

Choose Chester





Vibrant history, dynamic future

Chester is a unique location which combines a rich historical and cultural heritage with a vibrant economy, modern infrastructure and an innovative enterprise community.

The city offers excellent living standards, a strong labour market, impressive productivity rates, high-level education and skills achievements as well as excellent connectivity which have all helped to create a high quality workforce for Chester-based employers.

Against this background, it is no surprise that Chester is part of a sub-region that delivers economic output per capita ahead of many of its neighbours.

One eighth of the North West population lives in Cheshire and Warrington, but the area delivers one sixth of its economic output.

GVA in the sub-region is also 24 per cent above the North West average and nine per cent above the national figure.

Chester is particularly renowned for its broad spectrum of financial services businesses, focused on Chester Business Park. In fact, 84% of the local working population are employed in service and finance sector roles, working for

leading names such as MBNA, M&S Financial Services and Alliance & Leicester.

But cast the net a little wider and the economy of Chester and its hinterland also has strengths in energy, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, automotive, manufacturing, food and drink, professional services and the creative industries.

In addition to these economic advantages, Chester also has a remarkable sense of place defined by its rich archaeology, architecture, historic context and environment providing some of the best examples of Roman architecture in Europe.

Chester attracts eight million visitors a year to the city, generating an annual tourism and visitor spend of £800 million, which supports one in ten local jobs.

Recent hotel investments like the Abode boutique hotel, Travelodge Chester Central and Delamere Street plus Doubletree by Hilton

Chester Hotel, and a major extension to the Queen Hotel, are further evidence of the ongoing strength of the visitor economy.

Even with the city's many advantages for residents and businesses, Chester continues to raise its ambition levels.

Regeneration body Chester Renaissance has developed an ambitious One City Plan, a single strategy that sets out the overarching vision and direction of travel for Chester for the next 15 years.



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The main business sectors in and around the centre of Chester are financial services, tourism, retail and public administration.

Choose to invest

1,000

new jobs created in the city via the Global Technology Innovation Centre

Among the many successful financial services companies in the area are MBNA, which set up its European headquarters in Chester nearly 20 years ago, as did M&S Money, now part of HSBC.

Moneysupermarket.com, the first personal and intermediary online brokering service in the UK, was also developed and launched from a base in Chester. It is now located just seven miles away in Ewloe.

More recently, Bank of America committed to create 1,000 new jobs

1/8th

of the North West population lives in Cheshire and Warrington

in the city through the development of its Global Technology Innovation Centre, while other leading financial names in the area include the Funding Corporation, Lloyds Banking Group and Equity.

Many of these firms are based at Chester Business Park, recognised as a nationally important financial services hub by the Association of British Insurers.

The retail sector is alive and thriving. Chester city centre is well known for providing an outstanding

6,000

people employed manufacturing aircraft wings

shopping experience centred on The Rows – a historic raised gallery above street level, which dates from medieval times. Current occupiers of The Rows include a mix of large multinational and national high street names, as well as a number of specialist independent traders. Many other leading retailers can be found in the prestigious Grosvenor Shopping Centre and there are a number of large retail developments in and around the city - including Deva Retail Centre, Chester Retail Park and Greyhound Retail Park – and the country's largest retail outlet



9%

above the national average for VGA

village is located just a few miles away at Cheshire Oaks in Ellesmere Port.

Knowledge-based companies also have a strong presence in the area, especially technical and engineering services and scientific research operations.

Capenhurst, six miles from Chester, is the home of an outstanding energy cluster which includes both EA Technology and Urenco. A recent report named Urenco the most profitable company in the North West.



8 million

visitors to the city each year

Meanwhile Ellesmere Port, seven miles to the north of Chester, is another important business location with a proud industrial heritage and a number of leading international names like GM Vauxhall and Essar Energy.

Ellesmere Port also provides Chester with an important link to the emerging plans to create a Liverpool SuperPort. This initiative will integrate the strengths of the region's ports, airport and freight communities located at the Port of Liverpool, Liverpool John Lennon



84%

of the local population work in the service and financial sectors

Airport and the Manchester Ship Canal.

