

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**  
held on Friday, 28th October, 2022 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

## **PRESENT**

Doug Kinsman (Chair)  
Andy Butler, Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Jasbir Dhesi, Guy Kilminster,  
Councillor Nick Mannion, Dr Kieran Mullan MP, Councillor Jill Rhodes and  
Simon Yates

## **ALSO PRESENT**

Ellie Cox, Peter Turner and Lindsey Lewis

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Jez Goodman, Development & Regeneration Delivery Manager  
Rhiannon Hilton, Communications Officer  
Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development  
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer  
Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise  
Carol Young, Policy and Partnerships Officer

## **36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)**

Apologies for absence were received from Sally Hepton, Mark Hills and  
Martin Wood.

## **37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)**

As the Towns Fund Progress Update had become a standing item on the  
agenda, it was agreed that the following declarations of interest would be  
recorded and used for all future meetings where this item would be  
discussed:

Dr Kieran Mullan MP, in the interest of openness, declared that he  
supported the Whitby Morrison ice cream element of the heritage centre  
fund and the wishing well element of the pocket parks fund.

Councillor Nick Mannion, in the interest of openness, declared that he is  
an elected Member of Cheshire East Council which is the accountable  
body for the programme and requested that this standing declaration be  
recorded for any Cheshire East Councillors who may attend the meeting in  
future. Cllr Mannion also declared that he chairs the Council's Economy  
and Growth Committee which has regeneration within its remit.

In the interests of openness Councillor Jill Rhodes declared an interest as  
a political appointee of Cheshire East Council and Crewe Town Council.

In the interests of openness Simon Yates declared an interest in the  
Always Ahead Charity (for Flag Lane Baths).

Jasbir Dhesi declared that Cheshire College is a named beneficiary of the ice cream element of the heritage project and that the college is also supportive of a number of the other projects.

### **38 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the virtual meeting held on 30 September 2022 be approved as a correct record. The chair went through a list of actions from the previous virtual meeting and updated members on the status of each action accordingly.

### **39 TOWNS FUND PROGRESS UPDATE & PROJECT REVIEW (1 HOUR))**

Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development gave the board an update on the outcome of discussions with the TIP sub-group in respect of the operation and delivery risks for each of the ten projects. The Sub group had continued to review the projects following their submission and prompted by the current economic climate and high inflationary pressures they had asked Cheshire East Council to commission an independent review on how each of the projects were managing inflation and risks. Ekosgen and cost consultants Currie & Brown carried out the review.

The review identified that most projects had insufficient budget allocated to meet current and future inflationary pressures, and whilst some of these had identified mitigation measures such as seeking additional co-funding or value-engineering (i.e. descoping the scale/quality of the project), significant risks remain).

Three projects had been identified as facing 'significant' inflationary and delivery risks, Lyceum Powerhouse, Flag Lane Baths and Crewe Youth Zone. Following the completion of this external work the sub group had put forward its recommendations which were shared with the board which included:-

- 1) Crewe Town Board submits a request to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), through Cheshire East Council as accountable body, to withdraw the Lyceum Powerhouse project from its programme and the funding is reallocated across other projects;
- 2) Further engagement with key stakeholders is undertaken, including with local councillors and the MP;
- 3) Crewe Town Board delegates a decision on the amount of funding to be reprofiled across the remaining programme to the Chair and

Vice Chair of Crewe Town Board, in consultation with the Towns Fund Sub Group (TFSG);

- 4) The TFSG reports back to Crewe Town Board on progress with these actions;
- 5) The TFSG continues to provide regular updates on cost and delivery risks to Crewe Town Board.

Whilst the board expressed their disappointment that the Lyceum Powerhouse project be recommended for removal from the programme they understood that it was a difficult situation that people were facing with inflationary costs. The board acknowledged the due diligence undertaken and transparency in the TFSG reaching its recommendation and appreciated the significant amount of work done around the design and business case. There was a collective view that it was hoped that the project team would continue to actively work on the project and that it may come forward at a later date and under alternative funding streams.

It was agreed that should the recommendations be agreed by the board the sub group would put a paper together at its next meeting which would be circulated to the Board. The paper would set out the criteria for any redistribution of funds to support the best outcomes for each project.

Dr Kieran Mullen MP stated that he disagreed with the process, with specific regard to timescales and the presentation of information, which meant that he felt he was not in a position to make an informed decision at today's meeting, and therefore abstained from the vote.

**RESOLVED (by majority) That:**

1. Crewe Town Board would submit a request to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH), through Cheshire East Council as the accountable body, to withdraw the Lyceum Powerhouse project from its programme and the funding is reallocated across other projects;
2. Crewe Town Board agree to delegate the decision on the amount of funding to be reprofiled across the remaining programme to the Chair and Vice Chair of Crewe Town Board, in consultation with the Towns Fund Sub-Group (TFSG).

**40 COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT SUB-GROUP UPDATE (10 MINUTES)**

There had been discussions at the last board meeting in respect of how better to market the programme to the community, there were two options put forward:

- 1) Third party vehicle – Marketing Crewe – this would be run by a separate operator and would be able to receive funding.

- 2) Tapping in to a group of volunteer advocates who could help increase the social media presence and impact.

Both of these concepts had been positively received and further discussion would be held to advance this.

The Communications and Engagement sub group would meet following the board meeting to discuss what they would want changing and amending on the website.

## **RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

### **41 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (10 MINUTES)**

Peter Skates, the Director of Growth & Enterprise attended the meeting and gave a verbal update in respect of:-

**Royal Arcade** – A full review meeting had taken place with the developer. The programme was on schedule for the new temporary bus station to be opened in January 2023.

Phase 2 – There were ongoing discussions with the developer and there had been strong occupier interest which was a positive. It was expected that there would be a financial appraisal at the end of December which would then be analysed to look at viability in respect of rents and yields, but construction costs could be a risk.

All the planning applications submitted were progressing.

**Heritage Wall** – A public engagement session had been held in respect of the consultation which would be running for the next week. Information boards were available in the Market Hall along with comment cards and email addresses for people to submit responses.

## **RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

### **42 INVESTMENT ZONES UPDATE (10 MINUTES)**

The board heard that Cheshire East Council, with support of MP's had submitted seven expressions of interest of investment zones. The expressions of interest were similar to the project business cases, with four expressions of interest for investment zones in Crewe - three associated with the station HS2 hub and one with the Bentley site.

It was expected that the outcome of the submission would be known shortly.

**RESOLVED**

That the update be noted.

**43 AOB (5 MINUTES)**

The Board heard that the Chamber of Commerce had been designated as provider of the local skills improvement partnership which was a Cheshire and Warrington wide initiative to engage with employers of all sectors to identify skills needs for the future. Funding would be allocated to help the initiative and delivery process plan was being undertaken and would be submitted for approval before the end of November.

The board discussed future meeting dates as these had previously been changed from the first Friday of the month to the last Friday of the month to coincide with the submission of the business cases to government. As the business cases had been submitted it was agreed that after christmas the board meetings would go back to being held on the first Friday in the month.

**RESOLVED:**

That after Christmas, meetings of Crewe Town Board would be held on the first Friday of the month.

**44 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

That the date of the next virtual meeting take place on Friday 25 November 2022 commencing at 9.30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.40 am

D Kinsman (Chair)