

# VISION 2021

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Laying the foundations for a  
sustainable economy in our region

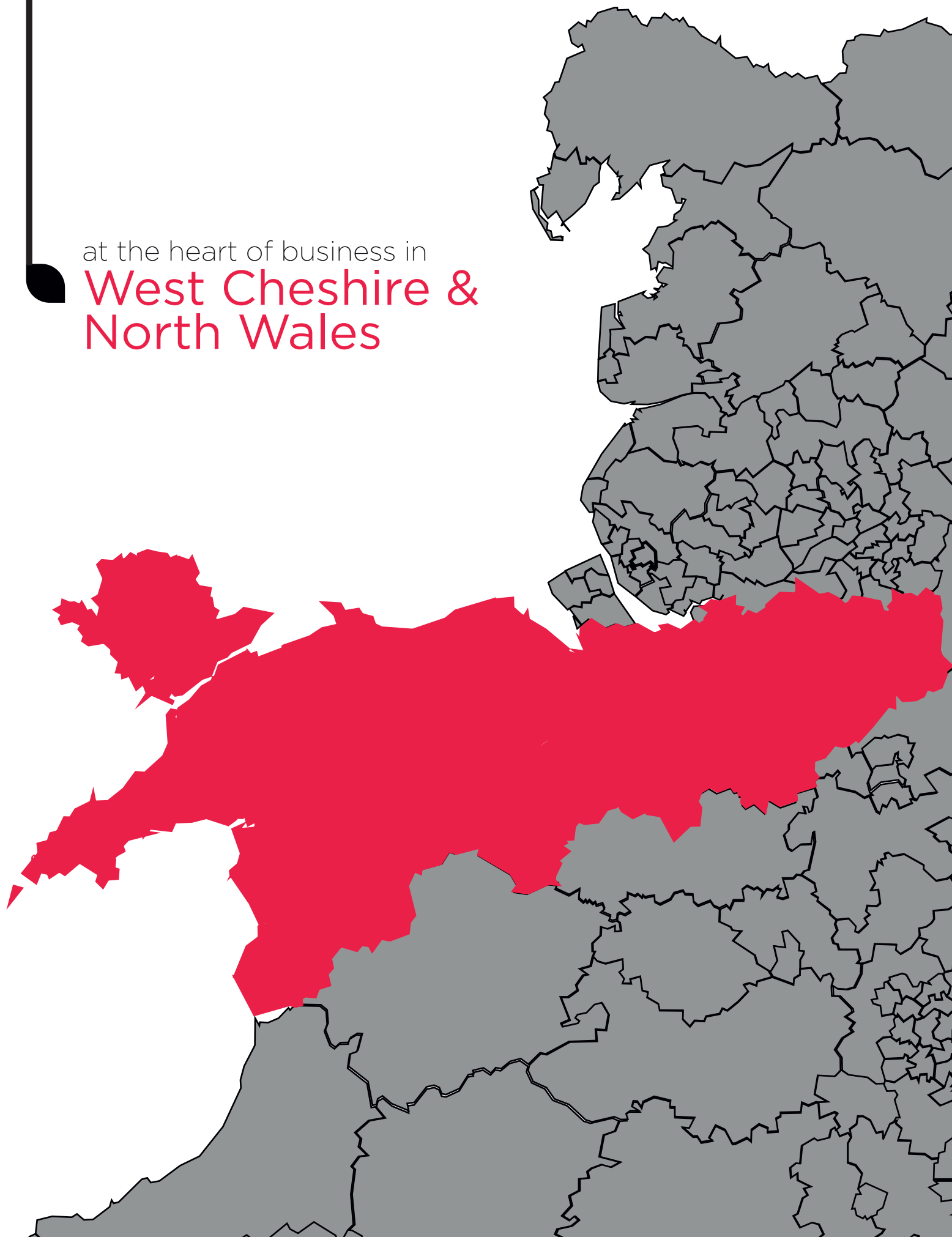
West Cheshire & North Wales  
Chamber of Commerce

Together, We're Well Connected.



at the heart of business in

# West Cheshire & North Wales



# Facing Forward

## for West Cheshire and North Wales

**West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce is the leading organisation representing the business community across the whole of West Cheshire and North Wales.**



**Debbie Bryce**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*West Cheshire & North Wales*  
*Chamber of Commerce*

As an independent, not for profit organisation, our objectives remain clear: to promote and encourage business for our members and others regionally, nationally and internationally to improve commercial growth and prosperity.

