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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council**
held on Wednesday, 20th July, 2022 in the Crewe Lifestyle Centre, Moss
Square, Crewe. CW1 2BB

PRESENT

Councillor D Marren (Mayor/Chair)

Councillor R Fletcher (Deputy Mayor/Vice Chair)

Councillors Q Abel, S Akers Smith, L Anderson, R Bailey, M Beanland, M Benson, L Braithwaite, J Bratherton, S Brookfield, D Brown, C Browne, C Bulman, B Burkhill, P Butterill, S Carter, J Clowes, S Corcoran, L Crane, A Critchley, S Davies, T Dean, D Edwardes, S Edgar, H Faddes, JP Findlow, K Flavell, A Gage, S Gardiner, L Gilbert, M Goldsmith, A Gregory, P Groves, A Harewood, G Hayes, S Hogben, S Holland, M Houston, M Hunter, D Jefferay, A Kolker, C Leach, N Mannion, A Moran, R Moreton, B Murphy, D Murphy, C Naismith, J Nicholas, K Parkinson, J Parry, B Puddicombe, P Redstone, J Rhodes, J Saunders, M Sewart, M Simon, J Smith, L Smith, D Stockton, A Stott, R Vernon, L Wardlaw, J Weatherill, P Williams and J Wray

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors M Addison, J Barber, M Beanland, J Buckley, B Evans, A Farrall, S Handley, L Jeuda, A Martin, S Pochin, L Roberts, L Smetham, M Warren and N Wylie.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to an amendment to state that the first part of the meeting was chaired by Councillor S Pochin and not Councillor D Marren.

21 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor, in summary

- 1 advised that he had assisted in organising a multi-cultural event. It followed on from an event which took place last February by the previous Mayor, Cllr S Pochin, and the Mayor of Crewe Town Council Cllr Tom Dunlop. The Mayor thanked the team which organised the event, with particular thanks to Magda Kolodziej of the Communities team. The next

multicultural event was planned as a joint event with the Nantwich Mayor, Councillor Peter Groves, scheduled to be held in December.

- 2 reported that Cllr S Pochin, the previous Mayor, had been the target of political hate mail which had been reported to the Police. He asked all Councillors to give Cllr Pochin their support and urged anyone who received or who was the subject of malicious communication to report such instances to the Police.

22 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Ms Laura Turner spoke in respect of the 'Fight for Middlewich' petition. Following her speech, she handed over the petition to an officer to pass on to the Mayor.

Mr N Cowie spoke in respect of anti-social behaviour taking place at Barnaby's Park, Poynton. He asked if consideration would be given to the sale of the play area, owned by Cheshire East Council, to a developer and thus remove the anti-social behaviour. He outlined the anti-social behaviour in question and asked that if the sale of the park could not be achieved then, as a minimum, access to the play park be restricted from 4.30pm until 8am the following day. In response, Cllr C Browne stated that the Council was not considering the disposal of the public open space at Barnaby Park in Poynton. He acknowledged that there had been an escalation in anti-social behaviour in the park and this matter had been considered at the latest Multi Agency Action Group meeting which included representatives from the Council, the Police and Poynton Town Council. A working group had been established to consider the options available to reduce anti-social behaviour with the working group reporting back to the Multi Agency Action Group at the next meeting in September.

Mr S Redgard spoke in reference to a letter he had received, dated 26 November 2021, relating to the emptying of roadside gullies. He referred to comments which he said had been made by Cllr C Browne within the correspondence which stated: "We are carrying out an 18-month programme to attend to all gullies and collect asset and condition data to allow a more risk-based approach to be adopted for future schedules". However, Mr Redgard pointed out that the Council's website stated that all gullies would be emptied before October 2022. He asked for clarification as to which statement was correct and whether the Council was on target to meet either of the dates. In addition, Mr Redgard asked when and what action the Council intended to take with regard to an alleged breach of condition 15 of planning application 15/0016M. In response, Cllr C Browne, the Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, stated that he recognised that a number of gullies across the borough had not been emptied since the Council's inception and therefore the Council would be investing significant funds in this area, including £1.1M towards drainage repairs and a further £305,000 in managing flood risk. Further to this, Cllr Browne advised that the Council's commitment to empty all highway gullies at least once during an 18 month period commenced in April 2021 and was on target to be completed in late October 2022. During this undertaking, officers had identified gullies not previously included on the Council's asset inventory system. It was anticipated that this would total approximately 9,000 additional gullies being included within the programme, which was an increase of nearly 10%. The additional asset and condition data collected during the programme would allow the Council's highways service to prioritise future areas of intervention using a risk-based

