# **Warwickshire County Council**



Economic Growth Strategy for Warwickshire

2024 -2034











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# Our Purpose

# "To make Warwickshire the best that it can be, now and in the future"







**Ambitious Growth** Inclusive Growth Sustainable Growth

**Areas of focus** 



Support high growth potential businesses start and scale



Foster Research and Development, innovation, and creativity



Ensure infrastructure and connectivity enables growth



Support our key sectors to grow



Targeting support for employment



Raise aspirations and develop career pathways



**Encourage enterprise and** entrepreneurship in under-represented groups & areas



Facilitate regeneration & empower priority places



Support the health & wellbeing of Warwickshire



Support our businesses transition to Net Zero



Support existing low carbon technology businesses and enable of new ones to move to the county



Make sure we have the right skills to support and capitalise on the shift to a low carbon economy Facilitate decarbonising transport



Promote reusing, recycling and remanufacturing practices to help businesses adapt their models to embrace sustainability and achieve clear outcomes

Each area of focus then has a number of missions - these are the actions we will be taking to see an impact or outcome.

## **Strategic Economic Plan**



### **Warwickshire Economy**

WMCA plan for growth C&W Strategic Economic Plan



Regional plans





District & Borough Economic Plans

Local plans



Community -based activity



#### **Ambitious Growth**

Warwickshire aims to position itself as a dynamic and resilient economy, one that is vibrant and ambitious. Fostering prosperity, building on current sector strengths and supporting emerging sectors.





#### **Inclusive Growth**

Warwickshire will focus on nurturing a skilled workforce, aligned to the needs of industries, collaborating with skills and education provision. Developing an economy that works for all our residents, one that tackles existing inequalities and ensures that everyone benefits from a strong and prosperous business base.





#### **Sustainable Growth**

Warwickshire aims to embrace green technologies, reduce carbon emissions, and promote eco-friendly practices across businesses and communities.

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Sustainable Futures, health and wellbeing

### **Foreword**

In the decade that preceded the COVID-19 pandemic, Warwickshire had one of the strongest performing economies of all upper tier local authority areas in the country.

With an economy generating over £22 billion in output each year, comprising of 22,065 businesses and 319,447 employees, the county experienced some of the fastest growth in productivity in the UK, attracted significant inward investment with a range of high-profile companies making Warwickshire their home, and saw strong levels of new business startups. Undoubtedly linked to this impressive performance, the county also experienced faster than average population growth as more people located to the county.

The economy has gone through a significant period of restructuring and change. Consumer behaviours are now very different, and our town centres are having to adapt and change at pace. The way we work is now different, with more agile working practices and greater utilisation of technology requiring new and different skills. As digital technology continues to grow exponentially, including the rapid development of automation and artificial intelligence, new opportunities and challenges are created and the need for continual reskilling and up-skilling is clear if we are to ensure that all parts of our society benefit from these changes. Our awareness of inequalities across our population has also increased, and the significant impact that this can have on health and wellbeing. As Warwickshire seeks to strengthen its economy, one that supports and rewards innovation and enterprise, we will encourage a wider and more equitable distribution of opportunities across the county.

Through this new Strategic Economic Plan, we need to be aware of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing us in the short-term, but also consider the longer-term direction of our economy and set a clear path to an ambitious, sustainable and inclusive sustainable future that provides benefit to all our residents. Our objective for the Warwickshire economy is one where every resident has the skills they need to

secure fulfilling employment, one where businesses can start, invest and grow sustainably, innovate, and adopt the newest technology. Our goal is one where the natural environment is respected, and our rural economy thrives, and where Warwickshire continues to play a leading and ever stronger role in the West Midlands and wider UK economy.

