

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	14 November 2022
Report Title:	Crewe Youth Zone Project Update
Report of:	Deborah Woodcock – Executive Director of Children’s Services
Report Reference No:	CF/20/22-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All Crewe Wards

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress for the development of the Crewe Youth Zone.
- 1.2 A Crewe Youth Zone contributes to the following strategic aims and objectives in the council’s Corporate Plan 2021-25:

A council which empowers and cares about people:

- Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient
- Reduce health inequalities across the borough
- Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Support all children to have the best start in life
- Increase opportunities for all children and young adults with additional needs.

A thriving and sustainable place:

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report follows on from previous Cabinet and Children and Families Committee reports, the approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and provides a summary of the steps taken to date and future activity that will drive a project to deliver a Crewe Youth Zone that is effective in terms of cost, time and quality.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Committee should note this update.

4 Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 This an update report for information only.

5 Other Options Considered

- 5.1 This section is not applicable.

6 Background

- 6.1 Crewe Youth Zone reports have been presented to Cabinet on the 06 October 2020 and to Children and Families Committee on 08 November 2021. This report provides an update to Committee on progress over the last year and a summary of next steps.
- 6.2 One of the major milestones during 2022 was the submission of a Crewe Youth Zone full business case for Crewe Towns Fund, the successful independent appraisal by Ekosgen and subsequent approval by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Ekosgen have provided a summary of the full business case which is included in the confidential appendix to this report. The appendix contains information of a commercially sensitive nature relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. It should be noted that the summary includes reference to the Mirion Street project and elements of the project have moved on since the business cases was completed.
- 6.3 The Crewe Youth Zone on the Oak Street site comprises capital investment to deliver a 2,250 m² Youth Zone facility available for young people aged 8-19 and up to 25 for those with additional needs. This will be delivered by OnSide and will include a large-scale sports hall and multi-use 3G pitch, climbing wall, boxing and fitness suite, dance and music studios, art workshop, an enterprise and employability suite, training kitchen, group work and training rooms, a subsidised café and social areas.

The main aims of the project are to:

- Deliver a new Youth Zone in Crewe town centre providing a wide range of skills, leisure, sport, health and wellbeing support to young people.

- Secure the regeneration of a major strategic town centre gateway site.
- Re-purpose an existing car park leading to enhanced townscape that is more attractive to residents, businesses and visitors
- Support community health and wellbeing in Crewe.
- Contribute towards the diversification of the town centre and improve its vitality, sustainability and resilience.
- Support young people as Crewe embarks on its post COVID-19 recovery.
- Create new opportunities for volunteers.

6.4 In order to plot the journey to date and the future key milestones the chronology below is provided:

December 2020 – Crewe Youth Zone shortlisted for inclusion as a project for the Crewe Towns Fund bid.

July 2021 – Cheshire East Council awarded £22.9m through Crewe Towns Fund subject to full business case approvals (Cheshire East Council's submission included £2m for Crewe Youth Zone and £600,000 for a youth facility development at Mirion Street)

Autumn 2021 – internal council business case submitted as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (£2.2m capital and £400,000 revenue contribution for three years commencing 2025-26)

February 2022 – Crewe Youth Zone full business case for Crewe Towns Fund submitted as a Tranche 1 project for independent appraisal by Ekosgen

February 2022 - £340,000 of Crewe Towns Fund upfront development monies provided to OnSide to progress the project to RIBA Stage 3 and Planning

24 February 2022 Full Council approved the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (including £2.2m capital and £400,000 revenue contribution for three years commencing 2025-26)

29 April 2022 – Crewe Town Board approve tranche 1 business cases submitted to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

18 May 2022 – Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) stage 2 design report received for Crewe Youth Zone from Onside.

As a preview, this is what the scheme could look like: -



7 June 2022 – Crewe Youth Zone received approval from DLUHC. There were funding conditions applied by the Crewe Town Board and confirmed by DLUHC that are summarised below:

1. Milestones are agreed for the development of a detailed project programme and for confirming site-specific costs, to demonstrate that the scheme remains affordable within the available funding envelope.