The West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce celebrates its centenary in 2021. With this incredible achievement in mind, the Chamber has created a strategic vision for the next five years that aims to not only enhance the Chamber, but drive our economy forward, and celebrate achievements.

In order for the West Cheshire and North Wales economies to grow we, the business community, government and society as a whole, must put the hard work in now.

In formulating our plans, we have consulted with businesses in all four corners of West Cheshire and North Wales and with other organisations campaigning on the issues we raise. The variety of perspectives and expert opinions we have received in our consultations have been built into this document, such that the West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce can state with absolute certainty that our vision truly and accurately represents the needs and wishes of our region's business community.

These consultations resulted in four key areas that are seen as priorities over the next five years, that will enable businesses to thrive:

- Ensuring we are the **authentic voice of business** that can deliver locally
- Creating enhanced **infrastructure and connectivity** for our region
- Bridging the **skills** gap across West Cheshire and North Wales
- Promoting **international trade** and stimulating regional **business ambition**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DBryce'.

**Debbie Bryce**

Chief Executive Officer  
West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce





Becoming the  
**AUTHENTIC VOICE  
OF BUSINESS**

for companies across West Cheshire  
and North Wales

V I S  
20

Promoting improved  
**SKILLS AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

to help individuals and businesses  
achieve more





Enhancing regional

# **INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY**

to better enable businesses to get things done

# ION 21



Developing

# **INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND REGIONAL AMBITION**

to place our region onto an international platform

# Authentic Voice of Business

**One of the core missions for the West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce is to provide a voice for the local business community. It is our goal to ensure that the voice of businesses – whatever the size – is heard when decisions are made in local, regional and national government.**

The Chamber regularly engages with its members, and the business community as a whole, to find out the issues that are affecting them. The Chamber uses these engagements to lobby on the behalf of business in the region to ensure that they have a seat at the table when key decisions are made.

The British Chambers of Commerce's Quarterly Economic Survey is the largest of its type and is not only used to influence key decision makers but is monitored by a range of organisations including; The Bank of England, HM Treasury and the European Commission. Our Quarterly Economic Survey is a simple way in which businesses across the region can have their say and help shape the support structures in their local community.

Through engaging with our members, the use of the Quarterly Economic Survey and consultations, the West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce endeavours to be the authentic voice of business in our region.



# What do we need to do to become the **Authentic Voice of Business?**

- Understand the needs of our members and the business community as a whole through regular engagements and evaluation of the Quarterly Economic Survey and member surveys
- Identify and work with key private and public sector organisations that influence the regional economy
- Represent businesses by being the lobbying voice locally, regionally and nationally to effect change
- Facilitate and signpost businesses to support organisations that encourage and help them to grow
- Effectively communicate with the business community the work that the Chamber does on its behalf and the outcomes of its representation and lobbying efforts
- Effectively communicate the views of the business community to the region's Members of Parliament and Assembly Members

## How do we achieve this?

**To act as the Authentic Voice of Business, the Chamber will engage with:**



# Infrastructure and Connectivity

**Our vision aims to develop a transport network that supports the needs of businesses. It also aims to provide businesses with access to cutting-edge communication technologies and the knowledge to use them effectively.**

A sustainable economy needs a transport network that puts moving people and goods at its heart and recognises that the transport demands in various parts of our region differ substantially.

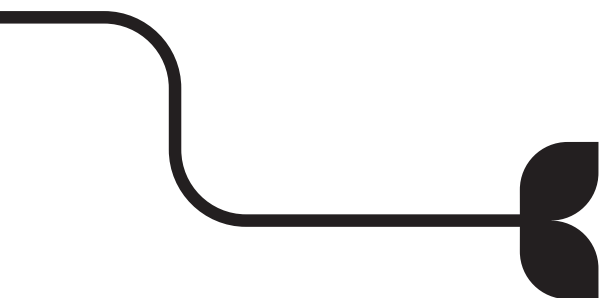
The scale of the challenge facing West Cheshire & North Wales when it comes to transport infrastructure shouldn't be underestimated. A large number of business leaders right across the region tell us that they do not feel that the current transport system supports the needs of businesses.

This problem is compounded by the timescales for planning infrastructure and the cost involved with some of the larger projects.