Warwickshire is intrinsically intertwined with the City of Coventry, covering a unique and shared footprint that exists as a strong functional economic geography. The two areas work closely together to support the growth of our collective economy, centred around a sub-regional economic strategy that recognises our interconnectivity and shared economic ambitions and priorities. This Strategic Economic Plan for Warwickshire is closely aligned to this wider strategy, but focuses on those activities, investments and interventions that are best undertaken at a Warwickshire level; and relates to the key levers and policy functions that are controlled within the county. As the county secures devolved powers and functions from Government, it is important that we deploy these to support the continued growth of the county while complementing and adding value to our collective work across the Coventry & Warwickshire sub-region.

Our mission is simple – grow our economy, support our businesses to succeed, increase the prosperity of all our residents, safeguard our environment and accelerate towards a net-zero Warwickshire.



Councillor Martin Watson Portfolio Holder for Economy, Warwickshire County Council



# Warwickshire now: our economic strengths, challenges, and opportunities

The Warwickshire economy is a highperforming and diversified economy. The economy features a unique eco-system of Research and Design (R&D) assets and two research-led universities. Key sectors include automotive and future mobility, where the county continues to be at the forefront of vehicle design and development, and multiple centres of excellence in electrification and autonomy. Warwickshire is home to the largest video game development cluster outside of London, known as 'Silicon Spa' and part of a leading digital creative sector, with major global brands and dynamic local scale-ups. The county enjoys a high-profile visitor economy as the home of William Shakespeare and the Royal Shakespeare Company, part of a wider hospitality and leisure offer that includes Warwick Castle. Other sectors of significance locally are agriculture logistics and e-commerce, and med-tech. We are proud of the investment being made by industry into our area, and at the same time recognise the importance of having a strong local business base. It is vital we have a healthy business base of Small Medium Enterprise's and new businesses coming forward, including selfemployment and social enterprise, to help build resilience, bring creativity and drive innovation in Warwickshire's economy.

Warwickshire's economic performance is one of strength and resilience with being one of the top 30% strongest performing economies of all upper tier local authority with Gross Value Add per hour worked (a key measure of economic productivity) growing by 25.3% over the last decade vs. 24.5% for England as a whole (2012-2021). The county has also enjoyed high levels of growth in Gross Household Domestic Income

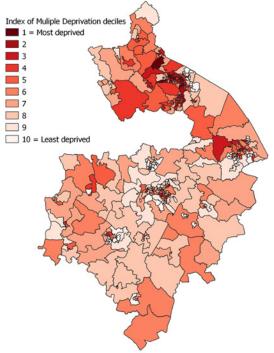
(Total GHDI up 37.2% vs. 36.5% for England as a whole 2012-2021) and a strong employment base, with consistently higher employment rates than the national average over the last decade. Alongside this, our residents are well skilled with at least 45% having at least a National Vocation Qualification (NVQ) 4 or equivalent qualification – as compared to 43.2% for England (in 2021). Median residential earnings have also been growing with four of our five district and borough areas (and Warwickshire overall) consistently having median residential earnings which are above the UK average. (All data from the ONS)

However, despite the overall positive economic picture, challenges remain with economic performance varied across the county. We know there are long standing issues of income inequality, life expectancy, affordable housing and educational attainment which show a stark divide. Many communities face particular barriers to securing and sustaining employment, which can impact significantly on their health and wellbeing, and create demands on public services. Prioritising residents' needs, participation, and quality of life is central to this strategy.

In 2019, 22 (6.5%) of neighbourhoods in Warwickshire were classified as being in the top 20% most deprived in the country. Deprivation is most prevalent but not limited to the north of the county. We know that the high affluence of some areas affects the overall picture and can mask areas of deprivation that exist within. This is particularly true in our rural communities where access to services, and loneliness can affect people's wellbeing.



