

Warrington
Annual
Property
Review
2022

Warrington
& Co.



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...foreword



Warrington's 24th Annual Property Review reflects on another year of significant challenge due to the impact of COVID-19 and more recent economic uncertainties. We have faced extremely testing circumstances, but I am pleased to say that we have once again shown strong resilience, community spirit and partnership, which can give us confidence about our future.

Over the past 12 months, our commercial property market has enjoyed a number of success stories. Within this year's Property Review, you will find a range of independent statistics which show that economic momentum is building once more in Warrington.

We remain fully committed to providing an environment where our business sector can thrive. During the pandemic, we have taken every step to support our businesses, paying out more than £100 million in government grants. At the same time, we have maintained strong dialogue and partnership working with our retail and hospitality sector who, in turn, have shown real positivity, adaptability and innovation.

This has paid dividends, with the recent Cities Outlook report finding that the resilience of high street spending in Warrington during the COVID-19 pandemic has seen the town outperforming most other large towns and cities.

This is reflected in our property market, with overall investment on the rise and some significant office deals completed, including the University of Chester relocating all of its teaching provision to Warrington town centre. We have also seen a huge uplift in house sales and prices, with plans moving forward for a brand new hotel close to Warrington Bank Quay train station.



...we have once again shown strong resilience, community spirit and partnership...



Meanwhile, the growth of our town continues. We have secured over £22m in Town Deal funding, which will see us delivering a programme of seven transformative projects. The first of these on site, a brand new, cutting-edge bus depot, will support one of the largest all-electric bus fleets in the UK.

Other success stories include our state-of-the-art Warrington Youth Zone, which opens later this year, while our £142.5m Time Square development continues to go from strength to strength, with the completion of deals for Parlour and Costello's meaning almost all units are now filled.

We continue to invest in our transport infrastructure, buoyed by the success of Centre Park Link which is visibly reducing congestion in the heart of our town and which, in its first year, has been used by an estimated three million vehicles. We are now moving ahead with a comprehensive active travel programme, which will transform the way people move around our town.

We were also pleased by the Government's announcement on Northern Power Rail. Although it will take some time to deliver, it will make Warrington a truly inter-connected rail hub.

Nowhere was Warrington's confidence more on display than when we hosted the Tour of Britain cycling race for the first time, in September. It was a huge success, boosting our local economy, bringing an influx of visitors and showcasing our sporting credentials to a global audience. We are also looking forward to being a host town for the Rugby League World Cup later this year.

All of this gives us every reason for optimism as we continue on our journey towards a bright and successful future. Thanks for your continued support.

Professor Steven Broomhead MBE
Chair Warrington & Co.

Pictured: Tour of Britain 2021 – Stage 5 – Warrington finish



executive summary

In a year in which Warrington boosted investment across the Borough with Town Deal funding, it is gratifying to also report a number of positive stories from last year's commercial property market. From the sustained appetite on show amongst commercial investors, to a returning workforce driving a robust occupier market, Warrington again highlighted its significance to the ever-changing demands of those who drive the economy on a local, regional, and global scale.

Investment

> £26m

Last year's investment activity saw a slight increase as the number of deals rose. Transactions of HQ office buildings, as well as larger logistics premises in established commercial locations, demonstrated a sustained investor appetite for property in the Borough.

- ▶ **With over £26 million transacted** in the town, the year's largest office deal saw Emerson Group purchase Buildings 2 & 4 at Cinnamon Park in Fearnhead for £4.25 million. Frankel Brow also purchased the now rebranded and comprehensively refurbished 110 Birchwood Boulevard for £2.25 million and Bridge Properties expanded its office portfolio with the purchase of Dominion House, also in Birchwood
- ▶ Australia-based Cromwell Property Group's European REIT acquired the 9,764 sqm Kingsland 21 from Canmoor. The logistics facility, currently occupied by Panther Warehousing on a 10-year term, represents the property group's first UK purchase
- ▶ Demolition began on the former Chevy's Bar in Padgate. The site was purchased by Alderley Group and plans have been permitted to construct a block of 30 flats, with 32 associated parking spaces.

Office

18,284 m²

Despite a slight, if expected, drop in activity across 2021, the numbers recorded in last year's office market still showed great resilience against a backdrop tainted by uncertainty. Supported by notable activity in the town centre, Warrington yet again demonstrated its appeal to an occupier base examining how the office of the future might work for them.

- ▶ A total of **18,284 sqm of floorspace transacted in 2021**, comprising 35 deals above 200 sqm. Almost 70 percent of this floorspace was transacted on a leasehold basis, with the number of deals in line with the average achieved across the last five years
- ▶ The University of Chester accounted for the two largest deals of the year, taking almost 3,500 sqm of office space in the town centre. This will see the University relocate all teaching provision from its existing site at the Fearnhead Campus
- ▶ 20 deals were recorded in Birchwood across the year, which accounted for over 42 percent of floorspace take-up in 2021. Centre Park also boasted a strong level of take-up, accounting for almost 10 percent of the year's total.

Industrial

107,132 m²

A slight reduction in take-up demonstrated a lack of industrial supply throughout 2021. Warrington however highlighted its capacity to plan for the future, with a number of industrial sites either commencing or completing work throughout the year.

- ▶ **A total of 107,132 sqm was transacted**, comprising 49 deals above 200 sqm. This level of take-up represents the second-highest total reported within the last six years and sits just below the decade-long average of 111,500 sqm
- ▶ Leasehold deals accounted for 92 percent of all transactions, with almost 19 percent completed on a term of 10 or more years, including all those of 2,000 sqm or above
- ▶ The year's two deals at Omega comprised Unit 2, Mountpark and Omega 88 where a total of 27,069 sqm was transacted. This included UPS taking space in the latter, with a headline rent of £74.81 per sqm achieved on a 15-year term.

Residential

595 x

With an increased adoption of hybrid working, city and town housing markets experienced a resurgence as the UK recorded an annual house price growth of 10 percent.

- ▶ Data from Zoopla indicates that 2,100 sales were completed in Warrington within the last 12 months, a huge 58 percent uplift on the previous year. 2021 also saw a rise in the average sale price achieved, up 15 percent to £249,778
- ▶ The annual housing data, supplied by Warrington Borough Council, demonstrated that a total of **595 homes were completed** in the 2020/21 reporting period, of which 113 were affordable. The figures indicate an uplift of 6.4 percent on the number of completions reported in the previous period
- ▶ Activity within the Omega Zone was most prolific, with 174 completions reported across seven schemes. This delivery was primarily driven by activity within the Miller Homes, Redrow Homes and Taylor Wimpey schemes, which accounted for 115 completions, or just over 19 percent of the Borough's total.

Retail and Leisure

2nd 62

Despite the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic still lingering amongst the retail and leisure sector, Warrington proved resilient to outperform many other big cities and towns in 2021. Research by Centre for Cities placed Warrington as the **second best performing of the UK's 62 largest destinations** in terms of reduced high street spending.

- ▶ Costello's became the latest tenant at Time Square, marking another step forwards for the town's £142 million mixed-use scheme. The company will establish a brand-new bar in the 3,562 sqft unit
- ▶ Rudy's Neapolitan Pizza opened its seventh site, in Stockton Heath. Taking over the former Barclays Bank building on 19 Walton Street, the site will sit amongst the company's existing premises in Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Birmingham
- ▶ Warrington's hotel offering looks set to improve, with the approval of a 126-bedroom hotel on land at Slutchers Lane, close to Warrington Bank Quay train station. Plans on the site, currently in use as a car park, include the retention of 76 spaces.