approach, both in terms of ongoing maintenance but also asset replacement. In response to Mr Redgard's second question, Cllr Browne advised that the Ward Councillor had been in communication both with Mr Redgard and the Planning Case Officer in relation to planning application 15/0016M since July 2021. He advised Mr Redgard that the pre-commencement conditions for this application were discharged through planning application 21/5450D on 25 February 2022. Further to this, he advised condition 15 was not a condition that must be discharged prior to the commencement of development. The condition related to specific types of work undertaken during the bird nesting season from 1 March to 31 August in any year. If work was undertaken within the date parameters, a survey would be required to identify nests in any building, hedgerow, tree or scrub or other habitat to be removed with a 4-metre exclusion zone around any nests being maintained until breeding was complete. Following receipt of Mr Redgard's question, the Council had opened an investigation into the alleged breach of planning control and in due course Mr Redgard would receive an acknowledgement letter with the case reference number and assigned Planning Enforcement Officer details.

23 LEADER'S AND DEPUTY LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader, in summary

- 1 advised that the Covid-19 infection rate in Cheshire East was 332 per 100,000 and local hospitals were under pressure. He reiterated that people could reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 by maintaining social distancing, ensuring good ventilation indoors and washing hands thoroughly with soap and water;
- 2 updated the Council on those affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine. To date, 804 Ukrainians had registered to come to Cheshire East under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and, of these, 424 had arrived in the borough. There were currently 277 sponsors registered in Cheshire East. The Education Team was supporting Ukrainian families in accessing education and, to date, the Council had offered places to approximately 90 children and young people. Officers were undertaking a wide range of safeguarding, housing and welfare visits, arranging payments and supporting volunteer, community and faith sector groups and sponsors. Colleagues from other local agencies, including Health, Police and the Fire and Rescue Service were all supporting the scheme and he thanked them, and everyone else who had contributed so positively;
- 3 reminded the Council of the ongoing work by the Council in supporting Afghan refugees, a number of whom were still in temporary accommodation in his ward. A bicycle scheme had been introduced to help them to be more mobile;
- 4 thanked the Officers who had put forward a strong technical bid resulting in Crewe being shortlisted for the HQ of Great British Railways. The team, he felt, had created an excellent presentation for the Rail Minister's visit, including visiting Avanti West Coast's

national training academy, visiting the entrance to Crewe station with virtual-reality goggles to show what the area would look like if plans were implemented and a trip to a site restoring classic trains;

- 5 reported that the Council had received the Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award. This latest award made by the Ministry of Defence, followed the Bronze Award which the Council received in 2020, and highlighted the ongoing commitment the Council was making to support serving personnel, reservists, veterans, families, cadets, and the wider military community across the borough;
- 6 reported that, for the fifth year in succession, the Registration Service had won the Ceremony Provider of the Year category at the North West Wedding Awards. He congratulated the Registration Service team for maintaining such a performance.

The Deputy Leader, in summary

- 1 attended a sod-cutting ceremony on 27 May to mark the commencement of work on the North-West Crewe Package;
- 2 reported that the design and development work for the Middlewich Eastern Bypass scheme continued to make good progress. A package of early site work was implemented earlier this year, whilst other environmental works, earthworks and landscaping were currently in preparation;
- 3 reported that since Council last met, the second reading of the Phase 2b (Crewe to Manchester) Hybrid Bill had taken place, which had triggered the petitioning process. A resolution had been made to petition against the Bill, as it was felt the proposals did not currently represent the best deal for the borough. The Council was currently running a series of 'cluster workshops' for town and parish councils affected by the scheme, to ensure they were well placed to petition themselves;
- 4 advised that the Council was also working with its neighbouring authorities, as well as sub-regional partners, as part of Transport for the North and Growth Track 360 to make the case for essential investment in HS2 infrastructure;
- 5 advised that the Council's planning service continued to experience significant delays, with a backlog of 2,684 undetermined cases at the end of June. A number of initiatives were being implemented to address the issues including the launch of a new recruitment campaign video, extending the Council's contract with Capita to provide agency staff, a revised site visit protocol for officers, establishing additional Team Leader/Principal Planner roles, engaging with universities to explore graduate recruitment and employing a planning consultant to lead to Planning Service Improvement Plan;
- 6 advised that, at the last budget council meeting in February, the Council took the ambitious step of borrowing to invest an additional £19M in its highways maintenance and repair

programme over the next three years. The £7M tranche of money being invested this year was starting to bear fruit and both Members and members of the public could find more details on the schemes being delivered on the Council's website;

- 7 reported another alleged assault on a member of the highways team. He felt all Members would want to join with him in condemning such behaviour towards an officer, who was going about the task they were paid to do. He stated that he was raising this issue to send a clear message that assaults on staff were unacceptable. He had signed up to the apolitical "Debate Not Hate" campaign, which the Local Government Association was currently championing, and encouraged all Members of Council to do the same;
- 8 reported that Crewe had been shortlisted as one of six potential locations for the new Great British Railways HQ. He had attended, along with the local MP and other Group Leaders, a meeting with the Minister of State, Wendy Morton MP, where she had an opportunity to see what Crewe had to offer, both now and in the future. He felt officers had submitted an excellent technical bid and encouraged friends and families to vote for Crewe at www.gbrcrewe.co.uk.