### Map of distribution of Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles throughout Warwickshire



The map shows disparity across several areas, with 2021 GVA per capita in Nuneaton and Bedworth (£16,000) up to £16,250 lower than the Warwickshire average of £32,250 and just over one third of that in both Warwick (£44,000) and North Warwickshire (£45,400). There is also disparity in the level of qualification obtained with the percentage of residents aged 16 years and over with NVQ level 4 qualification or above ranged from 35.4% in Nuneaton & Bedworth and 31.7% in North Warwickshire to 49.1% in Stratford-on-Avon and 49.4% in Warwick. In addition, 9.8% of residents in Nuneaton and Bedworth had no qualification compared to 3.6% of residents in Warwick. This is particularly important when considering levelling up areas of our county with higher levels of deprivation, as higher levels of qualifications often result in higher incomes later in life, and higher productivity rates. (All data from the ONS)

Looking ahead, there are a range of opportunities for Warwickshire to help further grow and develop our economy. Ensuring a more inclusive approach to the growth of Warwickshire's economy will generate significant direct and indirect dividends and levelling up across the county would generate an additional £3bn in the economic output of Warwickshire. Not only this, but it would also provide communities and places with greater income and opportunity which leads to healthier and longer lives. Building and strengthening community wealth by increasing assets, opportunities, economic activity and networks within our local areas means stronger and more resilient communities. a higher contribution to the local economy and a reduction in demand on other services.

We have huge potential to maximise the opportunities from the unique sector strengths that we have, increasing innovation and productivity, and exploiting opportunities where these sectors intersect to create new and exciting collaborations. A devolution deal with Government will give us increased local control and flexibility over key funding to support business growth and skills provision to ensure training aligns with the changing needs of our economy, and a platform for further powers in the future. Our new development sites are providing new employment at scale and we can support more of our residents to access these new jobs, and the inclusion of key sites in Warwickshire within the West Midlands Investment Zone will help drive forward growth in our advanced manufacturing and automotive sectors. Developing and strengthening local supply chains as part of a wider drive towards reshoring, reducing movement of goods, and increasing reuse and recycling can help drive further inward investment into the county; while building on our strong business start-up rates, and increasing the proportion that successfully scale-up to high performing businesses, will help generate a more prosperous, productive and competitive economy. A host of new market opportunities exist as we transition to a low carbon economy, and through our business sectors, research base and entrepreneurial culture, Warwickshire is well placed to maximise these new areas of growth.

### Our aim for the future

Over the next decade, Warwickshire will become one of the strongest, most productive and prosperous economic areas of the country. It will be globally known for its strengths in automotive technology, future mobility, low carbon technologies, video-gaming and Createch, whilst also being able to adapt and support new emerging industry and market opportunities. It will have an outstanding reputation for providing a welcoming and connected business support eco-system that enables all businesses to prosper and grow.

Our residents will have the skills they need to succeed in our future looking economy, backed by an agile and inclusive education and training infrastructure that supports continual development of skills that meet the needs of our businesses. All parts of our economy will become more prosperous, but we will see faster growth in our under-performing

areas and the gap between the best and worst performing areas will reduce significantly, and employment rates of our priority groups will match the average across the county.

Warwickshire's economy will have significantly decarbonised over this time, reducing our emissions and helping businesses and residents reduce their energy use. The county will continue to offer an exceptional quality of life, with a strong rural character combined with vibrant and connected towns and villages, and an unrivalled tourism offer.

We will deliver on this vision by therefore focusing on three interlinked key priorities: Ambitious Growth, Inclusive Growth, and Sustainable Growth.



#### **Ambitious growth**

Warwickshire aims to position itself as a dynamic and resilient economy, one that is vibrant and ambitious. Fostering prosperity, building on current sector strengths and supporting emerging sectors.



### **Inclusive growth**

Warwickshire will focus on nurturing a skilled workforce, aligned to the needs of industries, collaborating with skills and education provision. Developing an economy that works for all our residents, one that tackles existing inequalities and ensures that everyone benefits from a strong and prosperous business base.



#### Sustainable growth

Warwickshire aims to embrace green technologies, reduce carbon emissions, and promote eco-friendly practices across businesses and communities.

# Measuring delivery and impact



We have developed a new Index of Growth for Warwickshire, which takes a basket of indicators for each priority and looks to provide a rounded assessment of how Warwickshire is performing against the national average – both in relative terms and year-on-year change. The following indicators are currently included for each of the three areas.