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economy

Following the success of Warrington's bid for Town Deal funding, 2021 saw great strides made in approving projects earmarked to benefit from the scheme. In another year where Covid-19 played a part in shaping the economy both locally and nationally, there were a number of positive stories within the Borough to offer hope as we emerged from the tightest of pandemic restrictions.

Having been awarded £22.1 million from the £3 billion Town Deal Fund in October 2020, Warrington Borough Council's cabinet last year approved business cases for all seven projects earmarked to benefit from the funding. Bids are then to be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), in order to unlock funding for the schemes, which include:

- ▶ A health and social care academy at Warrington & Vale Royal College
- ▶ A health and wellbeing hub in the Contact Warrington building on Horsemarket Street
- ▶ An advanced construction training centre
- ▶ A new bus depot for Warrington's new all-electric fleet
- ▶ A comprehensive active travel programme, with the Council seeking to improve walking / cycling infrastructure
- ▶ A digital enterprise hub
- ▶ A remastered cultural hub at the Pyramid.

The Council has already submitted a proposal for the sustainable travel and recreation works. The £7 million plan includes the introduction of a mix of bus priority, walking and cycling infrastructure improvements as well as an enhancement of recreational facilities including a 3G pitch, improving the connectivity between the town's 'green ring' of parks and establishing a town centre community cycle hub. The sustainable travel package business case has been submitted to the DLUHC and forms an instrumental part of the wider Town Deal programme for Warrington, focusing on connectivity, regeneration, and the improvement of the town's infrastructure.

The Council's cabinet has also approved funding for the town's bus company to facilitate its relocation to Dallam Lane, unlocking land around Wilderspool Causeway for the 1,300-home Southern Gateway Development. The new bus depot, to be constructed on a four-acre site on the Warrington Central Trading Estate, is to cost around £10 million. £7 million has already been secured from external funders, with the remaining £3 million to be funded through borrowing. Plans for the new-build bus station, proposed by Wire Regeneration, a joint venture between the Council and developer Langtree, were approved in 2019. The Council's investment into Warrington's Own Buses is also aimed at helping the company upgrade its infrastructure so that it is able to support a fleet of electric buses in the future.



...connectivity, regeneration, and the improvement of the town's infrastructure.



In order to facilitate further Town Centre development, planning has been submitted for a 645-bay multi-storey car park on the existing Poundstretcher site near Warrington Bank Quay station. Parker Street (MSCP) submitted the application, marking a step towards developing a new central business district around the station. The five-storey building is expected to facilitate the anticipated increase in residents and workers as the area evolves. Subject to receiving planning consent, the £15 million project is expected to commence in Spring 2022 and complement the recently completed Centre Park Link Road, which links Warrington's southern suburbs to the town centre.

In October 2020, the Council took the decision to pause work on the Local Plan. This was due to the economic and wider impacts of Covid 19 and the Government's proposed amendments to the standard housing methodology. Work re-commenced following confirmation of changes to the Government's housing methodology at the end of 2020 and the Council updated its evidence base to re-establish Warrington's future development needs and subsequently re-assessed the Plan's spatial strategy and potential allocation sites.

Having undertaken this work and considered in detail the key issues raised from the previous consultation, the new Draft Local Plan 2021 proposes a number of significant changes from the previous Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (2019). These changes include:

- ▀ A reduction in new housing from 945 a year over 20 years, to 816 a year over a reduced plan period of 18 years
- ▀ Proposals for 580 hectares to be removed from the Green Belt for development. This equates to 5 percent of Green Belt land in the Borough, significantly lower than the 11 percent in the previous Plan
- ▀ The removal of the residential allocations at the South West Urban Extension (1,600 homes), Phipps Lane in Burtonwood Village (160 homes), and Massey Brook Lane in Lymm (60 homes)
- ▀ Moving away from the Garden Suburb concept in South Warrington (4,200 new homes in the plan period), and instead including new proposals for a South East Warrington Urban Extension, with a reduced allocation of 2,400 new homes
- ▀ The removal of Port Warrington (75 ha employment land) and the Business Hub (25ha employment land)
- ▀ The inclusion of the Fiddler's Ferry site in the Plan, with the closure of the power station in March 2020 providing the opportunity to bring the site into the allocation.



£22.1m

awarded to Warrington from
the £3 billion Town Deal



Pictured: Cookhouse, Warrington Market

investment

In a positive step, last year's investment activity saw a slight increase as the number of deals rose significantly. Transactions of HQ office buildings, as well as larger logistics premises in established commercial locations, demonstrated a sustained investor appetite for property in the Borough.



Pictured: 4 Cinnamon Park

Warrington reported 14 investment deals across 2021, with a total disclosed investment spend of £26.27 million. Whilst a slight drop in total spend on the previous year, these figures nonetheless represent a 56 percent uplift in transactions, as investing in primarily office and industrial premises saw investors beginning to re-evaluate what the market had to offer in a post-pandemic world.

Interest in larger, HQ-style office buildings led this growth with four buildings, above 2,000 sqm, trading in the Birchwood area alone, accounting for almost £10 million of the year's total spend. The year's largest office transaction saw Emerson Group purchase Buildings 2 & 4 at Cinnamon Park in Fearnhead. Purchased from Aberdeen Standard Investments for £4.25 million, the deal represented a Net Initial Yield of 10.2 percent. The buildings are currently occupied by Blue Prism and Datel Computing.

Birchwood Boulevard was a scheme of immense interest, with Frankel Brow purchasing Arpley House and Carter Gem Investments purchasing Pacific House. The former being Betfred owner Fred Done, who purchased the 2,787 sqm three-storey office building in June 2021 for £2.25 million. After acquiring the building from Homes England, a further £1.5 million has been spent on a comprehensive refurbishment which has now seen the building rebranded as 110 Birchwood Boulevard.

Across the Boulevard, Carter Gem Investments purchased Pacific House for £3.45 million from Birchwood Property Group. Currently tenanted by travel reward company Avios, the deal represented a Net Initial Yield of 8.7 percent. These two deals represent the first activity on the business park since the Council's double acquisition of both Appleton House and Atlantic House in 2018.

14 x deals) £26.27m spend

Elsewhere, Bridge Properties purchased Dominion House in Birchwood. The property manager agreed a sale with vendor Kames Capital, part of Aegon Asset Management, for an undisclosed price. The building at Temple Court Business Park comprises almost 4,000 sqm over three floors and will undergo a comprehensive refurbishment ahead of being marketed to potential occupiers. The new fit-out will include a roof terrace and bar, in addition to an on-site café and modern break out spaces within the transformed building.

The home of the world’s second-largest gin distiller, G&J Distillers, Melbury Park on Clayton Road in Birchwood was sold to Valor Real Estate in a deal worth £15.45 million. The year’s largest industrial deal, the property was acquired from vendor Saturon. The 10,162 sqm facility is home to the world-famous distillery and Warrington mainstay which produces 40 percent of all gin consumed in the UK.

Australia-based Cromwell Property Group’s European REIT acquired the 9,764 sqm Kingsland 21 in Woolston from Canmoor. The logistics facility, currently occupied by Panther Warehousing, represents the property group’s first UK purchase, and further increases its industrial/logistics property holdings to 39 percent. The freehold property dates back to 1980 and following a recent refurbishment was leased to Panther Warehousing on a 10-year term earlier in the year. The deal represented a Net Initial Yield of 5.60 percent.