Chester's location provides further useful economic links north to Liverpool and west into North Wales. For example, Broughton is home to the large Airbus factory where 6,000 people are employed manufacturing aircraft wings, and the headquarters of the Iceland frozen food company is also located nearby at Deeside.



Chester's wide range of business parks and development sites provide choice and flexibility which enable the town to meet the needs of all types of businesses.

Choose a prestigious base



Key business locations in Chester include:

Chester Business Park

One of the North West's largest and most prestigious office parks, located in beautiful countryside just off the A55 Expressway, two miles from Chester City Centre. The park has become home to a number of major companies looking to set up UK and European headquarters and call centres. Major occupiers include MBNA, M&S Money, Bristol Myers Squibb, GB Group plc, the Funding Corporation and Lloyds Banking Group.

Chester West Employment Park

A 34-hectare greenfield site which successfully combines a range of office, commercial and light industrial activities.

The park is located just one mile from Chester city centre with convenient access to the road and rail network.

Major occupiers include B&S Group, Pickfords, Calder Industrial Materials, Royal Mail and Chester and District Housing Trust.

Bell Meadow Business Park

A prestigious office development in a rural setting located a short distance from the A55 Expressway. The development combines traditional exteriors and contemporary interiors with an extensive programme of landscaping and planting.

Major occupiers include Northgate Information Solutions, Kessler Business Solutions, Wright Medical UK and Mercury Search and Selection.

Sealand Industrial Estate

A well-established industrial development one mile to the south west of Chester city centre in an area close to the Greyhound Retail Park that has been the focus of non-food retail development in recent years.

Major occupiers include Adeva NW, Fletcher Langley and Screwfix

Chester Gates

A high quality development of office, warehouse, distribution and storage units at Capenhurst, close to junction 16 of the M56 motorway. The scheme benefits from excellent links to rail, freight, port and airport facilities.

Major occupiers include BFI Innovations, ROK, Booker Cash and Carry, Costco, Deva Manufacturing Services and the Alexander Beard Group.

Capenhurst Technology Park

Which offers high quality office, laboratory, warehouse and production units in a parkland setting bordering Urenco's Cheshire site.

Major occupiers include EA Technology, C-Tech Innovation, Intertek and the Energetix Group.



Chester office rents are currently in the region of £10-£14 per sq ft, rising to £18-£20 per sq ft for grade A property of a BREEAM excellent or above standard. This compares well with other areas and represents very good value for money.



The Chester Renaissance One City Plan and brand vision are designed to enhance the reputation of the city as a wonderful place in which to live, work, learn, invest and visit.

Choose a city with a great future



The programme will also generate a new pride in Chester, improve business performance, attract new investment and shape the city for future generations.



Key initiatives supported by Chester Renaissance include:

- Production of the **One City Plan**, a single action-orientated strategy that will co-ordinate and drive a programme of public and private sector investment and development activity in Chester city centre over the next 15 years.

This is seen as a hugely exciting opportunity to define Chester's ambition and to draw together a number of initiatives, projects and ideas into one overarching vision for the city.



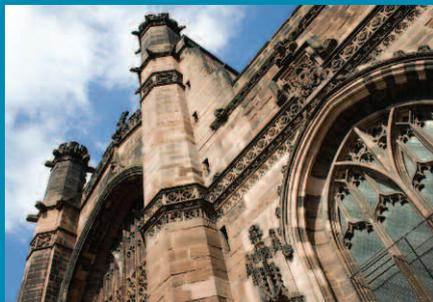
- An exciting new development will see a major transformation scheme breath new life into Chester's retail area that will include quality public realm, open spaces and public squares as well as food and leisure facilities, anchored by a key national retailer.

This scheme will rejuvenate almost a quarter of the city space, bringing vibrancy and vitality to the area.



- **HQ**, a mixed-use development on the site of the former Cheshire Constabulary headquarters which has 80,000 sq ft of office space, a luxury Abode boutique hotel, restaurants and 35 apartments.

- **Town Hall and public realm improvement works** - a programme of refurbishment and repairs to restore the imposing Town Hall to its former glory and enhance footpaths and street furniture whilst improving accessibility around the city.



- **Chester's Roman Amphitheatre** - improvements to the interpretation and signage at this site to tell more of the story of a unique attraction which is of international importance.