#### **Ambitious growth**

- percentage of population with NVQ4+ qualification
- percentage of residents in managerial or professional occupations
- percentage of employment in Knowledge Intensive Industries
- average gross disposable household income
- · GVA per capita
- · GVA per hour worked
- inactivity rate 25-49
- · new business birth rate
- number of job postings advertised per 10K population 16-64
- real wages



#### **Inclusive growth**

- percentage of 19-yearolds qualified to L3 (2 or more A-levels or equivalent vocational qualification)
- percentage of ethnic minority aged 16-64 who are economically inactive
- percentage of population with no qualification
- air quality
- Claimant Count Rate
- healthy life expectancy
- · inactivity rate 50-64
- ratio of earnings female/ male residents
- ratio of earnings top and bottom deciles of residents



#### Sustainable growth

- C0<sub>2</sub>e Emissions per Capita
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions estimates land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)
- collected household waste per person (kgs)
- Energy Intensity (electricity + waste energy / total energy)
- Severn Trent pollution incidents per 10,000km sewer
- percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting
- public electric vehicle charging devices (per 100,000 population)
- percentage of 19-yearolds qualified to L3 (2 or more A-levels or equivalent vocational qualification)

The Warwickshire Index of Growth has been built to give 2 scores based on the performance of Warwickshire across a range of measures related to economic growth. The Index of Mean compares the performance of Warwickshire against the national average, and the Index of Change compares the performance against the previous year.

An annual State of the Economy report will be published, which will present the latest position on the data and Index, along with commentary on projects and initiatives that has been undertaken to deliver against this strategy over the year.



# **Priority 1:**



**Ambitious growth** - Warwickshire aims to position itself as a dynamic and resilient economy, one that is vibrant and ambitious. Fostering prosperity, building on current sector strengths and supporting emerging sectors.

A strong economy is vital to the health and prosperity of our county. Building on our many and unique economic strengths, we will look to continue to develop our economy and drive productivity, and growth, whilst building pride in our places. The council and partners want to position Warwickshire at the forefront of innovation and new technologies that will support the County's continued and future economic success.

We want to make sure that the right business support and access to finance enables anyone with an aspiration to start or grow a business to do so. With partners, we want to create the right environment for our businesses to flourish, to have the means to grow and scale up, to export across the globe, creating fulfilling jobs for our people.

We also need to ensure that our residents have the skills needed by businesses to drive forward these growth opportunities, increasing our economic competitiveness and productivity. As technology develops at an exponential rate, it is critical that our education and training system is agile and able to quickly adapt to changing needs.

We recognise that Warwickshire has a range of key sectors which make our economy unique and different to elsewhere and will be at the cornerstone of driving forward this priority. These key sectors are detailed below: Whilst building on these key sectors we will also want to ensure the county looks to the future to be able to secure new areas of economic opportunity for Warwickshire arising from emerging and new industries and markets.





# Automotive & future mobility

The Coventry & Warwickshire area has long been associated with the design, development and manufacture of vehicles, from the modern bicycle and tractor through to the development of the jet engine and the deployment of four-wheel drive-in cars. Today Coventry & Warwickshire is seen as a major global centre for automotive and future mobility technologies and a leading centre for automotive technology with two industry-linked R&D universities, the sub-region is particularly strong in vehicle propulsion and autonomy technologies and light-weighting.

Over 40 leading industry companies are located in Coventry and Warwickshire, employing 50,000 people. Our local future mobility cluster includes, aerospace, commercial vehicles, defence, motorsport, off-highway machines, and rail, as well as automotive. From design and engineering to testing and protypes our area has a huge range of manufacturing expertise – no other UK location has this skill set in combination and the concentration of activity.



