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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 30th September, 2022 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Doug Kinsman (Chair)

John Adlen, Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Jasbir Dhesi, Sally Hepton, Guy Kilminster, Councillor Nick Mannion, Dr Kieran Mullan MP, Councillor Jill Rhodes and Simon Yates

ALSO PRESENT

Peter Turner and Martin Wood

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rhiannon Hilton, Communications Officer

Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development

Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise

OTHERS

Daniel Lindsay (Ekosgen)

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Butler, Ellie Cox, Mark Hills, Lindsey Lewis and Carol Young.

28 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.

29 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the virtual meeting held on 29 July 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.

30 TOWNS FUND PROGRESS UPDATE (45 MINUTES)

The board received a presentation from Daniel Lindsay, Ekosgen, which included an update on the final project, Repurposing Our High Streets Towns Fund Proposal which included

- A grant scheme for businesses taking on vacant commercial premises (including strategically important ground floor premises that will have a wider impact on the town)
- Visual 'shop window' type improvements to vacant premises
- Resources to (i) manage enquiries, (ii) pro-actively engage with commercial landlords, property agents and businesses, (iii) business support activity, and (iv) end of scheme evaluation.

Questions/comments were made in respect of the following:

- Could the process for applying for grants be carried out in steps so not everyone would be applying at once?
- There needed to be a clear marketing campaign;
- In terms of Market Research, work had been undertaken with landlords, local commercial agents and prospective tenants to help develop the scheme to ensure that it's targeted at local challenges.

In response to board questions, consideration would be given to waves of applications for grants rather than one tranche of applications. There had been discussions with landlord's, and they agreed it would be seen as a positive for the town.

It was considered that there was a strong basis for investment in its strategic, financial, and economic cases. Following the appraisal, the Repurposing Our High Streets was considered suitable for funding subject to specific conditions being met in commercial and management cases, and consideration given to the recommendations on project delivery.

The board thanked Daniel Lindsay from Ekosgen for all his work on the projects.

RESOLVED (Unanimously)

That the board approve recommendation to the S151 Officer to progress the Repurposing Our High Streets project back to Government.

31 BOARD GOVERNANCE (30 MINUTES)

The Board currently had two vacancies following the departure of Reverend David Edwards and Adam Knight. It was agreed that there would be a transparent process in the recruitment. A Job Description and Person Specification had been created with the idea that the people applying would have linkages to Crewe, some experience in the community and voluntary sector and interested in making a positive change in Crewe.

It was hoped that the successful candidates would be in position for the new year.

Comments and feedback were received in relation to:-

- The need to be creative in with the recruitment process and provide support for candidates i.e mentoring, induction.
- Cheshire East Community & Development team would be able to help with delivering the message to communities.
- It would be good to have a representative who had a strong understanding and knowledge of the importance in regenerating towns, culture, and heritage.
- Consideration be given to the gender balance on the board.
- If there were more than two suitable candidates could consideration be given to increasing Board member numbers?

A recruitment strategy would include using social media, HR processes within Cheshire East Council to receive applications, with officers, chair, and vice chair shortlisting applications.

RESOLVED:

That the process outlined for recruitment which included the recruitment strategy, the job description, person specification and timetable be agreed following the amendments as discussed.

32 COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT SUB-GROUP UPDATE (10 MINUTES)

The board received an update on the Communications and Engagement Sub-Group Resources which included what had been achieved to date, current support, issues, and the options on how to progress the board in a more impactful way going forward.

As well as the options already outlined, the following options were open to the board for consideration:

- A third-party organisation to help promote Crewe more widely than just the Board, and that could have the ability to receive and apply for funding.
- Have a group of advocates for the Town who would come together with guidance and direction to promote all the work that is going on in Crewe.

Comments and feedback were received in relation to:-

- There needs to be more co-ordination in promoting the projects.
- Like the idea of advocates who could market all the aspects of Crewe.
- Doing nothing is not an option.
- Would it be worth having an annual report?
- Would it be appropriate to accept sponsorship or crowdfunding if a third-party vehicle was used?
- The front story on the website should link to the ten projects and the website to be updated.

RESOLVED:-

That the concept of marketing Crewe structure be taken forward.

33 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:-

- Future High Streets project – The Economy & Growth committee considered a report on the Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycleway Connectivity Scheme to provide a new gateway entrance to the south of Crewe town centre via a new pedestrian and cycleway linking High Street and Forge Street. Negotiations with landowners and occupiers were progressing well and the committee noted the public consultation and outcomes from that. A planning application would be submitted shortly.
- There would be further planning applications submitted in the next few weeks in respect of the History Centre and the Public Realm, the demolition of the mezzanine over the car park and the new entrance over the magistrates courts.
- Royal Arcade – Stopping up orders had been produced and put up on site. There had been no objections so closures could continue.
- The demolition of the bus sheds had been completed so the temporary bus station was scheduled to be completed by January 2023.

- In the longer term, completion of the bus station and multi-storey car park was scheduled for December 2023.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

34 AOB (5 MINUTES)

There were no items of other business raised.

35 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date of the next virtual meeting take place on Friday 28 October 2022 commencing at 9.30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.43 am

D Kinsman (Chair)

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