Summary response: *A Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) plan of work will be followed that organises the process of briefing, designing, constructing and operating building projects. The current RIBA Stage 2 report for Crewe Youth Zone provided a cost plan that will be informed by (and revised following) completion of the Stage 3 design which will confirm site-specific costs. The programme for design and construction will also be updated once the balance of the capital funding requirement is secured.*

2. Milestones are agreed to confirm that match funding is in place ahead of releasing funding.

Summary response: *It has been agreed that the legal documentation will be structured to prevent further release of either the council's contribution or that of the Towns Fund until the match funding is in place, an affordable tender has been received and there is a start on site. The milestones for securing the match funding will be reviewed before 31 October 2022 in the context of a bid by OnSide for capital support from the recently opened Youth Investment Fund.*

3. The implications of cost inflation and cost overruns should be carefully monitored over the coming months, so that suitable mitigations can be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Summary response: *The RIBA Stage 2 cost plan contains a contingency for cost inflation (based on Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) data) plus other prudent risks of cost overrun. This will be revised following completion of the Stage 3 design and again at pre-tender. A monthly Project Board has been established which picks up the financial position of the project and any mitigation / escalation required. A monthly dashboard (including financial position / risk) is also presented to Crewe Town Fund Programme Board.*

4. A clear process should be agreed between Cheshire East Council (CEC) and the applicant for agreeing suitable mitigations, where they have the potential to impact on the scale or range of uses that can be delivered.

Summary response: *CEC and Onside have formed an effective Project Board and also meet outside of Board on a regular basis to review progress and any need for mitigations which have the potential to impact on the scale or range of uses would be identified and discussed immediately. Alternative mitigations would be explored as a priority.*

5. OnSide should provide clarity to CEC on the contracting entities at each stage of development and delivery post Board approval, roles and responsibilities of Onside and Crewe Youth Zone, and how the transition to Crewe Youth Zone will be managed.

Summary response: *CEC and Onside meet regularly to review progress and the respective parties' roles and responsibilities are highlighted at each stage of development. In August 2022 CEC nominated a senior officer to be one of the subscribers on the incorporation and charity registration of Crewe Youth Zone which will start the transition of responsibilities. An Operational Agreement will be put in place to formalise the ongoing management of the Youth Zone.*

6. CEC should be satisfied that short term contractual arrangements are clear.
Further evidence is provided in relation to the recruitment of a Board of Trustees for Crewe Youth Zone – including timescales demonstrating alignment with the overall programme, and process to ensure that a suitable breadth and depth of expertise is secured.

Summary response: *Short term contractual arrangements have been checked and agreed by CEC. Incorporation and registration of Crewe Youth Zone is to commence in early November 2022 at which point a programme for the recruitment and appointment of trustees will be produced. OnSide has a well-used and successful structure of portfolios*

for Youth Zone trustees and will recruit to those portfolios only at appropriate stages in the development of the project. This ensures that there is suitable local expertise available when needed but avoids trustees being in post before their expertise is required (risking loss of enthusiasm and commitment). OnSide has the resources to provide support across all portfolios until such time as the local resources are in place.

7. Further evidence is provided in relation to the recruitment of a Board of Trustees for Crewe Youth Zone – including timescales demonstrating alignment with the overall programme, and process to ensure that a suitable breadth and depth of expertise is secured.

Summary response: *See above plus Graham Ramsbottom, has recently agreed to be the private sector Trustee who will sit alongside Claire Williamson Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration and an OnSide representative, as the first three subscribers to the Board of Trustees for Crewe Youth Zone.*

Graham has most recently been the Chief Executive of the Wheatsheaf Group and was previously the Managing Director of the Grosvenor Estate. Educated at Harvard Business School following a number of years in the Royal Navy, Graham brings a wealth of expertise and connections across Cheshire to the Crewe Youth Zone Board.

June 2022 – OnSide formally start their capital and revenue fundraising

August 2022 – OnSide submit capital bid to Youth Investment Fund

October 2022 to December 2022 – incorporation of Crewe Youth Zone (at Companies House) and subsequent registration (with the Charity Commission) to establish an independent Crewe Youth Zone Charity to deliver and operate the Youth Zone (with CEC Senior Officer on board of trustees)

November 2022 – Planning application to be submitted for Crewe Youth Zone

November 2022 – Grant Funding Agreement, Operational Agreement and Agreement for Lease to be finalised.

June 2023 to September 2023 – Formal consultation and approval sought re the proposed variation to the car park order for Oak Street.

February 2023 to September 2023 – Tender preparation, issue, review and recommendation to gain approval to proceed to placing the building contract for Crewe Youth Zone (subject to all funding being secured).