# Digital Creative

Warwickshire's video game development cluster has long been established in the region and has become known as one of the largest clusters of studios outside of the Greater London region in the UK. Across the West Midlands there are over 130 games studios and over 90 of those are based in Coventry & Warwickshire. The cluster across Coventry & Warwickshire is made up of entertainment, AR, VR & serious games specialists. The main cluster of studios is anchored around the town of Royal Leamington Spa and is affectionately dubbed 'Silicon Spa' with over 50 studios.

The success of the local video games sector has attracted a vibrant eco-system of other creative industries such as marketing and comms agencies, creative content developers and innovative software developers. This rich mix of creative skill sets has fostered a collaborative and innovative environment. As these sectors grow, we are seeing many opportunities to develop other creative clusters and expand the growth across regions in Warwickshire.

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# Rural economy & agriculture

The rural economy in Warwickshire is home to a wide variety of businesses from artisanal food and drink producers to hospitality businesses and farmers which make up a thriving community of businesses. 38.33% of employment and 37.8% of places of work are within a rural setting which means over 1 in 3 workplaces is based rurally in the county and make up 38% of the county's total GVA (approx. £7.4bn of £19.6bn total. All data from the ONS/IDBR).

Agriculture plays an important role in the rural, attractive location that underpins and supports our wider economic base. With approx. 2000 farm holdings, managing 160,000 hectares of land, the local farms support 6,000 people, generating £138 million towards the Warwickshires economy. Warwickshire agricultural businesses are well placed to take advantage of the advancements of Agri-tech given the proximity to the University of Warwick's Wellesbourne Campus, a centre for innovation in Agri-tech.



# Tourism & hospitality

Warwickshire has a world-class reputation for its visitor economy based on the iconic attractions of Shakespeare's Stratford and Warwick Castle in the south. To the east, Rugby School boasts the birthplace of the game that bears its name. In the north of the County, business tourism has traditionally been strong, supported by a significant meetings and events industry clustered around Birmingham, Coventry, and the NEC. Other visitor attraction venues of national significance include The Belfry Golf Course in North Warwickshire and British Motor Museum at Gaydon.

The beautiful rural setting also attracts the leisure visitor who visit our country parks, alongside a growing number of cycle clubs who have established routes around Warwickshire taking in our local villages and towns. We are seeing a growing demand for 'outdoor' experiences.

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## To achieve this priority, we will focus on the following key deliverables:

- Develop Sector Growth Plans for each of our identified priority sectors, setting out a coherent approach to support the continued development and success of these planks to our economy
- Support businesses in Warwickshire with high growth potential to drive future productivity and prosperity, and increase the number of businesses scaling-up and achieving £1m+ turnover
- Develop a suite of programmes that will support businesses in overcoming the identified barriers to growth, particularly:
- access to finance;
- access to knowledge;
- access to skills including digital skills;
- access to markets, both domestically and internationally; and
- access to the property or land needed to grow.
- Work with our universities and research centres to increase the number of businesses engaging in innovation activity to drive productivity and competitiveness across the county

- Ensure the county's infrastructure and connectivity support new investment and local businesses to reach their full potential, with a particular focus on:
- a safe, reliable and connected transport infrastructure system;
- full fibre connectivity and widespread availability of 4G and 5G mobile coverage
- ensuring the supply of appropriate employment land and premises, in the right locations, with the right connectivity to support the growth of the economy
- securing sufficient power infrastructure to support our future growth ambitions
- provision of appropriate and affordable housing to attract and retain the talent needed
- Work with businesses to better understand future skills needs and ensure our skills and training providers are delivering against these needs.
- Promote the career opportunities that exist across the county to inspire our young people, and to attract and retain graduates from our two world-class universities



# **Priority 2:**



Inclusive growth - Warwickshire will focus on nurturing a skilled workforce, aligned to the needs of industries, collaborating with skills and education provision. Developing an economy that works for all our residents, one that tackles existing inequalities and ensures that everyone benefits from a strong and prosperous business base.

