

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

CABINET

Date of meeting: 14 July 2009
Report of: Strategic Director - Places
Title: Crewe Masterplanning

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The report outlines the current position with regards to the regeneration of Crewe and seeks endorsement to a proposed masterplanning process to be led by Cheshire East Council.
- 1.2 The outcome of this work will be the development of a high-level vision for Crewe and a business case for major public sector investment.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Approve the overall approach to masterplanning in Crewe.
- 2.2 Agree to underwrite £125k from balances to support the project if required.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Northwest region is currently debating future spatial, economic and transport priorities. Crewe currently features on the fringe of regional discussions largely due to the lack of clarity and awareness on the true economic and connectivity potential of this key gateway.
- 3.2 Cheshire East Council can provide the leadership required to fully explore this potential and present a business case for major public sector investment to the region and national government.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Crewe North; Crewe South; Crewe East; Crewe West

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Local ward members will be fully engaged in the delivery of this project.

6.0 Policy Implications including – Climate Change/Health

- 6.1 The outcome of this work will feed directly in a range of local, sub-regional, regional and potentially national policy. The ambitious timescales have been set to maximise the opportunity to influence regional policy development in relation to the Single Regional Strategy RS2010, and the Department for Transport funding allocation process.
- 6.2 The scope of the masterplanning will encompass a range of broader policy issues including climate change, housing, health and wellbeing, economic development and spatial planning.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs

- 7.1 There are no financial implications for Transition Costs.

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond

- 8.1 The total cost of the masterplanning process including the additional staffing resource could be up to £200k during 2009/10.
- 8.2 £75k has already been agreed in principle by NWDA following an approach directly to the Chief Executive seeking high level support and a financial contribution.
- 8.3 Every effort will be made to accommodate the remainder of the budget up to £125k through current budgets within the Places Directorate. The Cabinet is requested to underwrite this project in order that it can be progressed in accordance with the ambitious timetable outlined in this report, with any shortfall in funding being drawn from balances at a later date if required.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this piece of work.

10.0 Risk Assessment

- 10.1 There are minimal risks associated with Cheshire East leading this key piece of work as all stakeholders that have been approached to date have fully endorsed the need for the new Council to show leadership on this issue.
- 10.2 The key strategic risk is that the visioning process signs up all stakeholders to an ambitious strategy which seeks major public sector investment over a 10 -15 year timeframe. This approach may limit the ability to draw in short-term funding to make substantial change as the vision may require some key decisions from the Government in terms of rail investment that cannot take

place within the next 2 – 3 years. We will ensure that the implications of this approach are explored as much as possible during the masterplanning process to mitigate this risk. The two stage process will also agree a short-term investment programme which will need to take place regardless of the long-term vision.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 Crewe is the biggest spatial priority for Cheshire East. The Council has inherited a number of major initiatives/projects in Crewe at various stages of development – but no overall vision.
- 11.2 Recent discussions with NWDA have highlighted the significance of Crewe in the region, and the opportunity for Cheshire East Council to show leadership by demonstrating its true potential in relation to the Northwest economy. The future of Crewe will have a major role to play in the continued growth of the Northwest as key decisions are made nationally with regards to investment in the rail network, in particular the debate about the future of high speed rail.
- 11.3 Crewe currently has a minor reference in the Regional Economic Strategy as a growth town – there is a danger that this is lost through the RS 2010 planning process due to the lack of vision/strategy for the growth potential and strategic significance of Crewe from an economic and strategic transport perspective.
- 11.4 CWEA and Cheshire West and Chester Council also see Crewe as the major focus for sub-regional investment.
- 11.5 Cheshire East is developing the Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework (LDF) through 2009/10. The spatial plan needs to reflect a higher level vision for Crewe which fully exploits its growth potential.
- 11.6 Basford East is a Regional Strategic site but progress has been slow in addressing the land ownership issues. A clear strategy/action plan is required to retain confidence of regional partners about the long-term benefits of the site and its deliverability.
- 11.7 The potential role of Crewe in meeting the future housing ambitions of Cheshire East and the northwest needs further exploration prior to the development of our LDF.
- 11.8 The decision of Network Rail not to invest in Crewe station or its relocation during the 2009-2014 funding programme has affected the confidence of partners. There is no clear consensus about the way forward.
- 11.9 Crewe has the potential to feature in the development of national transport policy in order to benefit from major investment in the future ie. High Speed Rail 2.

