

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 5th April, 2024 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Tony Davison (Chair)

Andy Butler, Rick Carter, Guy Kilminster, Doug Kinsman, Councillor Nick Mannion, Dr Kieran Mullan MP, Councillor Jill Rhodes, Sally Hepton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Turner, Martin Wood

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place
Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Jez Goodman, Development & Regeneration Manager
Rhiannon Hilton, Communications Business Partner
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Colman, Simon Yates and Jasbir Dhesi.

95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

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

96 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

97 COUNCIL COMMUNITY TEAM (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an update from the Council's Community Team from Guy Kilminster, Head of Health Improvement.

A new Crewe Connect Forum had been set up which had its first meeting on the 15.04.2024. Cheshire East Officers would attend to raise the joint strategic needs assessment for Crewe. The Forum would engage environmental sector organisations in Crewe and provide an opportunity to share information across all of those organisations and promote the Crewe Town Board.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

98 REPURPOSING OUR HIGH STREETS GRANT SCHEME (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on the progress of the Repurposing Our High Streets Grant Scheme from James Rowley, Repurposing Our High Streets Fund Manager.

It was noted that the HS2 Northern Phase cancellation had caused nervousness with prospective businesses, however, there had been 106 grant enquiries from businesses, 3 completed claims and 3 businesses currently making claims from a range of diverse businesses in Crewe, with some of these looking at moving into recently vacant premises.

The issue of retrospective grant payments was noted, and the issues which this could cause with businesses feasibility. The possibility of staged payments was had been introduced, to assist with funding.

The Board was updated on the current Repurposing Our High Streets Grant Scheme marketing activity:

- www.openincrewe.co.uk website had been set up.
- Branding work had been completed.
- Social media channels had been set up.
- Video case studies had been filmed showcasing applicants, Crewe regeneration projects, and the benefits of opening businesses in Crewe town centre.
- Window vinyl designs had been completed for vacant premises to improve the look of vacant sites, and shutter designs for when some business premises are closed.

The Board was updated on the next steps of Repurposing Our High Streets Grant Scheme marketing activity:

- Continued engagement with applicants, agents and landlords.
- Continued delivery of the marketing campaign.
- Continued promotion of the Repurposing Our High Streets Grant Scheme.

It was noted that the High Street Rental Auction Trailblazer workshops had been postponed, but activity was taking place in order to reschedule these.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

99 MARKETING CREWE (10 MINUTES)

It was noted that a meeting of the Steering Group was due to take place week commencing 08.04.2024.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted and Paul Colman to report back at the next Crewe Town Board meeting on 3 May 2024.

100 **TOWNS FUND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (30 MINUTES)**

The Board received an update from Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager, and individual project sponsors, on several of the Towns Fund Projects and Additional Programme Management updates.

Flag Lane Baths – Currently awaiting tender prices. Removal of asbestos was underway. Fundraising was currently on hold until the final capital costs have been confirmed. The Board sub-group was scheduled to meet with Always Ahead representative in May 2024. Crewe Town Board Vice Chair sent a letter to David Edwards setting out the Crewe Town Board's obligations and expectations, which had been acknowledged.

Crewe Youth Zone – Works had been delayed due to the Stopping Up Order process. Department for Transport's consultation period had now ended, however there were still two objections outstanding from utilities operators which needed to be addressed - consultation with United Utilities was required due to a potential sewer diversion on High Street which required liaison with the Southern Gateway Project. Legal agreements were close to a resolution. A works contractor had been appointed following the Public Procurement Procedure. Officers would examine the current funding position across all projects to identify potential solutions for the shortfall and report back to the Chair. A Youth and Community Worker was in post and actively working with young people and across other projects and a Crewe Youth Zone Chief Executive Officer had been appointed. The project advised it was ready to start in May 2024, but further delays may result in further cost increases, and a risk of not being able to spend the granted YIF funds by the deadline of 31st March 2025.