Reducing inequalities and increasing social mobility across Warwickshire is a priority for all local authorities in the county. Addressing income inequality and creating opportunities through a progressive and inclusive economy is key to this. We know that high levels of inequality weaken economic performance; and by addressing these disparities we will create a stronger economy that our communities can benefit from. To support this, we need to strengthen our understanding of inequalities that exist for our communities that have a smaller share of wealth, such as those in our more deprived areas. Every community has unique challenges and opportunities, the county and our partners will need to tailor our approaches to ensure those in greatest need receive the right support to participate and benefit from economic growth.

We want all our residents and businesses to benefit from new investment and new opportunities in the county. We will deliver this through inclusive growth, increasing access to good quality jobs, raising skill levels and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Warwickshire. We recognise the connection between employment, income and health and wellbeing; and understand how low incomes and insecure employment can create further challenges in areas of need and deprivation. Improving the health of residents can provide much needed productivity gains, in the face of the UK's long-standing productivity problems. Good health can deliver prosperity across Warwickshire and the wider UK.

# Spotlight: The wider determinants of health

Good health is created through a wide range of factors, not only diet and lifestyle, but also your work, education, social groups, quality of housing and hobbies.

Figure 1: Wider determinants of health model demonstrating the complex web of factors that influence our health (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1993)

These wider determinants of health, or the 'causes of the causes' of health, are significant in determining how long we live, and how much of our lives are spent in good health. Having unequal distribution of wealth and levels of deprivation across the county creates

differing life expectancies across the county. For example, on average, males in the most deprived areas of Warwickshire are likely to die 8.3 years earlier than those in the least deprived. For females, this figure is 6.3 years.

We can prevent this level of difference in life expectancy by making sure we have the right building blocks in place to support good health. This includes creating a strong economy with stable jobs and good pay for all, good quality and affordable homes, accessible green open spaces, increasing educational attainment and supporting community spaces.



Figure 1:

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## To achieve this priority, we will focus on the following key deliverables:

- Develop tailored place based approaches through creating Opportunities Place Plans across our five district and borough councils, which will include locally relevant activity to develop more inclusive labour markets and increase the entrepreneurial culture within specific localities, especially in Lower Super Output Areas's (LSOA) that are in the 20% most deprived nationally according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- Develop and target business start-up and pre-start-up support programmes in areas and communities of interest (particularly women and minority ethnic groups) that have lower than average enterprise activity
- Actively utilise social value within the procurement activities of the public sector across the county to create opportunities to support inclusive growth activities
- Provide focused support to help our key priority groups (which include young people and adults with learning disabilities and/or autism, over 50s, resettlement, care leavers, young offenders, NEETS) move into sustainable and good employment.

- Work with healthcare partners to help ensure that health problems are not a barrier to economic participation, and develop focused support programmes to help those with ongoing health issues into employment
- Work with employers to increase and improve health and wellbeing activity within work to reduce sickness absences and early retirement
- Work with our schools and further education colleges to review the employment and careers support offer for all residents with a focus on priority groups, ensuring there are consistently strong academic, technical training and engagement pathways in high quality settings across the county that meet the needs of local employers (including T-levels and apprenticeships).
- Increase community wealth and assets in key priority areas, including through supporting social networks, community and voluntary sector activity, social enterprises, and wider place-shaping activity



# **Priority 3:**

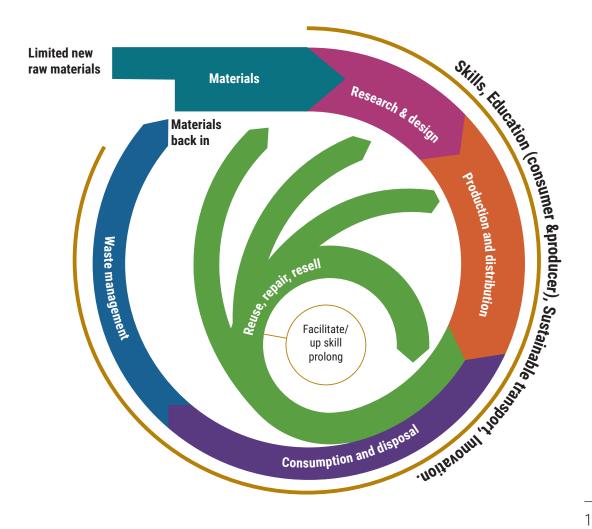
**Sustainable growth** - Warwickshire aims to embrace green technologies, reduce carbon emissions, and promote eco-friendly practices across businesses and communities.