- **Cathedral Quarter** - a major project to plan the future of the area around the cathedral which contains many of Chester's finest buildings and open spaces but is currently underused by both residents and visitors.



- **Chester walls and rows** - a programme of improvements to enhance the walls and rows which are distinctive and internationally recognised features of the city.

- **Natural Vision** - developing Chester Zoo to make it the largest animal, conservation and leisure attraction of its type in Europe. Key features of the plan include the creation of a unique African-themed domed ecosystem, a conservation college and a new on-site hotel.



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Choose a city with new ideas



- **Railands and Chester Station Gateway** - a major programme of investment to regenerate the railway station, creating a key gateway into the city and enhancing other historically important buildings along Brook Street and City Road.

- **Chester Central Business Quarter** - a major scheme to transform the area east and south of the railway station into a new commercial quarter creating 500,000 sq ft of new office space and around 1,100 new jobs.



- **Theatre development** – a £43 million project to transform the art deco former Odeon Cinema on Northgate Street into a new theatre for the city.

- **Business initiatives** - including Chester City Management and Chester Against Business Crime.



84%

of the local
population work in
the service and
financial sectors





Chester is truly accessible to all parts of the UK, with 15 million people and a third of British industry within one hour's drive.

Choose a great location

Travel times

London	2 hours
Liverpool	25 minutes
Manchester	40 minutes
Edinburgh	3 hours
Cardiff	2.5 hours



European destinations are also within easy reach - Brussels is just 4 hours 30 minutes away, for example - which means that virtually every UK and European city can be visited on business with a return on the same day.

Planned future investment in the UK's transport network, such as the HS2 high speed rail link and the second Mersey crossing, will further strengthen Chester's connectivity.



A key factor in these high quality transport links is Chester's proximity to the M53 and M56 motorways which provides the city with convenient access to the national motorway network, in particular the M6 north-south corridor and the M62 east-west route.

Chester Railway Station, meanwhile, is one of the busiest and most influential rail hubs in the region with an hourly service to London. More than 3.1 million people used the station in 2011.



Opportunities for international travel and trade from Chester are enhanced by the city's proximity to two major airports.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport and Manchester Airport - the UK's busiest outside London - have a wide range of flights to destinations throughout Europe and beyond, including the important international aviation hub of Amsterdam. The flight time to London's main airports from Manchester is just 55 minutes.



Chester also has its own airport for private, chartered and corporate flights at nearby Hawarden.

Businesses in the city also have access to good quality maritime trade links via the Port of Liverpool and the Manchester Ship Canal. Together these ports handle 15,000 ship movements and more than 40 million tonnes of cargo a year.

Chester's transport links will be further enhanced by the emerging plans for a Liverpool SuperPort, integrating the strengths of the local port, airport and freight communities.



40 minutes

travel time to
Manchester



Chester's location offers businesses access to a huge workforce. There are 850,000 people of working age within a 30-minute drive time of the city, 240,000 of them experienced in senior, management or professional roles.

Choose from a skilled workforce

The proportion of Chester residents qualified to NVQ Level 4 and above is 39.6 per cent, well above the North West average of 27 per cent and the national figure of 29.6 per cent. School examination successes consistently outstrip national results.

High skills levels provide a strong labour market and wage rates in Chester remain in line with the North West average, and are therefore lower than for the UK as a whole.

For residents and businesses, education and training facilities in and around the city are first class and include the University of Chester, West Cheshire College, Mid Cheshire College, South Cheshire College, Warrington Collegiate, Manchester Metropolitan University Crewe Campus, Chester College of Law and Reaseheath Agricultural College. Deeside College and Wirral Metropolitan College are also within easy reach.

A number of these facilities have been assessed as 'outstanding' by Ofsted and recent investment in new educational projects in Cheshire has included three new FE college

campuses in Chester, Ellesmere Port and Winsford, two new academy schools and the opening of the University of Chester's Riverside Innovation Centre.

Chester University is in fact one of the oldest higher education institutions in the country, having been established in 1839. Its two campuses - the other is in Warrington - are highly regarded in a number of subject areas including teacher training, management, media studies and IT.

A recent survey revealed that more than 75 percent of University of Chester graduates found employment within six months of graduation - a much higher proportion than many other universities in the region.