Upon the invitation of the Mayor, Group Leaders spoke:

Councillor J Clowes endorsed the comments made by the Deputy Leader in relation to assaults on Cheshire East employees and expressed her support for Crewe as the HQ of Great British Railways. In respect of HS2, she was grateful that the Council had moved forward with setting up North and South cluster groups.

Councillor P Williams echoed the comments on assaults on employees and 'poison pen' attacks on Councillors. On behalf of the Liberal Democrat group, he was encouraged to find strong cross-party support for the Great British Railways bid. In respect of HS2, he welcomed the response coming forward, but equally important was the support for the provision of an enhanced station hub at Crewe as well as pressing for compensation for those impacted by the Crewe to Manchester phase and mitigation on the ecological and environmental impacts.

24 **RECOMMENDATION FROM CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE: APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES**

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Children and Families Committee, which had met on 23 May 2022, in relation to the Approval of Supplementary Estimates of over £1m.

RESOLVED: That Council

approve the supplementary estimates over £1,000,000 set out in Appendix B, Table E.

25 RECOMMENDATION FROM ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE: APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Adults and Health Committee, which had met on 30 May 2022, in relation to the Approval of Supplementary Estimates of over £1m.

RESOLVED: That Council

approve the supplementary estimates over £1,000,000 set out in Appendix B, Table D.

26 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE: APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Corporate Policy Committee, which had met on 9 June 2022, in relation to the Approval of Supplementary Estimates of over £1m.

RESOLVED: That Council

approve the supplementary estimates over £1,000,000 set out in Appendix B, Table E.

27 RECOMMENDATION FROM FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE: APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES AND VIREMENTS

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Finance Sub Committee, which had met on 6 July 2022, in relation to the Approval of Supplementary Estimates of over £1m.

RESOLVED: That Council approve

1. the fully-funded supplementary revenue estimates over £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Appendix 2, Table 1; and
2. the virement of £2.3m in 2022/23 from the Medium-Term Financial Strategy Reserve to the General Reserve as detailed in Appendix 5, paragraph 4.

28 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE: UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - CHESHIRE EAST ALLOCATION

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Corporate Policy Committee, which had met on 14 July 2022, in relation to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Cheshire East Allocation.

Councillor J Clowes proposed an amendment to the recommendations of the Committee, to include an additional sentence which also noted the requirements of additional guidance from time to time. The Mayor asked if the proposer and seconder of the substantive motion were prepared to accept the amendment. Councillor S Corcoran, as the proposer of the motion, requested advice from the

Monitoring Officer, who advised that the amendment was acceptable. Councillor J Clowes confirmed she was content to accept the advice, as were the proposer and seconder.

RESOLVED: That

1. authority be delegated to the Executive Director Adults, Health and Integration to:
 - (i) make any amendments to the Local Investment Plan for the Multiply element of the Shared Prosperity allocation for Cheshire East as are required by government in order to release Multiply funding or as required during the plan period to enable the effective management of the fund; and
 - (ii) accept the Multiply funding allocation for Cheshire East and approve a Supplementary Revenue Estimate of up to £1,535,547, and to allocate that funding as set out within the Local Investment Plan over the years 2022-23 to 2024-25;
2. Council note the emerging Local Investment Plan for the core element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for Cheshire East.
3. Council note that the Chief Executive, S151 Officer and Leader are required to approve the core UKSPF Investment Plan once completed to comply with the requirements of the UKSPF government Prospectus and to also take note such guidance as may be issued from time to time ;
4. authority be delegated to the Executive Director Place to:
 - (i) submit the approved completed Investment Plan for the core UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for Cheshire East to the government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for the deadline of 1 August 2022;
 - (ii) make any amendments to the Investment Plan for the core UK Shared Prosperity allocation for Cheshire East as required by government in order to release the funding or as required during the plan period to enable the effective spend of the fund;
 - (iii) accept the core UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for Cheshire East and approve a Supplementary Revenue/Capital Estimate of up to £11,585,762, (split to be confirmed on approval of the Investment Plan) and to allocate the funding as set out within the Local Investment Plan over the years 2022-23 to 2024-25; and
 - (iv) manage the Cheshire East UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2022-25 programme, taking all necessary actions in the interests of maximising the impacts of the fund aligned to the fund parameters and local priorities aligned to the core UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan; and

5. Council note that Cheshire East Council will act as accountable body for the Shared Prosperity Fund where funds are allocated to third party organisations, for the duration of the funding.