Elsewhere, demolition is underway on the former Chevy’s Bar in Padgate. The site, which sits on the junction of Manchester Road and Padgate Lane, was purchased by Alderley Group and plans have been permitted to construct a block of 30 flats, including 23 one-bedroom and seven two-bedroom dwellings. The scheme will also include 32 associated parking spaces. Though now demolished following the pub’s closure in 2017, parts of the original building dated back to the 1870s. The site has formerly been known as the Cemetery Hotel, the Good Companions and Formby’s.



40%

of all gin consumed in the UK is produced at G&J Distillers, located at Melbury Park on Clayton Road, Birchwood.



Pictured above and below: The Square, Birchwood



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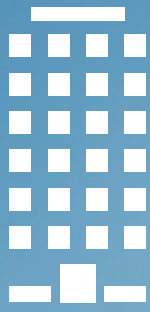
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Property	Vendor	Purchaser	Size (Sqm)	Price	Tenant	Income (£/pa)	Net Initial Yield (%)	Agent(s)
Office								
Units 2 & 4, Cinnamon Park, Fearnhead	Aberdeen Standard Investments	The Emerson Group	3,005	4,250,000	Blue Prism, Datal Computing	461,764	10.20%	Savills
Palmyra House	Presscredit (Cardiff)	Torus 62	2,523	Undisclosed	Various	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Read Property Associates
Pacific House, Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood	Birchwood Property Group	Carter Gem Investments	2,970	3,450,000	Avios	319,760	8.7%	Colliers / ACRE Capital
Dominion House, Temple Court, Birchwood	Kames Capital	Bridge Properties	3,809	2,700,000	Vacant	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Savills / Canning O'Neill
Arpley House, Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood	Homes England	Frankel Brow	2,787	2,250,000	Vacant	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Avison Young
700/710 Mandarin Court, Centre Park	Daniel UK Properties	Moorland	1,515	1,253,965	Cogent	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / Morgan Williams
9 Mandarin Court, Centre Park	Peleton Property	Palladium Property Group	961	827,500	Vacant	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	BE Group / B1 Real Estate
Industrial								
Melbury Park, Clayton Road, Birchwood	Saturon	Valor Real Estate	10,162	15,450,000	G&J Distillers	700,000	4.00%	Gerald Eve / Brackenridge Hanson Tate
Unit 15d, Gemini Business Park, Europa Boulevard, Gemini	Aberdeen Standard Investments	Undisclosed	6,804	10,322,611	Undisclosed	484,458	4.40%	JLL
Kingsland 21, Kingsland Grange, Woolston	Canmoor	Cromwell European Real Estate Investment Trust	9,764	10,000,000	Panther Warehousing	580,000	5.60%	CMS Manchester
Winwick 185, Mill Lane, Winwick	CCLA	Arrow Capital Partners	17,110	Undisclosed	Hermes Parcelnet	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Retail								
2 Lovely Lane	Private Individual	Private Individual	925	455,000	McCull's	30,000	6.31%	Johnson Tucker
30-42 Knutsford Road	Trustees of CE Carroll & AT Carroll	Private Individual	467	390,000	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Read Property Associates
Other								
Land and Building known as Chevy's Bar	WORF Estates Ltd	Alderley Group	0.5 acres	645,000	Public House	Vacant	Undisclosed	Read Property Associates



£4.25m, 10.2%

Buildings 2 & 4 at Cinnamon Park
in Fearnhead; purchased for
£4.25 million, representing a
Net Initial Yield of 10.2 percent.



Pictured: 2 Cinnamon Park

office

As Covid-19 restrictions started to relax across the country, the office market saw an increasing number of people return to the workplace in 2021. Despite a perhaps expected reduction in take-up, the actual number of transactions reported provides a positive outlook for the commercial property market as companies start to examine the different ways in which the office might start to work for them in the future.

A total of 18,284 sqm was transacted across Warrington in 2021, comprising a healthy 35 deals above 200 sqm. Despite the uncertainty within the office occupier market, this total number of deals is in line with the average across the last five years. The total amount of floorspace take-up is also a positive, the third highest within the same period, demonstrating a sustained demand, despite the lack of much-larger HQ deals which Warrington could usually expect to see each year or two.

Almost 70 percent of this transacted floorspace was done so on a leasehold basis, comprising 85 percent of deals. A total of 29 leasehold deals have been recorded, over 12,00 sqm of space, with an average rent achieved of £150.90 per sqm. Lease terms also remained robust, with four deals completed a term of 10 years and a further 40 percent at five years. Still, over 5,800 sqm of space was sold across six freehold deals, at an average achieved price of £898.20 per sqm. The year's highest value was achieved on Fontwell House in Birchwood, where the 666 sqm premises was sold for £1,321.10 per sqm.

Location once again proved to be a primary selling point to occupiers, with 20 deals recorded in Birchwood alone. These account for just over 42 percent of all take-up, with occupiers taking advantage of the local amenities, transport links, and roadwork infrastructure put in place across recent years. The town centre also boasted an impressive level of activity, bolstered by the year's two largest deals, comprising 4,860 sqm. Just outside the town centre, Centre Park also had a successful year, accounting for almost 10 percent of take-up.

Plans were reported last year that University of Chester was intending to relocate its teaching provision from the Fearnhead Campus into the town centre. 2021 saw the culmination of this planning with the year's two largest deals seeing the University purchase Mersey Bank House on Barbauld Street and agree lease terms with the Council on Unit 2 at Time Square.

Mersey Bank House, which extends to 2,079 sqm, was purchased for £936.47 per sqm. The building will house the majority of the teaching provision, including education and nursing courses, and will be renamed the Sarah Parker Redmond Building, after the prominent black anti-abolitionist who gave a series of Lectures in Warrington in the late 1800's.

Pictured: 110 Birchwood Boulevard



The year's largest leasehold deal, at Time Square, will host the University's information point for the public and will include a learning space for students, encompassing lecture and breakout spaces for seminars. The 1,403 sqm unit, which the University took on a 10-year lease at £201.07 per sqm, will also include resources from Further Education partners including the Accelerate Skills programme and Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership.

Birchwood Park welcomed a number of new tenants to site in 2021, with seven deals above 200 sqm. The largest of these saw business service provider Integral UK take 990 sqm of contact centre space in Chadwick House. Up to 70 staff will work from the new premises, supporting thousands of mobile engineers across the country. Other significant lettings included Perkins taking space at 101 Dalton Avenue and again the year's prime rent was achieved at 304 Bridgewater Place, where Equity Release Supermarket took a five-year lease at £226.04 per sqm on 426 sqm of ground floor offices. Across 2021, Birchwood Park welcomed more than 20 new companies to site, across a range of serviced and conventional lease agreements.

The Square in Birchwood also saw a great deal of activity across 2021, with four deals encompassing 1,209 sqm. The largest of these deals saw plant and machinery hire company Nationwide Platforms agree to take 471 sqm of space across a 10-year lease on the first and second floor of Building 3. Venturi Cardiology, a private heart-health

clinic also agreed to a 10-year term, taking 230 sqm on the ground floor of Building 3. The clinic's extensive fit-out includes a private entrance and car park. Other deals to M&J Evans Construction and insurance company Opteven complete a stellar year of activity on the site, with rents achieved averaging £160 per sqm.

