

CITY STATUS – BENEFITS FOR WREXHAM

Report prepared by Owen Davies Consulting – November 2021

This statement is intended to provide a short summary of the benefits Wrexham could expect from any award of city status. It is based on the research undertaken so far and focuses on what the benefits will be for the residents and communities of Wrexham County Borough.

For Wrexham to be awarded city status as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Honours would be a recognition and celebration of what the County Borough has achieved through its history, people, institutions and places. It would also widely recognise Wrexham's significant contributions to society and cultural infrastructure in Wales, the UK and the World. And whilst being granted city status is not about what might happen in the future, changing the name or a guarantee of economic growth, it has been shown elsewhere in towns that became cities how they used their newfound status to increase economic opportunities and improve the well-being of the communities that live there.

City status for Wrexham would be one of the many tools at our disposal to strengthen the well-being, identity and pride in the County Borough and support the delivery of several place making strategies directed at promoting Wrexham's community on a regional and national scale. Place making for Wrexham is an overarching idea for improving our neighbourhoods, villages, town and region and strengthening the connection between people and the places they share and paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, social and economic identities that define Wrexham and support its ongoing growth.

Wrexham's national growth zone status and unlocking the potential of the Mersey Dee city region as well as the North Wales Growth Deal, Levelling Up Fund and other government funded programmes will help deliver our ambitions for the County Borough. Wrexham's recent shortlisting for City of Culture is another potential tool available to strengthen the cultural identity and promote Wrexham and our community on a national and international level. The continuing work of public service partners in taking forward our future well-being strategy is important for improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of our communities.

Working alongside all these place making strategies, the award of city status would help make Wrexham as good as it can be in supporting the aspirations, health and well-being of all people, businesses and institutions. Following the experience of towns like Wrexham that have also become a city, the 10 key opportunities that 'Wrexham as a city' will provide include strengthening:

1. people's increased sense of pride in where they live, work and/or spend leisure time which in turn has potential health and economic benefits
2. the platform to promote Wrexham and raise ambitions locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
3. opportunities for anchor institutions, economic clusters, and sectors to raise their profile and increase inward investment e.g., the University and its opportunity to attract students and research programmes
4. the number of skilled and ambitious students, employees and investors attracted to Wrexham e.g., the Hospital and its opportunity to attract skilled medical professionals

5. opportunities for the community, infrastructure, and services to grow and develop more sustainably
6. the focus for future branding campaigns and the wider marketing of Wrexham
7. the awareness of the history, heritage, identity, culture and language of Wrexham that attracts more visitors which increases money spent in local businesses and communities
8. the potential to attract major projects that might not otherwise be secured as a town
9. the ability to collaborate with Welsh and UK cities and Governments on specific urban and city projects
10. increased expectations of 'place making' that in turn creates more vibrant places to live, work, and invest