29 RECOMMENDATION FROM ADULT AND HEALTH COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND CONSEQUENTIAL REVISIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to the recommendations arising following the meetings of the Adults and Health Committee and Scrutiny Committee, which had met on 30 May 2022 and 14 June 2022 respectively, in relation to the Establishment of a Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Health Scrutiny Committee and Consequential Revisions to the Constitution.

RESOLVED: That Council

1. Agree to the establishment of a Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Health Scrutiny Committee as set out in the Joint Committee Arrangements document at Appendix A.
2. Adopt the amended 'Protocol for the establishment of Joint Health Scrutiny Arrangements in Cheshire & Merseyside' as set out in Appendix B.
3. Note that Corporate Policy Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2021 delegated the appointment of members to external scrutiny functions to the Scrutiny Committee, which may invite any member with the appropriate knowledge of health and social care, having regard to political proportionality.
4. Note the constitutional changes delegated by Council to the Director of Governance and Compliance on 27 April 2022 as set out in Appendix C.

30 POLITICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

Consideration was given to a report which sought a resolution from Council which would determine the political representation on the Council's Committees.

RESOLVED

That the political group and other representation, as set out in the Appendix to the report, and the methods, calculations and conventions used in determining this, as outlined in the report, be adopted and the allocation of places to Committees be approved.

(Prior to consideration of the following item, the meeting was adjourned for a short break).

31 NOTICES OF MOTION

Consideration was given to the following Notices of Motion, which had been submitted in accordance with the Council's Procedural Rules.

1 Review of Winter Service (Gritting) Programme Assessment Criteria

Proposed by Councillor R Moreton and Seconded by Councillor D Edwardes.

Council resolves that: prior to carrying out the next planned operational review of the Winter Service (Gritting) Programme for the 2022/23 season and in advance of any changes to secondary gritting routes, the scoring assessment criteria and threshold for inclusion in the Winter Service (Gritting) Programme should also be reconsidered.

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be referred to the Highways and Transport Committee.

2 Safer School Streets

Proposed by Cllr Suzie Akers Smith and Seconded by Cllr Lata Anderson.

That Council creates a process that allows a Safer School Street to be created for all schools, where supported by those schools and the community, which will provide a safer environment and enable children to walk and cycle to school safely.

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be referred to the Highways and Transport Committee.

3 Sprinklers Save Lives and Protect Property from Fire

Proposed by Councillor N Mannion and seconded by Councillor J Nicholas

That:-

- 1. Our Council explores local policy options to promote and secure the fitting of sprinklers in the above building types when they are built, or if they undergo a major refurbishment.*
- 2. Our Council writes to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and local Members of Parliament to promote changes to the law to require sprinklers in at least the above building types.*
- 3. Our Council writes to the Secretary of State for the Department for Education to strongly oppose the proposed removal of sprinkler provisions from the revision of the design guide for fire safety in schools (Building Bulletin 100) and to request that the requirement for sprinklers in schools is strengthened rather than removed.*

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be referred to the Environment and Communities Committee.

32 QUESTIONS

Cllr P Williams asked if the Council would consider applying for government funding available for the Brownfield Land Release Fund 2.

In response, Cllr N Mannion, Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee, stated that officers were currently assessing the criteria for the fund against sites identified by Housing Development and examining whether the timescales aligned with the priorities for these sites. There would be funding rounds for the next two financial years; therefore, if the Council was unable to develop a bid by the 2022 deadline, it was likely that proposals would be developed for Spring 2023. Cllr Mannion would provide a written response with detail on exact dates and funding amounts.

Cllr S Holland asked a question in respect of the New Burden Grant and whether the grant could be utilised to fund, reinstate, or replace via a similar service as the pathfinder service. The Leader requested that the question be submitted in writing and he would then provide a written response.

Cllr J Bratherton referred to an art project proposed to be located outside Crewe station and asked who made the decision to appoint the artist, what criteria it was based upon and which other artists had put forward work to obtain the contract. She stated that she felt both examples offered bore no resemblance to Crewe and stated that she would have liked to have had some broader say within the Council on the designs. Councillor N Mannion, Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee, agreed that he would provide a written response.

Cllr L Smith asked if the Council would look to Manchester, Yorkshire and other areas of the UK in respect of how bus services operated; for example the municipal ownership of buses and whether the Council would look at removing contracts from companies like Arriva who she believed continued to focus on profits rather than the service received by the public and treatment of workers.

In response, Cllr L Crane, Chair of the Bus Service Improvement Plan Advisory Group, stated that she would like to make such changes but the Council was restricted by the legal framework. The Council had, under the Bus Service Improvement Plan, been able to establish an enhanced partnership for bus companies which she hoped would address some of the issues raised. She felt it was a matter upon which all Councillors needed to lobby their MPs, as cities which had devolved powers had superior public networks and she felt Cheshire East deserved the same.