At the smaller end of the scale, the end of 2021 saw a sharp rise in activity at St James Business Centre on Wilderspool Causeway, with six new tenants occupying more than 650 sqm at the office centre. This included its largest deal of 325 sqm to recruitment company Lignum. The centre offers conventional, serviced, and virtual office space and is operated by Wire Regeneration, a joint venture between Langtree and the Council. More than 250 now work on-site, demonstrating the sustained appeal of flexible office space to many companies and their employees.

Quite timely then that Pure Offices unveiled a new £2 million refurbishment at Centre Park during the year. Operating at over 20 locations across the UK, the serviced office provider acquired the 2,800 sqm Lakeview building on the site in September 2019 and unveiled the new centre in April of 2021. The building comprises 43 serviced offices, suitable from one to 50 people, as well as a host of business lounges and meeting rooms. The new refurbishment specification also includes air-conditioning, onsite parking and an expansive outdoor courtyard overlooking Centre Park's central lake.



**Pictured above and below:
University of Chester, Time Square**



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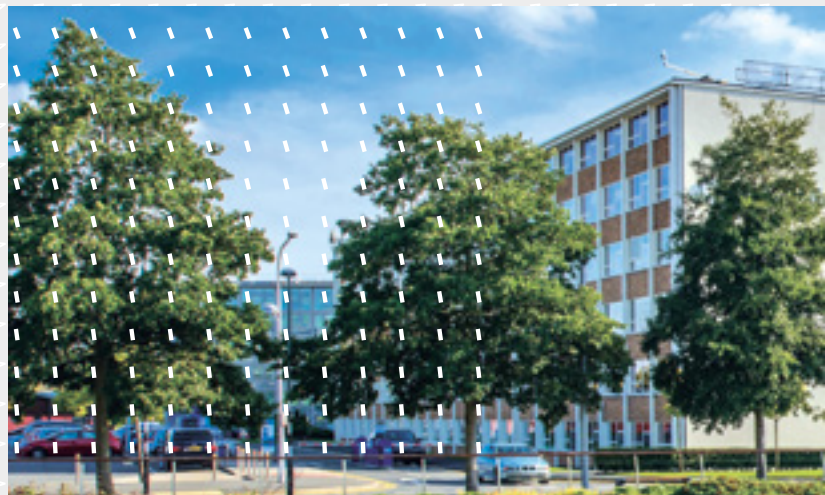
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Property	Vendor/Landlord	Tenant/Purchaser	Size (Sqm)	Rent/Price (£/Sqm)	Lease Term (Years)	Agent(s)
Mersey Bank House	Kew Developments	University of Chester	2,079	£936.47	Freehold	Cushman & Wakefield / Eddisons
Unit 2, Time Square	Warrington Borough Council / Muse Developments	University of Chester	1,403	£201.07	10	BE Group / Cushman & Wakefield
21 Bridge Road, Woolston	Williams Tarr Property Holdings Ltd	Park 1	1,091	£641.75	Freehold	Morgan Williams
3 Clearwater, Lingley Mere	JFW Investments	Alpha Bio Labs	1,005	£166.84	5	BE Group
Fourth Floor (East), Chadwick House, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Integral	990	£156.08	10	BE Group / JLL
Hillcrest, Gappenhall	Cruden Group Administrators	Undisclosed	867	£950.57	Freehold	Avison Young
21 Bold Street	Undisclosed	Private Individual	752	£624.31	Freehold	Morgan Williams
First Floor, 101 Dalton Avenue, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Perkins	696	£188.37	10	BE Group / JLL / Canning O'Neill
Building A, Concentric, Birchwood	CEG	Asics	604	£172.22	5	JLL / Avison Young
First Floor, Stirling House, Mandarin Court, Centre Park	Sterling 2000 Ltd	Solus	483	£134.55	Undisclosed	Morgan Williams
Building 1, Webster Court, Gemini	Coutlands Properties	Alpha Bio Labs	474	£126.58	5	BE Group / Knight Frank
First Floor, 3 The Square, Birchwood	Orbit Developments	Nationwide Platforms	471	£160.92	10	BE Group / Savills
Ground Floor, 210 Cygnet Court, Centre Park	Ram Properties	Bespoke Hotels	465	£150.70	5	BE Group
First Floor, Building C, Concentric, Birchwood	CEG	Tilia Homes	436	£188.37	5	JLL / Avison Young
Ground Floor (Part), 304 Bridgewater Place, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Equity Release Supermarket	426	£226.04	5	BE Group / JLL
1 Empire Court	Empire Court Warrington Ltd	Undisclosed	426	£914.94	Freehold	Morgan Williams
Suite E, Darwin House, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Eurofins Forensics Services	395	£134.55	5	BE Group / JLL

Pictured: Chadwick House, Birchwood Park



Property	Vendor/Landlord	Tenant/Purchaser	Size (Sqm)	Rent/Price (£/Sqm)	Lease Term (Years)	Agent(s)
Ground Floor (Part), The Point, Birchwood	MDS	Balfour Beatty Group	385	£177.61	Undisclosed	Knight Frank / Canning O'Neill
Unit 4, Firecrest Court, Centre Park	Harper House	Undisclosed	374	£134.55	5	Avison Young
Second Floor (Part), Phoenix House, Centre Park	Hillview	Jeremy Benn Associates	369	£179.76	Undisclosed	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / Lambert Smith Hampton
602 Birchwood One Business Park, Birchwood	Seddon Construction	TES 2000	310	£145.31	6	BE Group
830 Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood	Frankel Brow	DMG	305	£172.22	5	BE Group / Knight Frank
Suite 013, Newton House, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Ansaldo Nuclear	303	£133.58	3	BE Group / JLL
Suite 20, St James Business Centre	Langtree	Lignum Recruitment	297	£107.64	Undisclosed	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Ground Floor (Part), 3 The Square, Birchwood	Orbit Developments	M & J Evans Construction	279	£156.08	5	BE Group / Savills
Suite 36-38, Genesis Centre, Birchwood	London and Scottish Properties	UK Power Solutions	259	£156.08	Undisclosed	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / Avison Young
Ground Floor (Part), 4 The Square, Birchwood	Orbit Developments	Venturi Cardiology	230	£160.92	10	BE Group / Savills
First Floor (Part), 4 The Square, Birchwood	Orbit Developments	Opteven	229	£160.92	5	BE Group / Savills
Westbrook House, The Westbrook Centre	Asda	American Golf	215	£53.82	Undisclosed	JLL
1/2 Whitefield Court, Taylor Business Park, Risley	Undisclosed	Private Individual	200	£103.87	Undisclosed	Morgan Williams
Suite C, Darwin House, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Ionic Recruitment	200	£134.55	3	BE Group / JLL
Suite C, Chadwick House, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Science Solutions Recruitment	200	£156.08	3	BE Group / JLL
861/863 Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood	Frankel Brow	HE Simm	200	£161.46	3	BE Group / Knight Frank
9 Suez Street	Private Individual	Seetec Business Technology Centre	200	£75.35	Undisclosed	Morgan Williams





Pictured: Mountpark, Omega

Despite an evident lack of industrial supply resulting in a reduction in take-up in Warrington throughout 2021, a number of new developments offer some hope for the larger logistics sector moving forward. A report from Savills reveals that the region's vacancy rate hit a record-low of 3.09 percent in 2021, with the big-box market currently left with only 0.52 years-worth of supply.