- 11.10 There are a large number of existing strategies/studies that will provide a significant evidence base to support the wider strategy development.
- 11.11 There is a need for strong political backing for Crewe to exploit its true potential within the region and nationally.

Masterplanning/Visioning Brief

- 11.12 Here is a need for strong leadership from Cheshire East Council to take the lead in defining a high-level vision for the area and producing a short, medium and long-term investment strategy that addresses the above issues.
- 11.13 The first stage of the masterplanning process which is targeted for delivery by September 2009, will identify the short/medium-term investment priorities that will have an immediate impact on the local area. The work will address:
- The early delivery potential of current projects and 'quick wins'
 - A package of investment for Crewe station and surrounding area with potential funding sources
 - The early interventions required by Cheshire East to unlock the development potential of key sites ie CPO/land acquisition.
- 11.14 The second stage of the process which is targeted to be completed by end December 2009, will define a longer-term vision for the area which will:
- Provide a high-level vision and clear economic case for Crewe as a regionally significant project from a jobs/growth perspective and as a regional transport gateway into the Northwest.
 - Define the major opportunities and challenges facing the area from an economic/growth perspective.
 - Identify the connectivity and strategic linkages between current development proposals and existing masterplanning for the University quadrant, West End, Town Centre and Basford sites.
 - Review the recent business case for the relocation of Crewe station and the alternative options in light of the current position of Network Rail.
 - Provide a medium and long-term investment strategy for the area in line with the overall vision.
 - Recommend appropriate delivery/governance arrangements aligned to the investment strategy
 - Engage proactively with stakeholders/partners through the process.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 11.15 Cheshire East will lead the process but seek engagement/support from the following stakeholders:
- NWDA/4NW – to inform the development of RS2012 and future investment planning
 - GONW – Cheshire East providing strategic leadership as a new unitary
 - CWEA – to inform sub-regional planning processes

- Cheshire West and Chester Council – to develop Crewe as a sub-regional priority
 - Network Rail – as a strategic partner and to inform future investment planning
 - Homes and Communities Agency - as a potential partner for future housing development/growth point status
 - North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership – to understand the linkages/opportunities between the Potteries and Crewe.
- 11.16 There are currently a number of Boards/Development groups at various stages of development leading individual projects. This will be reviewed by Cheshire East as an early action in the masterplan process.
- 11.17 To lead the masterplan and maximise local and regional buy-in, Cheshire East will assemble a high-level task group of high profile figures to meet a maximum of three times through the process. An early consideration of potential figures/organisations is as follows:
- Leader, Cheshire East Council
 - Bentley Motors
 - Pete Waterman
 - Edward Timpson MP
 - Manchester Airport
 - NWDA
 - HCA
 - University
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Network Rail
 - CWEA
 - Cheshire West and Chester Council

Management Arrangements

- 11.18 The Strategic Officer Lead for the project will be the Strategic Director, Places supported by the Head of Regeneration.
- 11.19 Due to the imperative to deliver this project within the ambitious timelines a 6/9 month post has been created within the Economic Development function to take a lead on this work supported by Senior Officers and Members. The role is currently out to tender and requires an individual with a high level of skill and demonstrable track record in developing economic strategies/spatial plans.
- 11.20 The role will:
- Lead the masterplanning process, bringing in external support as required.
 - Develop appropriate mechanisms to engage with stakeholders
 - Engage with colleagues across Cheshire East to ensure a co-ordinated approach
 - Work with Members through the process to ensure buy- in and full engagement

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1 The following ambitious timetable is proposed:

- Masterplan process scoped by **end May 2009**
- Internal/external resources secured by **end June 2009**
- First Stakeholder workshop by **end August 2009**
- First stage masterplanning completed by **end Sept 2009**
- Second Stakeholder workshop by **end Nov 2009**
- Second stage masterplanning completed by **end Dec 2009**
- Final Stakeholder workshop in **January 2010**.

For further information:

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