Crewe Youth Club – Tender for main works contract had been issued and were expecting five bids. Three applications for further funding had been successful, with a total of almost £500,000.

Mill Street Corridor – Planning consent had now secured. Working closely with Southern Gateway project to ensure efficiency and to mitigate costs in the delivery of both projects.

Way Finding – The first installation outside of the new Bus Station had been installed, with MSCP expected in Spring 2024 and further installations at the Southern Gateway, Mill Strete and Gresty Road.

History Centre Public Realm – The main dismantling and deconstruction work commenced in February 204 and expected to complete in June 2024, with the remaining construction work to be completed by October 2024. The main History Centre project was expected to commence in September 2024 subject to additional funding being secured and satisfaction of planning conditions.

Lyceum Square – Outstanding works relating to community artwork, painting of junction, lighting, and recladding to take place in April 2024. Plan to provide

Crewe Regeneration rolling presentation on large screen. A meeting was scheduled with Highways on 11.04.2024 to discuss ongoing management.

Pocket Parks – The first Pocket Park on McLaren Street completed on 03.04.2024 and other projects were well under way, with Derby Docks pocket park opening on 10th April and Queen St and School Crescent opening in the spring.

Valley Brook Green Corridor – First phase of works to be completed imminently. The route details were being finalised with the main works to commence April 2024.

Cumberland Arena – Works ongoing to deliver the project.

Jubilee Project – ANSA had appointed a designer to develop the plans and public consultation. Detailed pre-application discussions with planning and environmental protection were to be had, focusing on the issue of floodlighting and noise impacts on residential properties.

Royal Arcade Phase 1 – Expected completion and handover in May 2024 with launch and PR details to be confirmed.

Warm and Healthy Homes – A bid had been submitted to Historic England for £50,000 of ancillary works, and the project was seeking further support from Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. Work expected to start in summer 2024 and complete winter 2025.

The Board discussed the need to review project budgets to assess whether any grant funding could be reallocated between projects. It was agreed that an exercise would be undertaken to facilitate this, with a decision to be taken at the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

101 **BOARD MEMBERSHIP (10 MINUTES)**

The Board received an update on Board Membership from Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development.

There had seen significant response to the Board Membership advert. CVs and cover letters had been reviewed and shortlisting of the candidates will be undertaken. The interview process / panel would be developed.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

102 **STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (15 MINUTES)**

The Board received a Strategic Update from Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place and Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development on:

Connecting through Crewe HS2 Event – It was noted that the event went well, and positive messages were reinforced throughout by key stakeholders. The importance of networking with other rail infrastructure projects in the region was noted to ensure the connection with Crewe.

DLUHC Deep Dive – Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and Department for Transport colleagues visited Crewe before Easter 2024 to see the site and progress which had been made to date and a positive meeting with Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities Deputy Director. A Twelve-month action plan had been developed which included a Transport and Regeneration Plan for Crewe.

Royal Arcade Phase 2 – Site expected to be handed over in mid-May 2024, and work on the “meanwhile uses” of the site was ongoing. Interim arrangements would focus on security and visual aspects; fencing, pavements, grass / wildflowers, soft landscaping, footpaths, and lighting. The sensitivities of fencing on the site were noted and to be explored further.

Crewe Business Improvement District – BID formally commenced on 04.04.2024. A Chair had been appointed and Groundwork were providing initial technical and administrative support.

Feedback on Crewe Town Board Terms of Reference and next steps – Crewe Town Board Chair had sent a letter to Cheshire East Council Chief Executive and was awaiting response.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

103 **AOB (5 MINUTES)**

It was noted that a Crewe BID representative could attend a future meeting of the Crewe Town Board.

It was noted that the “We Are All Crewe” event could be a useful occasion to launch Marketing Crewe.

104 **DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING**

The date of the next meeting be confirmed as 3rd May 2024 commencing at 9.30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.42 am

Tony Davison (Chair)