Despite this, Warrington generally continued to perform well, with larger units of 1,000 sqm or more accounting for almost 90 percent of the year's floorspace take-up. A total of 107,132 sqm was transacted, comprising 49 deals above 200 sqm. Whilst this total represents a 33 percent reduction on transacted floorspace in the previous year, and with only two deals reported on Omega in 2021, the total still represents the second-highest total reported within the last six years. This year's take-up also sits just below the decade-long average of 111,500 sqm.

Leasehold transactions once again made up the bulk of deals, with freehold transactions accounting for only eight percent across four deals. Where lease terms were disclosed, landlords achieved an average term of 5.7 years, with almost 19 percent of deals completed on a term of 10 years or above. All of those longer-term transactions were achieved on units of 2,000 sqm or larger, indicating the strong commitment occupiers are willing to undertake in Warrington.

With deals at Omega at a premium, local industrial centres stepped up to satisfy demand, with Woolston, Winwick/Gemini and Birchwood/Risley performing well. Deals at Woolston Grange in particular accounted for 18 percent of floorspace take-up, thanks to larger deals on Units 4 and 21 on Kingsland Grange. Winwick/Gemini accounted for just over 10 percent of floorspace and Birchwood/Risley accounted for nine percent. Indeed, it is the demand for space within this churn of smaller deals, as ever, that continues to underpin Warrington's performance in the regional industrial market.

Values continued to remain strong, with an average rent of £68 per sqm, much in line with last year. The year's highest rent was however a significant £105.92 per sqm achieved at 34 Prestwood Court in Risley, where hygiene company Diversey agreed to a five-year lease on the 204 sqm unit. With a reduced number of freehold deals in 2021, the average value rose to £974.54 per sqm, with the prime value achieved on the sale of a 313 sqm unit on Knutsford Road, where the long leasehold interest was sold.

Looking at the deals themselves, the year's largest was once again to be found at Omega where Unit 2, Mountpark was leased on a 10-year term in June 2021. The unit extends to 18,875 sqm and the deal to Amazon achieved £74.81 per sqm for landlord Mountpark Properties.



...the year's largest deal was once again to be found at Omega where Unit 2, Mountpark was leased on a 10-year term in June 2021.



Pictured above: Mountpark, Omega
Pictured below: Gemini8




Omega's second deal of the year came in October when US parcel delivery company UPS took space at Omega 88, the last high-profile unit on the scheme. The 8,194 sqm warehouse was the only remaining unit situated directly alongside the M62 and was built by Brackley Developments on behalf of US investor Cabot. The company agreed to a substantial 15-year lease at a headline rent of £74.81 per sqm. UPS join a stellar cast of Omega occupiers including market competitors Hermes and Royal Mail, as well as Travis Perkins, Amazon, Domino's Pizza, Gousto, and Hut Group.



The year's second largest deal came at 21 Kingsland Grange in Woolston, where delivery specialist Panther Logistics agreed a 10-year deal to expand its national depot network. With a now greater reliance on home delivery across the country, the 9,764 sqm warehouse is expected to add an additional 1,000 deliveries a day across 40 routes and will service North Wales, Cheshire, and Lancashire.

4 Kingsland Grange is now occupied by biotech firm Life Technologies, after the company signed a 10-year lease in January. The detached unit extends to 6,115 sqm and has been fully refurbished to provide modern warehousing space with two-storey offices. The company joins neighbours including XPO Logistics, Hermes, Iceland, and Fed Ex, centrally located within Woolston Grange. The biotech company took space off Landlord Custodian REIT, the real estate investment trust.

Birchwood Park secured its largest ever letting, with e-commerce fashion retailer Arne Clo striking a 10-year deal on 720 Daten Avenue. The 5,486 sqm unit was let at £64.37 per sqm in a move which now sees Phase Two of the Cavendish Warehouse development fully let. Since its launch only three years ago, Arne Clo has seen quite significant growth and last year's move saw the company relocate from Wigan.



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Property owner Kinaxia Logistics let a new build warehouse at Stretton Distribution Centre in Appleton to toy firm James Galt & Co for a period of five years. The company will now have sole use of the 9,290 sqm warehouse, which sits at the wider premises of Kinaxia subsidiary Mark Thompson Transport. The unit was completed in late-2020, with Kinaxia stating that it intends to invest a further £500,000 in fitting out the new building with lighting, racking, handling equipment, CCTV, and a warehouse management system. James Galt & Co supplies a range of toys and games to nationwide stockists, and as well as its UK distribution operations, it also intends to use the Appleton warehouse to pack items for export outside the UK.

Vehicle repair centre Activate Accident Repair Group signed a 10-year lease on the newly refurbished Gemini Business Park. The 2,300 sqm unit, which underwent a change of use as part of the deal, by switching from retail to light industrial, achieved £75.35 per sqm. Having taken space off Landlord Aberdeen Standard Investments, the new tenant will now operate its latest accident repair centre from the site.

With demand for industrial premises at a high, February saw developer Tungsten Properties secure approval for a 22,866 sqm speculative unit at the former Travis Perkins facility on Appleton Thorn Trading Estate. The company purchased the 4.45 ha site in Q2 2020 and subsequently submitted plans to demolish the existing buildings and construct a single unit dubbed 'Super W' in a bid to also create up to 200 local jobs. The unit completed construction in Q3 2021 and the 22,866 sqm facility now benefits from a double-height entrance foyer, Grade-A office accommodation, 15 metre eaves height, 18 dock levellers and a two-storey office.



18 x units,
11,000 m²

Gemini8 is a £19 million joint venture between Chancerygate and Hines, with construction being undertaken by main contractor Caddick Construction.



Pictured: Gemini8

Construction has also begun on Gemini8 Industrial, a scheme of 18 warehouse units totalling around 11,000 sqm. The £19 million scheme is a joint venture between Chancerygate and Hines, with construction being undertaken by main contractor Caddick Construction. The units will range from around 400 to 1,500 sqm and will be marketed on both a leasehold and freehold basis. Completion is expected in March 2022 and will mark the ultimate completion on the final plot of the Warrington business park. The scheme is also the first new-build, multi-unit industrial and warehousing development in the Warrington area for more than 10 years.

WS50 also completed construction during the year, with the 4,700 sqft unit now available on Lyncastle Road, Appleton. Work finished in May 2021, with Caddick Construction appointed to complete the work on behalf of Mileway, the largest owner of last mile logistics real estate assets in Europe. The single-storey warehouse sits within Warrington South Distribution Park, marking another solution with which Warrington can satisfy the growing nationwide demand for logistics space.