Cllr S Gardiner stated that he wished not to ask a question but to thank a colleague on behalf of the Council who was leaving the authority, Sarah Baxter, Democratic Services Officer, for her contribution over the years.

Cllr A Kolker commented that he found the content of the agenda disappointing as he felt every item reaffirmed decisions made in other Committees. He asked that, if agendas were going to lead to Members redebating items previously debated, whether the Chair might use his discretion, and rather than refer Notices of Motions on to other Committees, Members should debate them in full Council.

In response, the Mayor confirmed he would look at the contents of agendas and use his discretion where necessary, but that a number of items that had been to other Committees constitutionally need to be endorsed by full Council.

Cllr D Edwardes asked if the Council had submitted an application for government funding to support the roll out of electric vehicle charging points within the borough and what this would provide. In response, Cllr C Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, stated that the Council had submitted a bid to the government's On Street Residential Charging Fund (ORCS) in April 2022 for a total of £157,580. This was being matched with a Council contribution of £55,300 as required by the scheme. The application had been assessed and was deemed technically compliant. If successful, the scheme would form the introduction of electric vehicle charging points at 15 locations, with most locations providing 4 charging points each as follows:

Fairview Car Park, Alsager
Antrobus Street Car Park Congleton
Wrexham Terrace Car Park, Crewe
Bulkley Street, Crewe
Edleston Road Car Park, Crewe
Hope Street Car Park, Crewe
King Street Car Park, Knutsford
Tatton Street Car Park, Knutsford
Brook Street Car Park, Macclesfield
Churchill Way Car Park, Macclesfield
Whalley Hayes Car Park, Macclesfield
Southway Car Park, Middlewich
Snow Hill Car Park, Nantwich
Chapel Street Car Park, Sandbach
The Carrs Car Park, Wilmslow

Potentially, this would give the Council 56 new electric vehicle charging points across the borough by the summer of 2023 as the funds would have to be spent within 12 months. A Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) was expected to come on stream next year to support further investment in this area.

Cllr C Naismith stated that HS2 had the potential to add immense benefits to Crewe and asked if Cllr C Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, would agree that government delivering anything fewer than 5 to 7 HS2 trains stopping at Crewe per hour would be a betrayal of the towns and the wider sub regions ambition for its regeneration. He asked if this view could be fed in through the petitioning process and via any other avenues available.

In response, Cllr Browne confirmed he could agree with Cllr Naismith. Due to the way the project was being phased and constructed, beginning in London and ending in Manchester, any benefits to the north of HS2 would be delivered much later than the south. For this reason, it was vitally important that there was a commitment from government to the necessary infrastructure to support 5-7 trains per hour. He advised there was already a disconnect between what was being promised with £2.6B starting in London, £500M for two stations at Birmingham and £45M for two extended platforms at Crewe. He reported that, at the recent ministerial visit, Members pressed for a commitment on 5 to 7 trains an hour but were told that this almost certainly would not happen prior to the completion of phase 2B to Manchester. This was important not only for the Council's own regeneration plans but also the investment decisions that

businesses were going to make which would be different if they were predicated on 2 trains per hour, as opposed to 5 to 7 trains an hour. The Council would continue to work closely with partners across the North-West of England, including Cheshire West and Warrington, as well as the Metro Mayors for Greater Manchester and Liverpool to put pressure on the government for that commitment to the infrastructure that supports 5 to 7 trains per hour.

Cllr K Parkinson referred to issues arising from some visitors to the Parish of Pickmere which included parking in such a way as to create an issue for emergency services gaining access, and antisocial behaviour. Cllr Parkinson asked for assurances from Officers and Cllr C Browne to work with her and Cheshire Police to find a solution. In response, Cllr C Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, advised that these issues were similar to those raised at the start of the meeting regarding Poynton, and that the route forward would be through the Antisocial Behaviour Team and the Multi Agency Action Group. Cllr Browne gave assurances that he would provide any support he is able to and would ensure this was on the agenda of the Multi Agency Action Group.

Cllr P Redstone asked, on behalf of Odd Rode Parish Council, for assurances from Officers that no herbicides would be used in the area by Cheshire East going forward as they left a 'revolting slurry' after use. Cllr C Browne advised that he would look into this issue and provide a written response.