In today's world businesses need to be able to talk to each other instantly, whether they are in the next county or on the other side of the globe. The introduction of superfast broadband across our region goes part way towards laying the communication foundations that are needed but it is not enough in itself.

The world of communications is constantly upgrading. But too many businesses are not using today's technologies to their full advantage let alone planning for what opportunities may come in the future. This needs to change if businesses in West Cheshire & North Wales are to compete on a global platform.

The West Cheshire and North Wales Chamber believes that in order for businesses to reach customers locally, nationally and globally, substantial improvements are required.





# What do we need to do to enhance regional **Infrastructure and Connectivity?**

- Develop the rail network across West Cheshire and North Wales to link in with the planned HS2 line between London and the North of England
- Upgrade the road system across West Cheshire and North Wales so people can move seamlessly across the region and link with the economy of the North
- Grow the transport network so that it supports the need for moving freight locally, regionally and internationally
- Make sure that businesses in the region are effectively linked in with the expansion of Heathrow and the other London airports and also push for the expansion of our regional airports
- Ensure that every business in West Cheshire and North Wales has access to superfast broadband and a good mobile phone connection. This will enable a business to access the technology needed to grow and will not put rural businesses at a disadvantage
- Work with business owners to not only maximise the take-up of the latest communication-based services and technologies but to help protect them from cybercrime by raising awareness of the potential risks
- To work with businesses to identify planning issues and liaising with decision makers to overcome any challenges

## **On Infrastructure and Connectivity, the Chamber will engage with:**

- The Department for Transport and other Government and regional bodies
- The British Chambers of Commerce
- Local business representative groups, including focus groups and allied consortia
- Transport and freight companies
- Mobile and broadband providers, as well as IT support organisations
- Regional institutions and organisations leading on the infrastructure and connectivity agenda
- Public and Private Sector organisations and forums



# Skills and Development

**Our vision aims to develop a skilled and able workforce across all sectors, allowing our businesses, and in turn the economy of West Cheshire and North Wales, to grow and thrive. The most important foundation for any economy is the skills and talents of its people. Our businesses can only perform as well as the people that start, run and work in them.**

For businesses to succeed they need access to a quality 'pipeline' of young people entering the labour market for the first time and the tools to improve the skills of existing employees.

While every business is different and needs different skills, businesses across all sectors are telling us that they are finding the basic skills of literacy and numeracy lacking in a high number of job applicants.

We need schools, colleges and universities that prepare young people for employment; that work with businesses to address skill shortages; and that equip the next generation to start and sustain the enterprises of tomorrow.

The West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce believes it is a shared responsibility between business, education and government to address this. We are therefore committed to bridging the gap between business and education, by increasing collaboration between the business community and education providers to improve young people's transition to work.



## What do we need to do to improve **Skills and Development?**

- Through the implementation of our Young Chamber initiative, ensure that schools across West Cheshire and North Wales prepare children from a young age for the world of work and equip them with the skills needed to succeed
- Engage with regional universities to ensure that students are graduating with the skills and degrees that meet the needs of businesses in West Cheshire and North Wales
- Work with colleges across West Cheshire and North Wales to guarantee that pupils leave further education with the skills needed to go straight into work or apprenticeships if higher education is not the best path for them
- Make sure businesses in West Cheshire and North Wales identify and understand the skills that they require future employees to have
- Make demands of key public sector organisations so that a regional strategy can be created that provides businesses with the skilled employees they need to grow

## How do we achieve this?

### **On Skills and Development, the Chamber will engage with:**

- Schools across the West Cheshire and North Wales region via our Young Chamber Initiative
- Higher Education providers
- Local businesses
- Local, regional and central Government organisations
- Regional institutions and organisations leading on the skills agenda



# International Trade and Regional Ambition

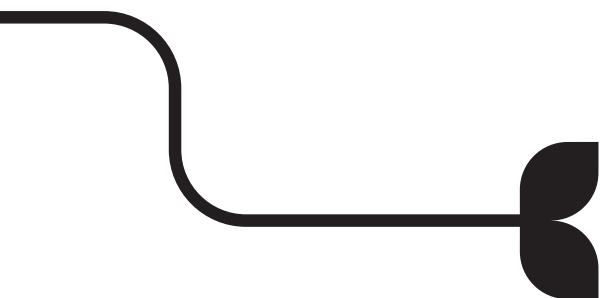
**Our vision aims to open up the world to West Cheshire and North Wales businesses, providing them with the support needed to access more customers in different markets. Focussing West Cheshire and North Wales' economy on more sustainable sources of growth is essential for our long-term growth.**

Developing West Cheshire and North Wales' export base, both through more intensive and more first-time exporting, must be a top priority for any future government. Companies that export grow faster than those that don't. Additionally, they are more innovative and more adept at developing new products and services. Breaking into new overseas markets allows companies to expand and create more jobs.