November / December 2023 – site preparation and start on site (date of release of Oak Street car park interdependent on opening of new Royal Arcade multi-storey car park)

December 2024 – practical completion of the building

January - March 2025 - Fixtures, fittings and equipment fit-out; staff orientation and training; soft opening period.

April 2025 – Public opening

- 6.5 The efficient and effective delivery of a new Crewe Youth Zone requires appropriate governance and monitoring of risk. The following provides an outline of the avenues to secure effective governance:

Boards / Meetings:

- Crewe Town Board – Responsible for oversight of Crewe Towns Fund Programme
- Crewe Towns Fund Programme Board (CEC-led as Accountable Body for Towns Fund)
- Crewe Youth Zone Project Board

Tools / reports:

- Legal framework including Grant Funding Agreement, Lease, Operational Agreement, Network Agreement, Memorandum and Articles of Association
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) stage reports
- Monthly dashboard incorporating progress, escalation requirements and risks
- Financial dashboard – reported to S151 Officer
- Monitoring and evaluation reports to DLUHC
- Risk registers

7 Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1 The views of children and young people have been captured and built into the business case and early visits to see an operational Youth Zone have taken place. Prior to the submission of a full Planning application, face to face and virtual public consultation will be undertaken during late October 2022.

- 7.2 A comprehensive consultation and engagement plan will be drafted late 2022 / early 2023 when the project is at the appropriate stage of delivery. A bespoke community engagement approach will be based on the following principles:

- Working closely with the council, schools and any key figures in the business and voluntary communities to identify key community stakeholders.
- Seeking to understand the wider needs of the local community, obviously including young people, and the existing local provision.
- Being good listeners; being ready to hear the views in the community.
- Developing consultation evidence about the views of young people to support the Youth Zone and wider youth provision (including young people visits to Youth Zones).

- Having an eye out for opportunities for delivery and grow partnerships.
- Bringing together a Young People's Development Group; a group that is as representative as possible of the young people of the Borough (this generally starts about 18 - 20 months prior to opening).

7.3 It is important that access to youth support, whether through the council or other organisations / partners, is effective, targeted and supports the best outcomes for children and young people. The following bullet points provide the landscape that will influence access to the right offer, at the right time in the right location:

- The Council's current MTFS has the planned Cheshire East Council revenue commitments in respect of the Youth Zone identified and funded for the appropriate time period. The allocation of the overall resources for youth services will be planned with the knowledge of the additional significant resource being applied through the Youth Zone (estimated £1.3m revenue cost of operating a Youth Zone to be funded 100% through external fundraising, membership / sales revenues and external grant funding). When the new Crewe Youth Zone is up and running the existing youth service resources will be applied effectively across the remaining areas of the borough to deliver a good universal / targeted offer for all Cheshire East young people.
- Access and transport will be a key topic for the Youth Development Group to investigate (the Youth Development Group is 25-50 young people from across the borough who work intensively during the build period to shape the offer working with OnSide teams). The ability for parents to drop off and access to public transport will be considered and where possible supported by developing other options i.e. current Youth Zones across the country have mini bus pick up points in strategic locations and work closely with local bus operators to maximise support with access and transport.
- Some of the existing Youth Zones are working with their local Council's to develop 'Strategic Youth Partnerships' – a collective of organisations, into which all providers (public, charity and voluntary sector) are welcomed. Together, they are bidding for significant funding streams to share between them. They are avoiding duplication and plugging gaps through collaborative programme scheduling, larger organisations are actually now sharing staff to support smaller organisations in hard to reach areas, they are providing training and best practice sharing, co-referring and generally raising the bar even further for young people. Youth Zones are becoming a hub or a catalyst to galvanise and champion the whole youth sector within a locality – and a game changer to the system.
- Research and intelligence from existing Youth Zones shows distances travelled by Youth Zone members (one North West Youth Zone for

example - 14% of young people travelled between 5 and 8 km and an additional 15 % travelled over 8km) and shows that Youth Zones reach the right communities, even when big distances are involved.