We cannot and should not have economic growth at any cost. We must ensure that as our economy grows and develops, we respect environmental boundaries and continue to reduce waste and pollution.

Warwickshire has declared a climate emergency, and the County Council and many of its partners and stakeholders have pledged to do all they can to lead Warwickshire to be net zero with respect to carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 or sooner.

We will support and assist our businesses to transition to net zero in the best way possible and to seek new opportunities that a sustainable and more climate friendly model might provide. There are huge economic opportunities to exploit as we move to a low-carbon economy, and it is important that we help support our existing businesses adapt and diversify, and enable new innovative businesses to be created to reap these rewards as well as helping residents develop key skills in this post-covid economy. As businesses take advantage of net-zero opportunities our residents and wider economy will also reap the benefits. This Strategic Economic Growth Plan recognises and supports this commitment and emerging opportunities and helps set out steps that can be taken to move us forward on this journey.





## To achieve this priority, we will focus on the following key deliverables:

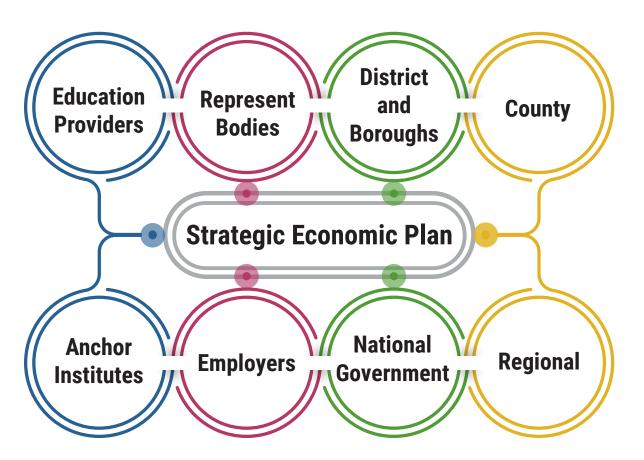
- Provide support to businesses to help them reduce their energy use and carbon emissions and help them on their journey towards net-zero.
- Establish an approach to encourage material reduce and re-use across our economy, and create business opportunities
- Support new business start-ups, spinouts and social enterprises that support our sustainable growth ambitions.
- Support new developments to consider and mitigate their environmental impact, and seek to promote the transport hierarchy set out in the Warwickshire Local Transport Plan

- Support the development and growth of low carbon technology businesses, building on our existing sector strengths and strong university and research centre presence.
- Work with businesses and key stakeholders to identify the skills needed to support the transition to a low carbon economy, and work with training providers to grow and develop required provision in the county.
- Embed climate change adaption approaches within businesses, and promote the new commercial opportunities that arise from this

# Delivering the Plan

For our vision to become a reality it is essential to have a clear approach to guide our actions and ensure we deliver against our objectives.

This strategy is accompanied by a twoyear delivery plan that sets out the role that Warwickshire County Council, working with its key partners and stakeholders, will play in making these ambitions a reality. This delivery plan is aligned to Warwickshire County Council's Council Plan and will we develop an annual State of the Economy report where we will report on progress and use our new Index of Growth to track performance. Warwickshire County Council can facilitate the delivery of the plan, but our success is dependent on strong partnerships with a range of partners including the district and borough councils, employers, partners, education providers, representative bodies and anchor institutions. This strategy has to be owned by all stakeholders who have a role in improving economic prosperity of residents, business and the wider Warwickshire economy.



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