Chester also benefits from being close to the world-class universities of Liverpool and Manchester, which are centres of research excellence in more than 20 subjects.

50,000 students a year graduate from universities across the North West as a whole, including 31,000 science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates.

A number of Cheshire and Warrington's educational establishments and other training providers also offer a range of bespoke programmes specifically linked to strengths in the local economy, for example retail, logistics and food.



50,000

students a year graduate from universities across the North West as a whole.





Chester is a highly desirable place to live and work, a uniquely attractive city with stunning countryside and coastline just a few miles away.

Choose a great place to live

28

sites of special scientific interest

Unsurprisingly therefore, the quality of life of people living in the area is high (92 per cent satisfaction in a survey by the Halifax Building Society) and above the national average.

One reason for this is the affordable housing in and around Chester. A wide range of property is available in urban, suburban and rural settings, from starter homes for young couples to luxury executive dwellings, all at a price below the national average.

Education facilities in the area are also excellent, with a choice of high-performing independent and state schools. Key stage and public examination results achieved by local pupils consistently outstrip the national average.

4,000ha

of woodland including Delamere Forest

Add to this the Roman walls and amphitheatre, a medieval castle and stunning cathedral, the oldest operational racecourse in the country and the UK's number one wildlife attraction, Chester Zoo, and it's clear why the city scores so highly as a location.

In addition, the waterfronts of the River Dee and the Shropshire Union Canal run right through the centre of Chester, offering a beautiful natural environment in the heart of a vibrant urban location.

West Cheshire also has an extensive rural area accounting for more than 85 per cent of local land, with 40 per cent of the population living in this rural environment.

40%

of the local population living in rural areas

There are also a large number of environmental assets, including 28 sites of Special Scientific Interest, such as the River Dee and nearly 4,000 ha of woodland, including Delamere Forest. The North Wales coast is easily accessible, with its beautiful beaches and countryside.

Meanwhile, Chester city centre is well known for providing an outstanding shopping experience focused on its historic two-tier rows. The outlets are a mix of large multinational and national high street names, as well as a number of specialist independent traders.





Chester residents have many leading visitor attractions on their doorstep from the historic features in the Roman walled city to Chester Zoo.

Choose a city with a heart

Others within easy reach include the National Waterways Museum and Blue Planet Aquarium at Ellesmere Port, Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre and Gulliver's World at Warrington. Plus there are the many stately homes and historic properties and gardens in the area including Ness Botanic Gardens, Tatton Park, Dunham Massey Hall, Arley Hall, Cholmondeley Castle, Norton Priory, Little Moreton Hall and Port Sunlight Village.



Residents have easy access to a number of Cheshire's high-profile events including Chester Food, Drink and Lifestyle Festival, Chester Literature Festival, Chestival, the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park, Cheshire County Show, the Pageant of Power at Cholmondeley Castle and the Thundersprint at Northwich.

In addition to the excellent retail facilities to be found in Chester city centre, nearby Ellesmere Port is home to the country's largest retail outlet village, Cheshire Oaks, and the adjacent Coliseum Leisure Park. A new flagship



Marks & Spencer store is being built in the town, the retail giant's largest outside London.

Elsewhere, Chester has a lot to offer sports enthusiasts, whether they're playing or spectating.

For example, Cheshire as a whole has the second highest sporting participation rate in England, with hundreds of clubs and facilities to cater for every taste, from basketball to boxing and from fencing to football.



Golfers are particularly well catered for. As England's Golf Coast, the North West offers some of the most naturally challenging courses in the country.

Chester has its own racecourse which hosts a superb season of first class racing, show jumping and polo in the heart of the historic city.

Motor racing fans, meanwhile, can head to the Oulton Park circuit for a number of major car and bike events each year.

Football enthusiasts are well catered for, with Premiership



football less than an hour away in Liverpool and Manchester.

There is also topflight rugby in the area with both codes well represented. Warrington Wolves fly the league flag, while Sale Sharks are the leading rugby union team.

As well as the wealth of local cultural activities on offer in Chester, residents can head to Liverpool and Manchester for top-flight theatre and concerts and many of the North West's leading museums and galleries.



25 minutes

travel time to
Liverpool

For further information on how we can help please contact the business location service on:

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Cheshire West
and Chester



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