- Seeing the overall local Youth Offer as a toolbox or jigsaw is really helpful. Not all young people want the same offer. We need to be providing young people with choice and options. A partnership approach to add value to the whole youth sector will be embedded early.
- It is vital that the investment into a Crewe Youth Zone has a positive impact for children and young people, their families and communities. Building on the impact described in the November 2021 Children and Families Committee report, the “Proven Impact” summary provides clear evidence of excellent impact of Youth Zones to date. A sample of the impact achieved is detailed below:
 - 77% of members are more self-confident
 - 82% of frequent attenders have more friends
 - 70% of members believe that they are healthier
 - 75% feel better in themselves
 - 73% of members feel less isolated
 - 79% of frequent attenders feel they are better prepared for the future
 - 83% have found work or gone into education or training as a result of our get a job course
 - 66% of members agree that they are more likely to stay out of trouble
 - 97% of stakeholders thought that their area was better since their Youth Zone opened
 - 94% of stakeholders said that it raised pride in the local area
- When the Crewe Youth Zone is operational regular local reports will be available that cover the impact that Cheshire East Council wishes to see from a Crewe Youth Zone.
- Within Cheshire East we have been ambitious to set our Corporate Plan and our 7 priority areas within our Children and Young People’s Plan. Work with the Crewe Youth Zone will ensure we link our agreed priorities from both plans with a clear outcome framework to evidence the impact of the work and in partnership with the Crewe Youth Zone to ensure we are achieving positive impact for our children and young people.
- The restructure of the Early Help and Prevention service is underway and it is proposed that a new outdoor education and engagement service will see youth workers target provision to re-engage children

back into education through various programmes. Strong partnerships will be further built on with our schools to engage young people into youth work provision. In areas where there is disruption, our targeted youth work team via detached work will engage young people into various targeted activities. Work with the police, health and partners to support our young people at risk of exploitation and serious crime will be an integral part of the work of the team to ensure our young people are safe from exploitation. Alongside this the Community Youth Lead will work within the localities to build community interest to develop community led youth work provision to engage a universal offer of youth provision. As the Crewe Youth Zone is developed resources within the youth support team will become dedicated to the remaining areas across Cheshire East.

8 Implications

8.2 Legal

8.2.1 The legal team (together with external lawyers) have been providing advice on the project, funding arrangements and subsidy control matters arising. The legal team will continue to provide advice on the grant funding agreement and be engaged in the creation and completion of all necessary legal agreements.

8.3 Finance

8.3.1 The next significant financial milestone in terms of the funding of the project will be the result of the Youth Investment Fund bid which was expected by the end of this calendar year. However, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have recently requested that the Crewe Youth Zone project be fast tracked for a decision by the end of October 2022 which is a positive sign. Once the funding decision is received this will enable the financial planning for the project to move forward, including critical cash flow planning given the sources of funding being applied overall.

8.3.2 The Council will be providing £1.2m of revenue funding made up of £0.4m for three years from 2025. This will enable the council to deliver targeted and universal preventative youth services to young people in Crewe and beyond dependant on need. The Grant Funding Agreement and Operational Agreement will put the necessary legal structure around the council funding to be applied to the project.

8.4 Policy

8.4.1 There are no policy implications as this is an update report.

8.5 Equality

8.5.1 Access to youth services for children and young people across the borough is important. As the Crewe Youth Zone is developed resources within the

council youth support team will become dedicated to the remaining areas across Cheshire East.

8.6 Human Resources

8.6.1 There are no human resources implications as this is an update report.

8.7 Risk Management

8.7.1 Risk management is a key feature throughout the business case and RIBA stages to project completion. A comprehensive risk register is maintained and project governance has a clear focus on identifying, mitigating and managing risk.

8.8 Rural Communities

8.8.1 The delivery of youth services (incorporating the new Crewe Youth Zone) across the borough will take account of the Cheshire East Council Rural Action Plan 2022 – 2026.

8.9 Children and Young People/Cared for Children

8.9.1 There are significant benefits of developing a Youth Zone for young people in terms of aspirational things to do, support to mental health and wellbeing, routes to employment and training, community cohesion and changing mindset around school attendance.

8.10 Public Health

8.10.1 Developing a Youth Zone will encourage improved physical activity and mental health and wellbeing thereby improving key public health outcomes.

8.11 Climate Change

8.11.1 There are no human resources implications as this is an update report.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	David Leadbetter, Children's Services Project Manager dave.leadbetter@cheshireeast.gov.uk 07794059581
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Crewe Youth Zone Business Case (Part 2 – Confidential)
Background Papers:	None