Cllr M Goldsmith referred to Cheshire East's £7M additional investment in highway maintenance for 2022 and asked for confirmation of what this would fund. In response, Cllr C Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, advised that the first £7M tranche of the £19M that was being invested by the Council over the next three years was expected to fund:

- Six road resurfacing schemes, approximately equating to 3km of treated road;
- Repairs to 25 roads to address localised deterioration;
- The reconstruction or resurfacing of approximately 2km of footway;
- Nine drainage investigation and improvement schemes;
- 13 bridge improvement schemes;
- The design of nine bridge improvement schemes for delivery during the later period;
- Lamp column replacements for 100 identified streets;
- New road markings and surface repairs for approximately 3km of A roads

Cllr M Hunter referred to the Local Plan which had been adopted in 2017 and stated that some areas of the borough had been excluded from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments which were an integral part of local infrastructure projects. Cllr Hunter gave notice that he intended to put in a motion at the next Council meeting on CIL payments which would ask for a review of the system. Cllr Hunter asked if Group Leaders would support a request for that review. In response, Cllr Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, advised that he would need to see the content of what was being proposed before he could confirm support, but that he would look forward to seeing it.

Cllr B Puddicombe referred to agreed improvements to the Flowerpot Junction in Macclesfield and asked why this work had not yet started. In response, Cllr C

Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, advised that the project had progressed well through the development stage although there had been some on site investigations through which a few issues had arisen. These included:

- Statutory enquiries had identified more underground services than were originally anticipated;
- Openreach had needed to undertake more extensive site surveys to identify all their assets and determine what diversions would be required;
- Cadent Gas had required further site investigations to look into the detail of the mains that run through the site;
- Complex legal advice was needed on how the open space in the south east corner of the site was used ;
- Land negotiations with nearby third-party private landowners had continued although were not always responsive at the times required

Those attempts to reach agreement were ongoing; however, due to a lack of certainty, it was likely to proceed to agree a compulsory purchase order. Work was ongoing to put together the evidence required to support this with a target date of the Highways and Transport Committee meeting in November.

Cllr L Anderson thanked Cheshire East for providing a warm welcome to Ukrainian refugees and stated that feedback on Cheshire East's response had been positive. Cllr Anderson stated that some refugees had now been here for three months and wondered what would happen in the future, with some hosts having received letters asking if they would continue after the initial six months. The Leader thanked the 277 sponsors supporting Ukrainian families and confirmed that there had been very few sponsor/refugee breakdowns but that, where that did happen, the Council would look to find alternative placements. In addition, the Leader confirmed that the Council had a responsibility for those who were made homeless and that this would be honoured. Cllr C Browne also thanked the hosts and advised that the guidance for what would happen after the initial six months continued to change on a frequent basis and, therefore, a written response would be provided.

Cllr S Akers Smith referred to the redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre where more asbestos was found in the building than had been expected, resulting in a cost and time delay amounting to more than £8.6M. Cllr Akers Smith asked for an update on progress and completion and information on how the potential cost increase would be funded.

Cllr Akers Smith raised a further question regarding the redevelopment of Congleton Skate Park and stated that no funding was included for this in the leisure centre redevelopment, despite both being on the same site. Cllr Akers Smith asked whether it would be possible to commit any funds from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to provide a new skate park rather than the refurbishment of what was believed to be an out of date facility. In addition, she asked whether Cheshire East could help to deliver this project in partnership with ESAR and ANSA. In response, Cllr C Browne, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, advised that this would usually be a question for the Chair of Environment and Communities and that a written response would be provided due to his absence at the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 1.40 pm

Councillor D Marren
Chair

COUNCIL 20 JULY 2022**Item 15 - Questions****(1) Councillor P Williams question to Councillor N Mannion**

Asked if the Council would consider applying for government funding available for the Brownfield Land Release Fund 2. In response, Councillor N Mannion, the Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee stated that in July the government announced the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BRLF2) which provided capital grant funding seeking to release land for new homes. The current application window was open to Mid-August and was valued at £40m out of a total fund of up to £180m over three years.

The Council's Economic Development and Housing teams were aware of the Fund and were considering it in comparison to the proposals. The Council was looking to ascertain whether any meet the bidding criteria. Councillor N Mannion stated that he would be happy to send a more substantive response to Councillor P Williams in writing detailing the exact dates and amounts.

Written Response

The One Public Estate Partnership announced on the 11 July 2022 that up to £180 million capital grant funding is available to all constituent English councils over a three-year period to support the release of council-owned brownfield land for the development of new housing. The BLRF2 will support the government's levelling up ambitions in places that need it and is aimed at restoring a sense of community and local pride and spreading opportunity across England so that every place can realise its potential.

This funding will be made available via three competitive bidding rounds:

- The first of these is currently open for applications and closes on the 19 August 2022, a total of £40m of funding has been allocated in round one.
- Round two is expected to be open for bids in 2023, with the bidding round closing early Spring 2023 and £60m of funding has been allocated; and
- Round three is expected to be open for bids in 2024, with the bidding round closing early Spring 2024 and up to £80 million of funding has been allocated.

What does BLRF2 mean for Cheshire East?