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Property	Vendor/Landlord	Tenant/Purchaser	Size (Sqm)	Rent/Price (£/Sqm)	Lease Term (Years)	Agent(s)
Unit 2, Mountpark Warrington, Omega	Mountpark Properties	Amazon	18,875	74.81	10	CBRE
21 Kingsland Grange, Woolston Grange, Woolston	Canmoor	Panther Warehousing	9,764	59.20	10	B8 Real Estate / Knight Frank
Unit at Stretton Distribution Centre	Kinaxia	James Galt & Co	9,290	Undisclosed	10	Undisclosed
Omega 88, Omega North	Cabot	UPS	8,194	74.81	15	B8 Real Estate / CBRE
Howley 80, Howley	Vengrove	ESS Modular	7,246	69.97	10	CBRE
4 Kingsland Grange, Woolston Grange, Woolston	Custodian REIT	Life Technologies	6,115	Undisclosed	10	Savills
Unit 720, Daten Avenue, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Arne Clo	5,486	64.37	10	JLL
Unit 1/1c, Causeway Park	Warrington Borough Council	Edwards Cheshire Company	5,263	21.53	5	Morgan Williams
WS50, Lyncastle Road, Appleton	Mileway	M Markovitz	4,688	80.73	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Howley Lane, Howley	Vengrove	Renault Trucks	4,180	Undisclosed	Freehold	CBRE
Unit 4b, Stretton Distribution Centre, Stretton	Grammont Group	UK3PL	2,880	40.37	10	Roger Hannah / B8 Real Estate
Unit 1, Gemini Business Park, Europa Boulevard, Gemini	Aberdeen Standard Investments	Activate Accident Repair Group	2,300	75.35	10	JLL
Unit 3, Heaton Court, Birchwood	IO Asset Management	Essens UK	1,676	59.20	3	B8 Real Estate
Unit 8, Bishops Court, Winwick	IO Asset Management	KDM Shopfitting	1,368	61.89	6	B8 Real Estate / Avison Young
Unit 1, Bishops Court, Winwick	IO Asset Management	Randox Laboratories	1,288	57.59	3	B8 Real Estate / Avison Young
Unit 2, Bishops Court, Winwick	IO Asset Management	Randox Laboratories	1,288	59.20	3	B8 Real Estate / Avison Young
Unit 2a, Thelwall Lane Industrial Estate, Thelwall	EP Properties	Grono Lawns	1,254	45.75	Undisclosed	Avison Young
Former Andrew Page, Pitt Street, Bewsey	Undisclosed	Snow (North West)	1,251	359.63	Freehold	B8 Real Estate
Unit 12, Cameron Court, Winwick	Coal Pension Properties	SIG	1,246	67.28	10	JLL / Knight Frank
Unit 14, Cameron Court, Winwick	Coal Pension Properties	Kenji UK	1,106	67.28	5	JLL / Knight Frank
Unit 23, Grosvenor Grange, Woolston	Knight Frank Investors	TLK Solutions	1,031	69.86	5	B8 Real Estate
Unit 4, Cedar Court, Taylor Business Park, Risley	Ribston	Anchor Pumps Company	971	77.18	5	B8 Real Estate
Unit 7, Bowood Court, Winwick	Georgetown Carr	Woods & Co Packaging	942	48.98	5	Roger Hannah
Unit 15, Taurus Park, Gemini Business Park	Undisclosed	Gen Powe	748	56.40	5	B8 Real Estate
Unit 1, Rivington Court, Woolston Grange, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Volker Fitzpatrick	703	85.25	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate

Property	Vendor/Landlord	Tenant/Purchaser	Size (Sqm)	Rent/Price (£/Sqm)	Lease Term (Years)	Agent(s)
Unit 3F, Lyncastle Way, Appleton	Undisclosed	Zinc Real Estate	557	807.30	Freehold	B8 Real Estate
Unit 8, Colville Court, Winwick	Coal Pension Properties	Pro Rail Services	505	79.12	5	JLL / Knight Frank
3e Lyncastle Way, Barleycastle Trading Estate, Appleton	Private Individual	MG Carriers	479	69.32	5	Morgan Williams
Unit C1, Trident Business Park, Birchwood	St Modwen Developments	Eagle Removals	477	53.82	3	BE Group
Unit 38, Gateway 49 Trade Park	Network Space	Stevenswood	437	88.80	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Unit 5, Guardian Street	Private Individual	Performance North West	436	59.63	5	Morgan Williams
Unit 6, Priestley Street	Private Individual	Circuit Planet	370	48.65	5	Morgan Williams
Unit C2, Trident Industrial Estate, Birchwood	St Modwen Developments	AC Speedtech	369	53.82	3	BE Group
Unit 4, Gemini Trade Park, Europa Boulevard, Gemini	Canmoor	Transformation Coaching (Bolton)	369	82.88	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Unit 17, Rufford Court, Woolston Grange, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Logan Airport Maintenance	344	75.35	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
Unit 10, Easter Court, Gemini Business Park	Picton General	Hydraulic Attachment Services	341	91.49	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / CBRE
Unit 11, Easter Court, Gemini Business Park	Lippert Commercial	Twisted Wheel Brew Co	320	78.04	2.5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
280 Knutsford Road	Urban Building Developments	David & Gemma Mercer	313	1756.68	Long Leasehold	Morgan Williams
Unit 18, Melford Court, Woolston Grange, Woolston	4th Industrial	Undisclosed	275	90.85	5	Knight Frank
Unit 15, Rivington Court, Woolston Grange, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Euro Truck and Trailer	279	86.11	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
Unit 16, Rivington Court, Woolston Grange, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Arcon Construction Supplies	279	86.11	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
21 Melford Court, Woolston Grange, Woolston	Knight Frank Investors	Mototow Engineering	275	61.89	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / Knight Frank
Unit 6, Gateway 49 Trade Park	Undisclosed	Bromborough Paints	274	Undisclosed	5	Network Space
Unit 6, Clarendon Court, Winwick	Undisclosed	Ladylove	237	80.73	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
121 Hoyle Street	Morbaine	SJA Upholstery	232	59.20	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit B1, Trident Industrial Estate, Birchwood	St Modwen Developments	Medipaws	205	74.81	3	BE Group
Unit 34, Prestwood Court, Risley	PBM Debury	Diversey	204	105.92	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 6, Howley Quay, Howley	Northern Trust	Optimal Atlantic	202	75.99	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 8b, Trident Industrial Estate, Birchwood	St Modwen Developments	Home Choice Carpets	200	53.82	3	BE Group

The Centre for Cities annual health-check report on the UK's largest economies has this year revealed that Britain's biggest cities have lost almost a year's worth of sales during the Coronavirus pandemic. The Cities Outlook 2022 report showed that Warrington however outperformed most other big cities and towns on high street spending, with a hearty resilience resulting in a loss of week's sales more than four times less than London. This places Warrington as the second best performing of the UK's 62 largest towns or cities, in terms of reduced high street spending.



The report more broadly suggests that Britain's biggest cities have lost almost a year's worth of sales during the pandemic, with lockdowns and a lack of visitors causing a collapse in consumer spending. The Cities Outlook Report 2022 follows on from the High Street Recovery Tracker at the end of 2020, which placed Warrington second in the UK for COVID high street spend recovery.

It is maybe no surprise then that despite national trends, the town's leisure offering increased once more in 2021, with a number of additions adding their name to both town centre and out-of-town locations throughout the year.

Costello's became the latest tenant at Warrington's Time Square, marking another step forwards for the town's £142 million mixed-use scheme. The Costello family, who own Costello's bars, along with micro-breweries, Lymm brewery and Dunham Massey Brewing Company, will bring their craft ales to the new 3,562 sqft unit.

Newtons Restaurant and Bar also opened alongside Gravity at Time Square. The interactive and social venue will serve cocktails alongside a New York-themed menu. The menu will complement the surrounding design ethos, which also includes booth seating and an augmented-reality Digital Dart zone. The new addition is part of the Gravity brand, which has grown exponentially across the UK since its inception six years ago.

Following the closure of Showbar nightclub in the town centre, Trilogy opened its doors in September. The club has been completely redesigned by new owners Epic Bars to offer night-owl patrons three levels of entertainment, complete with new lighting, sound equipment and VIP booths to reserve. The venue, which joins Epic Bars' three other recent openings across the country, can host up to 1,300 people.