West Cheshire and North Wales businesses, however, need to gain the confidence in trading within new markets. The foundations for more international trade need to be laid by removing barriers and improving business knowledge, support and ambition both now and in the future.

Over the next five years, the Chamber hopes to reduce barriers that restrain businesses from exporting and improve their knowledge, confidence and ambition so they can take their products or services global.

Brexit is going to have a large impact on businesses that trade internationally. Whether it's a new documentation procedure, different customs arrangements or new trade agreements, changes are coming. The Chamber aims to support businesses through this change and help them prepare for life outside the EU.



# What do we need to do to promote **International Trade and Regional Ambition?**

- Grow the confidence and ambition of West Cheshire and North Wales businesses to look beyond our borders and take hold of opportunities abroad
- Work closely with the British Chambers of Commerce to lobby government on behalf of businesses from West Cheshire and North Wales on international trade matters
- Continue to engage with the British Chambers of Commerce's Global Business Network to promote business links between West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce members and the 20+ accredited overseas Chambers
- Engage with the Department for International Trade and Welsh Government to ensure that the support is there for businesses that want to take their first steps into export or develop their current exports
- Continue to provide a range of services to businesses in international trade that not only develops their knowledge but opens their minds to different opportunities that will help them grow
- Ensure that the infrastructure across West Cheshire and North Wales supports the needs of businesses in international trade and is not a barrier to those starting out
- The Chamber will continue to help prepare the region's businesses for Brexit and help them plan effectively for any changes that may arise

## How do we achieve this?

### **On International Trade and Regional Ambition, the Chamber will engage with:**

- The Department for International Trade
- The Welsh Government
- The British Chambers of Commerce and their Global Business Network
- Foreign Embassies in the United Kingdom
- Regional institutions and organisations leading on the international trade agenda



# Moving Forward

## for West Cheshire and North Wales

**As the West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce is approaching its landmark centenary in 2021, we have laid out this five-year strategic vision focusing on the four areas which will help businesses thrive and drive forward the region's economic growth.**

Ensuring we are the **authentic voice of business** that can deliver locally

By regularly engaging with members and the business community as a whole, the West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce endeavours to be the authentic voice of business in the region. This will enable businesses of any size to have a seat at the table when decisions are made in local, regional and national government.

Creating enhanced **infrastructure and connectivity** for our region

An efficient transport network that supports the needs of businesses in the region is an essential component of a sustainable economy. Our vision aims to reduce congestion and improve the transport links across the region, connecting businesses locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Communication is key for business. With ever-advancing technology, we aim to ensure that businesses in West Cheshire and North Wales are not left behind so they can compete on a global scale.

Bridging the **skills** gap across West Cheshire and North Wales

One of the most important foundations for any economy is the skills and talents of its people. Businesses need to have access to young people with the skills required to hit the ground running when entering the labour market. We are committed to bridging the gap between business and education, by increasing collaboration between the business community and education providers, to improve young people's transition to work through initiatives such as our Young Chamber model.

Promoting **international trade** and stimulating regional **business ambition**

We aim to stimulate ambition in the region's businesses and give them the confidence to take their products/services to overseas markets. Businesses that export are more likely to grow and therefore create more jobs, benefiting the region's economy. By removing barriers and offering support to businesses looking to export, the West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce hopes to inspire businesses to look beyond our shores.



# together, we're well **connected**

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## Your opinion **counts...**

We need **your** help in making our **vision** a reality, so we would encourage you to contact us with any issues that you face as a business in **West Cheshire and North Wales** and specifically issues that fall into our four areas of focus.



Our Chamber's Policy Executive, Matt Hodgson, will be happy to hear your views on our vision and your issues and concerns as a business. Please contact Matt using the details below.

**[vision@wcnwchamber.org.uk](mailto:vision@wcnwchamber.org.uk)**

**01244 66 99 88**

# West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce

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