Across all three rounds of BLRF2, the fund places a large emphasis on places that are considered in need of levelling up and therefore areas with lower residential land values. Suggesting that in Cheshire East, developments would be confined to central Crewe and parts of Macclesfield, where the tartan rug clearly identifies concentrations of deprivation.

Cheshire East currently benefits from Housing Investment Fund (HIF) from Homes England for its three strategic housing sites (South Macclesfield

Development Area, Handforth Garden Village and Leighton). It is unclear from BLRF2 guidance if this new fund can be used in conjunction with HIF, and questions have been raised with government officials on this matter.

Officers are currently assessing the criteria for the fund and against sites already identified for housing development which are in the Council's ownership and examining whether the timescales and ambitions of the fund align with the Council's priorities for individual sites.

If the Council is not able to develop a bid by the deadline for the 2022 funding round, 19 August, it is likely to be developing its proposals for individual sites for Spring 2023.

(2) Councillor S Holland question to Councillor S Corcoran

Asked a question in respect of the New Burden Grant. She asked if the grant could be utilised to fund, reinstate, or replace via a similar service as the pathfinder service. Councillor S Corcoran, the Leader of the Council, requested for the question to be submitted in writing and he would provide a written response.

Written Response

Following the Council's decision there are no plans to re-commission the pathfinder service. The decision reflected the positive approach that is offered via the Live Well website where similar support is available ([Live Well Cheshire East](#)). The site is highly accessible, but CEC Libraries and the Contact Centre can also help customers who have difficulty completing forms online.

The New Burden Grant - (Incapacity Benefit Reassessment) is a specific grant from the DWP to fund the administration costs associated with reassessing Housing Benefit claims for those previously receiving Incapacity Benefit. As such it is compensation for costs incurred and the grant cannot therefore be utilised to fund other initiatives.

(3) Councillor J Bratherton question to Councillor N Mannion

Referred to a news release on 18 July 2022 in connection with an art project - the heritage wall proposed to be located outside of Crewe station. She wanted to know who made the decision to appoint the artist, what criteria was it based on and which other artists put in a piece of work for verification in order to obtain the contract? She found out about the vote on the 18th July with the ballot taking place only a few days later. She stated there were only two options on the voting paper, however she was of the view a third option needed to be put forward stating none of the above on. She felt both examples been offered bared no resemblance to Crewe. Further to this she would have liked to have some broader say within the Council on the designs signalled out. She reiterated who made the decision, how to chosen artist was appointed, the relevance of public art realm in the first place on the bus station and the cost.

In response, Councillor N Mannion, the Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee stated he would provide a written response.

Written Response

As part of the initial plans and discussion for phase one of the Royal Arcade (the new car park and bus station) the idea to incorporate some form of public art came up through comments made by the public and stakeholders. The use of a perforated aluminium design was identified by officers as a solution that would enable the incorporation of some public art, while also addressing the technical building control requirements of managing air to flow into the car park to provide both ventilation and fire prevention mitigations. This type of cladding/artwork has been used in other multi storey carparks and was included in the budget for the car park in Crewe. It was referenced in the hybrid planning application for the scheme, subject to a final design, which was awarded planning consent in September last year. The budget for the heritage wall, including the design, construction and installation of the cladding/ artwork is circa £50,000.

Local members were made aware of the process and the plans to have a public vote on the heritage wall during briefing sessions on the planning application. Members did not express at that time an interest in being involved in the design process, although it is recognised that this offer could have been followed up and confirmed later.

To identify and procure an artist, the Council invited local volunteers, including from the Crewe Cultural Forum, heritage and business groups, to support in the production of a brief for an artist. The procurement was advertised as an 'open call' via national and local artist and networks, including a website commonly used for public art projects (www.artjobs.org.uk). The brief was issued to those that expressed an interest and Cheshire East received tenders from 10 artists including four from local artists based in Cheshire East. The tenders were evaluated against specific scoring criteria relating to the designers' experience, skills, proposed approach, and cost. An additional weighting was given to local artists based in Cheshire East. The best tender overall was Orakel Workshop, who have vast experience in similar projects.

The designer followed the brief to research local heritage and associated imagery to create two alternative designs and to incorporate the recently developed Crewe brand, which has been the subject to extensive earlier consultation.

The successful designer has produced information boards and videos which explain the inspiration behind the designs, and the process for the final proposals, based on a number of factors including relevance to Crewe's heritage, aesthetic appearance, and consideration of the materials and production method. Further details on these designs and how they were put together can be found here:

[CREWE — Orakel Workshop](#)

Several other design ideas developed through the tender process have been discounted for use in the heritage wall, but it is the intention that some of these may be used elsewhere – for example, inside the new bus station concourse.

The original intention was to go to a public vote to select the preferred design as soon as possible, so that the materials can be ordered, and production commenced, mitigation anticipated price increases affecting aluminium production.