Rudy's Neapolitan Pizza, one of Manchester's most revered pizzerias, has opened a seventh site, in Stockton Heath. Taking over the former Barclays Bank building on 19 Walton Street, the site joins the company's existing premises in Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Birmingham. Rudy's, which is backed by Manchester's Mission Mars hospitality group, has expanded rapidly since founders Jim and Kate Wilson opened a site in the Ancoats area of Manchester in 2015.

Elsewhere a number of schemes moved forward in 2021, with the town's hotel offering set to improve in the coming years, providing much needed additions to the town's expansive outlook.

Plans have been approved for a 126-bedroom hotel, submitted by Falconer Chester Hall and real estate firm Clifford Christian Estates, which would see construction take place on a 0.4 ha site on the edge of Centre Park. The site, which is currently being used as a surface level car park off Slutchers Lane, will be the new home of the seven-storey development close to Warrington Bank Quay train station, benefitting from the recently completed Centre Park Link Road. Plans also include a 76-space car park.

Pictured opposite: Proposed Centre Park Hotel
Pictured below: Centre Park Link (CPL)



retail & leisure



Within the town centre, the building on Winwick Street which was originally home to the Parrs Banking Company in 1788, started conversion into a hotel. Developer YP Group have already created a coffee shop and events space on the ground floor of the building. Plans were approved for the conversion of the former Natwest bank in 2020. This will see a full redevelopment into a hotel featuring a reception, guests' lounge, and lobby on the ground floor. The hotel rooms will be located on the first and second floors on the Grade-II listed building. The property was built in 1877 and has been vacant since 2015, when NatWest closed down the branch.

Construction has also begun on transforming the former post office building on Palmyra Square in the town centre. The £3.2 million redevelopment being led by Priestley Construction, will see the upper floors of the Grade-II listed building converted into 21 high-specification apartments for short-term rent. Completion is expected in mid-2022 on the Aparthotel development, which will also boast a full retention and refurbishment of the building's original features.

Activity on the recreation front also picked up last year, with some exciting developments to Warrington's public spaces and sports facilities.

Ryland's FC have had planning approval for improvements to its home ground on Gorse Lane. The development includes three proposed covered seated stands to the east and west of the football pitch, as well as new changing rooms behind the East Stand. These will replace existing temporary units at Rylands Recreation Club and will provide a positive step forward for the team who play in the North West Counties League Premier Division.

The Bewsey & Dallam Community Hub opened in November, providing vital leisure, library, and community facilities to the area. Operated by Livewire, the new £4.3 million facility on Longshaw Street comprises a state-of-the-art gym, multi-use studio and swimming pool, alongside library facilities and other community spaces for hub users. The Community Hub is a project originally developed through the Delivering Wellbeing in Bewsey and Dallam programme, before being adopted as a priority project in the Central 6 Masterplan. The Council and other partners, including Torus, provided the necessary capital investment, along with a grant awarded by Sport England.



Pictured above and below: Bewsey & Dallam Hub



Baker Mallett Supporting the Warrington vision



2021 saw a property market already in flux due to the ongoing pandemic see further distortion due to the stamp duty holiday. With added activity due to an increased adoption of hybrid working, city and town markets experienced a resurgence as the UK recorded an annual house price growth of 10 percent.



Research by Knight Frank highlighted how HMRC data for last year showed a 62 percent drop in sales in July compared with June, the month that the maximum stamp duty saving of £15,000 ended, with transactions in June 2021 recorded as the highest for a single month since 2005. This helped lead to an annual house price growth of 10 percent, in November 2021. This level of growth highlights competitive mortgage rates and tight supply, both of which are suggested to reverse moving forward into 2022.

Table 1 details residential sales in Warrington throughout 2021. Data from Zoopla indicates that 2,100 sales were completed within the last 12 months, a huge 58 percent uplift on the total reported on the site last year. 2021 also saw a rise in the average sale price achieved in the town, up 15 percent to £249,778.

As ever, semi-detached houses accounted for the majority of all sales during this period (39 percent), achieving an average price of £222,074. Detached houses (29 percent) and terraced houses (25 percent) represented the same proportion of sales that were recorded for the previous years, albeit at around a 66 percent overall uplift.

Warrington House Sales (Last 12 months)

House Type	Sales	Difference to 2020 (+/-%)	Average Price (£)	Difference to 2020 (+/-%)
Detached	616	+67%	384,301	+15%
Semi-Detached	828	+44%	222,074	+14%
Terraced	527	+66%	384,301	+15%
Flats	129	+82%	222,074	+14%
Total	2,100	+58%	-	-

Source: Zoopla (as of 2nd February 2022)



Pictured above: Sycamore, Great Sankey

Warrington Housing Completions (2020/21)

Local Area	No. of Schemes	No. of Completions
Great Sankey North & Whittle Hall	7	174
Poulton North	2	103
Bewsey & Whitecross	8	95
Appleton	3	71
Westbrook	2	42
Lymm North & Thelwall	5	27
Grappenhall	1	22
Lymm South	7	21
Stockton Heath	2	11
Great Sankey South	1	10
Culcheth, Glazebury & Croft	4	8
Penketh & Cuerdley	1	6
Latchford West	1	2
Rixton & Woolston	1	1
Fairfield & Howley	1	1
Chapelford & Old Hall	1	1
Total	47	595

Source: Warrington Borough Council (2022)

The annual housing data supplied by Warrington Borough Council, compiled in Table 2, demonstrated that a total of 595 homes were completed in the 2020/21 reporting period of which 113 were affordable. The figures indicate an uplift of 6.4 percent on the number of completions reported in 2019/20.

Activity within the Omega Zone certainly helped boost the figures, meaning that once again the local area with the most activity was Great Sankey North & Whittle Hall, where 174 completions were reported across seven schemes. Again, this delivery was primarily driven by activity within schemes by Miller Homes, Redrow Homes and Taylor Wimpey, which accounted for 115 completions, or just over 19 percent of all completions in the Borough.

The former Bayleaf Restaurant site in Poulton North saw the completion of 97 extra care apartments, within a new four-storey facility. The build was completed in December 2020 by Anwyl Homes and was the first project awarded on the new JV North framework, a consortium of major social housing associations across the North of England. The 10,000 sqm site encompasses a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments, alongside supplementary facilities including a hair salon, bowling green and bistro.

residential

Elsewhere, building work has started on a £28 million scheme to create 161 new, affordable homes at two former school sites. The two new developments are being built on the former Fox Wood Special School site in Birchwood, and the former Sycamore Lane Community Primary School site in Great Sankey. The schemes are being developed by Incrementum Housing Development Company Ltd, set up and owned by the Council. The new housing company was successful in securing £2.2 million of local authority accelerated construction funding from Homes England, and a further £1.2million repayment funding has been secured via Ofgem's renewable heat incentive scheme. The first houses were handed over in November 2021, with both schemes set to be completed in October 2022.

July 2021 saw construction begin on 145 homes at Castle Green Homes' new Willow Fields development on Omega, the largest mixed-use development in the North West. The 8.5 ha site will deliver two-, three- and four-bed houses. The land acquired from Omega Warrington and Homes England is set to be transformed into a scheme including commercial space, homes, a new primary school and plans for shopping and leisure facilities, a care home, hotel, and a 14 ha park. The Willow Fields development will also include public open space and a children's play area.

