

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 6th October, 2023 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Doug Kinsman (Chair), Simon Yates (Vice Chair), Tony Davison, Jasbir Dhesi, Guy Kilminster, Councillor Jill Rhodes, Councillor Nick Mannion, Paul Colman, Rick Carter, Sally Hepton, Dr Kieran Mullan MP

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Lindsay Lewis, Pete Turner, Abigail Thorley, Martin Wood

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place
Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Chris Gibbs, Media Officer
Chris Jackson, Senior Regeneration Officer
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Butler, John Adlen, Jez Goodman and Rhiannon Hilton.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

There were no new or updated Declarations of Interest, other than those already on file.

40 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the virtual meeting held on 1 September 2023 be approved as a correct record. The chair went through a list of action from the previous virtual meeting and updated members on the status of each action accordingly.

41 TOWNS FUND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (1 HOUR 30 MINUTES)

The board received updates from Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development and individual project sponsors. The government's Discovery Programme had been set up to assist with support, consultation and guidance to the Towns Fund projects and they would be reviewing the projects based on their original costings.

Flag Lane Baths – Due to the heritage nature of the building, a concrete survey would be undertaken, which could highlight compromises in the building structure, however the initial structural survey of the building was completed satisfactorily.

Cumberland Arena – Planning applications and contracts were in place, and work was due to start on site shortly. There had been a request for further funding for additional improvements to the changing rooms as there were several sports groups in the immediate area which could all benefit from sharing resources.

Mill Street Corridor – A value engineering exercise was being undertaken to review costs. Following a change to the street lighting proposal A planning application would be submitted shortly.

Warm and Healthy Homes – The level of detail, key milestones and identified risks were reassuring. The government had made a number of changes to its green policies recently, but the project leads did not believe the project would be impacted.

History Centre Public Realm – This was part of a larger project including the demolition of the old Crewe Library which should begin in the next couple of months, and a cleared site should be handed to the history centre by end of February 2024. The Ice Cream Van project fell within this, and the contracts and communications were being progressed.

Repurposing our high streets – Several new projects were moving forwards and contracts with tenants and owners had been agreed. There were some owners who bought assets on the basis of HS2 reaching Crewe, who would need to be contacted to ensure that they remain engaged. It was hoped that the high street auction powers would be available soon.

Pocket Parks – Several projects have been initiated recently, the first group of four parks was underway and the second group should start in late 2023 / early 2024. Discussions were due to take place with Cheshire Wildlife Trust to encourage community involvement. A press release had been issued and the Board were encouraged to share the press releases where possible.

Valley Brook Green Corridor - The proposed route was presented to the board - the route was subject final agreements with network rail and other landowners being resolved. The route was already being used by walkers and cyclists so the improvement works should be well received and attract further usage.

Youthzone – There was a risk that the underground sewer which cut across the site could impact the development - conversations with United Utilities were planned.

Jubilee Gardens Project – There was work ongoing around the land transfer.

Mirion Street –. Assurances were required that the boxing premises would be retained for youth activities should the boxing company cease to trade.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

42 **STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (10 MINUTES)**

The Board received an update from Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place.

HS2 – Cheshire East Council were disappointed that HS2 would no longer be constructed to Crewe, and that there was a lack of reference to Crewe in the government's new rail proposals. It was noted that other investment packages should be sought to replicate the benefits to Crewe as much as possible and continue to highlight the requirement for a Transfer Deck upgrade and the significant investment required at Crewe Station. There was an opportunity to lobby and for further work with the Crewe Deep Dive to be taken forward as the foundation for Crewe independent of HS2.

Royal Arcade – The façade of the car park, to incorporate the living wall, was ongoing and Phase 1 of the project would be completed by mid-March 2024. An officer report would be presented to the 15 November Economy and Growth Committee.

Senior Leadership – The Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lorraine O'Donnell, would leave Cheshire East Council on 12th October 2023, and an interim Chief Executive had been appointed, subject to ratification at Full Council on 18th October 2023. The permanent recruitment campaign was ongoing.

43 **MARKETING CREWE (10 MINUTES)**

Paul Colman, Chief Executive of South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, noted that a meeting was held in September 2023 with the public / private sector in relation to Marketing Crewe, and had their full support. A permanent recruitment would be made to support Marketing Crewe, as it was a large strategic task.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

44 **AOB (5 MINUTES)**

The Board declared their disappointment at HS2 no longer being delivered in Crewe:

- It was disappointed that HS2 would no longer be the backbone to secure regeneration and redevelopment in Crewe and the surrounding area. Crewe Town Board would ensure that Crewe received the best redevelopment opportunities going forward and lobbying on the Crewe Station upgrades would continue.

- The importance of "Town Boards" in the progression of towns had been noted by the government.

- HS2 had already cost Cheshire East Council millions of pounds, and there was a further risk of losing investment from HS2 to contribute towards other projects contained within, such as the Middlewich Eastern Bypass.

- Businesses needed reassurance so as to not to change their decisions to invest in Crewe.

- Political pressure should be utilised to secure investment in roads and other connectivity issues for Crewe.

- It was noted that it would be important to invest in freight infrastructure in Crewe and to make use of closed rail lines.

- Residents felt betrayed, and the government should continue to be held to their other commitments to show a visible sign of government support in Crewe. It was important that the existing projects within Crewe continued, and it was made clear to residents what the next steps for Crewe were.

Doug Kinsman formally stood down as Chair of Crewe Town Board and handed over to Tony Davison who had recently been appointed as the Chair of Crewe Town Board. The Board extended their thanks to Doug Kinsman and Abigail Thorley for their input to Crewe Town Board over the last three years.

45 **DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the date of the next virtual meeting take place on 3 November 2023 commencing at 9.30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.35 am and concluded at 12.25 pm

Doug Kinsman (Chair)