The perforated aluminium is to be provided by a Cheshire company and it can only be provided in one colour, and a light grey was selected as it provides the greatest contrast to help the images to stand out to best effect.

Going forward, the heritage wall work has been put on pause due to the response from members and the public on social media, we shall now revert to further discussions with key stakeholders including local members to review the design proposals and consider how they can be improved and whether other alternatives should be considered.

(4) Councillor P Redstone question to Cllr C Browne

Councillor P Redstone asked, on behalf of Odd Rode Parish Council, for assurance from officers that no herbicides would be used in the area by Cheshire East going forward as they left a 'revolting slurry' after use. Councillor C Browne advised that he would look into this issue and provide a written response.

Written Response

Cheshire East Highways currently use a herbicide (Glyphosate) to treat most weeds. Although Glyphosate is safe if used under manufacturer's instructions and by trained personnel, we are currently looking at other options. We have an annual programme of weed spraying covering all public roads, footways and paved areas. This year's programme started on Monday 1st August and will last for approximately 8 weeks, subject to weather conditions.

(5) Councillor L Anderson question to Cllr C Browne

Councillor L Anderson thanked Cheshire East for providing a warm welcome to Ukrainian refugees and stated that feedback on Cheshire East's response had been positive. Councillor L Anderson stated that some refugees had now been here for three months and wondered what will happen in the future, with some hosts having received letters asking if they would continue after six months. The Leader thanked the 277 sponsors supporting Ukrainian families and confirmed that there had been very few sponsor/refugee breakdowns but that, where that does happen, the Council would look to find alternative placements. In addition, the Leader confirmed that the Council has a responsibility for those who are made homeless and that this would be honoured. Councillor C Browne also thanked the hosts and advised that the guidance for what happens after

the initial six months continues to change on a frequent basis and, therefore, a written response would be provided.

Written Response

This initial guidance on the Homes for Ukraine scheme outlines the role of councils across England in supporting the scheme: [Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils)

There may be some cases where the sponsor/guest relationship breaks down and the guest is homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Councils' statutory homelessness duties will apply in this instance.

Local housing authorities may be able to end a homelessness prevention or relief duty owed to a Ukrainian beneficiary by facilitating a rematch, provided the placement and accommodation are suitable and there is a reasonable prospect of it continuing to be available for at least six months.

Local housing authorities must continue to consider their statutory homelessness duties in full and take account of the individual circumstances of each household when assessing if the accommodation and match is suitable. DLUHC intends to provide more detail on this interaction shortly in an update to the Homelessness Code of Guidance, as well as consequences for intentional homelessness decisions.

Homelessness legislation in respect of local connection is unchanged. However, to support councils in determining which authority should provide assistance in cases where the household is yet to establish a local connection, the recommended general approach should be for the council where the household's sponsor is located to take the homelessness application.

If the household makes a homelessness application to a council other than the council where their sponsor is located, in line with the legislation the council must take the application and then consider if a local connection referral is appropriate.

(6) Cllr S Akers Smith question to Cllr C Browne/Cllr M Warren

Councillor S Akers Smith referred to the redevelopment of Congleton Leisure Centre where more asbestos was found in the building than had been expected, resulting in a cost and time delay amounting to more than £8.6m. Councillor S Akers Smith asked for an update on progress and completion of this leisure centre and information on how the potential cost increase would be funded.

Councillor S Akers Smith raised a further question regarding the redevelopment of Congleton Skate Park and stated that no funding was included for this in the leisure centre redevelopment, despite both being on the same site. Councillor S Akers Smith asked whether it would be possible to commit any funds from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to provide a new skate park rather than the refurbishment of what was believed to be an out of date facility. In addition,

Councillor S Akers Smith asked whether Cheshire East could help to deliver this project in partnership with ESAR and ANSA. In response, Councillor C Browne advised that this would usually be a question for the Chair of Environment and Communities and that a written response would be provided in his absence.

Written Response

Good progress is being made on the redevelopment of Congleton leisure centre, with construction expected to complete in December this year. The main building works are well advanced, and the attention has now moved to the internal works. There has been a delay to the original programme due to the presence of asbestos found during the ground works and also because of the need for the main contractor to source an alternative specialist pool sub-contractor after the original sub-contractor went into administration part way through the works. The higher than anticipated level of asbestos has resulted in an increase in the cost of the project. This has been funded via a virement from the Strategic Capital Reserve.

The Leisure Centre redevelopment project included budget provision to ensure the skate park was of an acceptable standard for the re-opening of the leisure centre. However, future aspirations for the skate park are in excess of the budget provision and so proposals for the refurbishment of the skate park will be taken forward as a separate Park Development project which will seek to identify ways in which the works can be funded.