Plans to demolish the Bank House office building and further construct a ten-storey apartment block in its place have been approved. The existing building on the corner of Bank Street and Mersey Street is to make way for the new development, which will contain 30 one-bed and 50 two-bed units. Plans also include a rooftop amenity space, with the ground floor to be retained for commercial use, including the potential for retail, restaurant, or bar space. The Council approved the plans, which also include four parking spaces and a proposal from architect Falconer Chester Hall to reserve 20 further spaces for residents in the nearby Time Square multi-storey car park.

Countryside has also secured permission to build more than 500 homes close to the town centre. Previously known as Spectra Park, the 15 ha project, now named Rivers Edge, will comprise 413 two-, three- and four-bed houses and 100 apartments. The site is divided by the £20 million Centre Park Link Road, with the northern half previously occupied largely by Spectra Packaging and the southern side as a driving range. As part of its Section 106 agreement with the Council, Countryside has pledged to invest £100,000 in local health services and contribute £300,000 towards transport and education.

Pictured right and opposite: Sycamore, Great Sankey



Following the approval of outline planning consent in March 2019 on the Bevan Mews housing development, the Council is now seeking approval to dispose of the land. The approved plans, which are in line with the regeneration masterplan for the Southern Gateway area, include 160 homes on the former Warrington Wolves stadium. The vision for the Southern Gateway, as set out in the masterplan, is to deliver the long-standing ambition of regeneration around Old Road and the now demolished Rugby League stadium. It also seeks to provide new commercial and residential developments adjoining the River Mersey waterfront, as well as enhance the key strategic route of Wilderspool Causeway and Knutsford Road.

▲10%
annual growth
in house prices

2,100
sales
completed

£249,778 **15%**
average sale price, up 15 percent

2021 proportion of sales



looking forward

The Annual Property Review is always a good opportunity to take stock, both looking backwards over what has happened but inevitably to look forward and see where the potential sits. So, in view of how long some of the projects and deals take to deliver perhaps a look forward over a number of years might be more appropriate than just one or two. Perhaps it might be worth looking forward – 10 years.



That may seem a fanciful thing to do in the times we currently find ourselves in; Brexit, Covid and war do not really make for stable long term investment conditions, but the 10 year horizon comes around quickly. Warrington is also on the cusp of a major turning point in its regeneration, where we turn from the start of regeneration to the acceleration of regeneration and a look at the more strategic way forward is probably worthwhile.

Warrington & Co often talk about Time Square, Stadium Quarter and Southern Gateway and these projects are still delivering. The Steel Works (formerly known as John Street) development is back up and running and construction progressing well to open early next year, the Youth Zone is in the process of being taken into operational use and Academy Way is shortly to complete. In helping the delivery of these, Warrington & Co are constantly involved in discussions with partners and investors, and despite the turmoil of the recent couple of years the conversation about investment in Warrington has evolved from one about whether an investment was viable, with an unproven market, to one of how best to invest in the town. This question comes from a range of investors, from our partners in Homes England, the Local Enterprise Partnership, residential developers in Countryside and Rothschild and Torus.

The Annual Property Review demonstrates that Warrington has a strong property market across all sectors and the level of activity has reflected this. It is against this background that I think a forward look over 10 years is justified and for that we have to consider for the major transformational influences that we already know about, but whose impacts we are yet to fully understand.

Integrated Rail Plan

In terms of external influences, I think the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) will be one of the largest. The IRP states that, “On Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), we will build a new high speed line between Warrington, Manchester and Yorkshire”. The IRP states that this new line will connect HS2 with the centre of Warrington with the “reinstatement of Warrington Bank Quay low level station”

This is positive news for Cheshire and Warrington – trains could connect Warrington to Leeds in 45 minutes and London to Liverpool HS2 services would route via Warrington Bank Quay low level station. NPR services across the north of England would all serve Warrington. Indeed, the IRP states that “there is a strong business case for serving Warrington, in terms of both conventional transport appraisal and supporting economic growth.”



Pictured: Warrington Youth Zone

There is of course massive potential for this to deliver significant development around Bank Quay station and the surrounding areas which includes significant parts of the town centre and the former Unilever site. Many will dismiss the IRP as being too far away to be concerned about just yet, but it has a 10 year time horizon, the same time as it took to take Time Square to develop from thought to completion. If we are to fully capture the potential that IRP can bring, we need to be able to demonstrate a coherent and thought out plan for doing so to Government and investors alike.

Local Plan

As with any Local Plan, the effects will be felt by all sectors of business for at least the 10 years and therefore will be a major influence on development. The Local Plan quite rightly goes through a diligent approval process with voices both for and against and its ultimate approval sets the landscape for what development will happen and where, and gives greater certainty over development. Although in advance of the Local Plan, we have recently seen with the Six 56 development in south Warrington a desire to keep Warrington moving forward and deliver the framework for development that is needed to drive employment.

Net Zero

The Electric Bus programme is interesting in itself for all the positive impacts it has on environment and equality. But it is just one element of the drive to reduce energy usage and particularly fossil fuel derived energy usage across the Borough. From the development of solar farms to the retrofitting of double glazing and insulation to our worst performing homes through the Green Homes Grant programme, the focus on Net Zero development will become even sharper, given the recent volatility on energy pricing. Warrington is well placed to capture this in the next 10 years. The building blocks for this are being set now, but the integration of all to maximise each component to their best effect, in conjunction with the others is what needs the long term perspective. The delivery of an electric bus network only works if you can access the bus easily and this depends on the First & Last Mile project. This in turn needs to work with the regeneration of town centre sites and how we integrate this with emerging plans for sites such as Bank Quay.



Pictured: Warrington Youth Zone

One thing we know about looking into the future is that the reality will be different to what we envisaged – but always influenced by what was predicted and Warrington Means Business is a case in point.

What is currently being delivered is different to what was first set down nearly 10 years ago but we would not have the delivery of schemes such as the Steel Works and Academy Street without that initial vision. The proposals for New Town House, Quattro and Cockhedge diverge from the original plan in height and mass and have a greater focus on the development of communities, but would not have come about without the original plan. It is therefore imperative that Warrington Means Business takes these differing elements and puts them into one place in a coherent manner so that we can tell our story and give confidence to all that not only is Warrington a place to invest but it has sufficient clarity in doing so – public and private alike.

We rewrite Warrington Means Business every few years, when we know that reality has diverged from the original vision. Next year will be 10 years since the first Warrington Means Business document was written and we will look to undertake a new version of this key strategy in 2023, which will draw on many of the themes originally set, but with greater understanding of what is right for Warrington, based on the hard experience of the past 10 years and the emerging influences.

The question last year was what else we needed to move forward. With the market resilience shown in the Annual Property Review together with the opportunities that open up from the Integrated Rail Plan, Local Plan and the drive for Net Zero development I think the question now is how we move forward – not if there is anything to stop us.

So looking back to last year I did highlight the commitment and teamwork that we have with our partners across Warrington as being the key ingredient. It does not seem to matter if the task is one of helping a small business find the right talent or dealing with the government and the new funding routes. One continuous theme emerges, I think typified by the energy that underpinned the Town Deal programme; which is a real desire to see Warrington move forward and that I don't think will ever change after one year or after ten.

John Laverick
Managing Director, Warrington & Co.



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BE Group has been the proud author of the Warrington Annual Property Review for 24 years.

BE Group is a property agency, regeneration and planning consultancy and has over 35 years' experience of working in the Warrington commercial property market. This report has been carefully prepared, however it is for general guidance only and Warrington Borough Council, Warrington & Co. and BE Group cannot guarantee that there are no errors or omissions.

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