

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 7th March, 2025 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Tony Davison (Chair)

S Yates, K Blakemore, A Butler, R Carter, P Colman, S Hepton, G Kilminster,
D Kinsman, N Mannion, G McKnight, J Rhodes and I Moston

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Pete Turner, Lindsay Lewis

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise

Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development

Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager

Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing

Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

89 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Jasbir Dhesi, Connor Naismith
MP and Martin Wood.

90 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

There were no declarations of interests other than those already on file.

91 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 07.02.2025 be approved as a
correct record.

92 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR (5 MINUTES)

In line with the Crewe Town Board Terms of Reference, the Chair of the
Crewe Town Board was required to be reviewed annually by the Board.

RESOLVED:

Following consultation with Board members, Tony Davison was approved
to continue as Chair of the Crewe Town Board for the next 12 months.

93 CHESHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on the Cheshire Community Foundation from Mel Sproston, Chief Executive Officer. The Board were updated that:

- The Cheshire Community Foundation (CCF) is one of 47 Community Foundations and was founded in 2011
- Since 2011 CCF had awarded over £14 million in grants and supported over 1.4 million people across Cheshire and Warrington
- CCF brought together donors, business, and charities to create opportunities, improve lives and empower communities by raising funds, designing, advertising and administering grant programmes
- CCF had five key pillars:
 - Addressing food insecurity, financial hardship and homelessness
 - Supporting mentoring, counselling services, support channels, and community health programmes
 - Reducing isolation, fostering inclusivity, and strengthening local groups
 - Helping young people and adults gain skills, training, and access to better opportunities
 - Promoting sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives
- CCF was currently involved with the Active Futures initiative, growth of the South West Enterprise Fund which supports young entrepreneurs, collaborative relationships with charities, businesses, Cheshire East Council, Crewe Fund and South Cheshire Funders Forum
- It was noted that since the start of 2025, the number of charities in the area facing financial difficulty was increasing
- CCF were aiming to increase the awareness of itself within Cheshire East
- The opportunities which could come to CCF and Cheshire East as a result of devolution were noted.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted, and the work of the Foundation be commended and endorsed by members of the Board.

94 ROYAL ARCADE PHASE 2 UPDATE (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on the Royal Arcade Phase 2 development, from Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager.

The project had submitted a proposal to receive funding from Cheshire East Council's allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support meanwhile uses on the Royal Arcade Phase 2 development site.

The project would be delivered in two stages, as the second stage required planning consent:

- Stage 1 – Tidying, soft landscaping and a low-level perimeter fencing
Expected to commence in April 2025 and complete in May 2025.
- Stage 2 – Grassing, footpaths and pedestrian lighting, hardstanding for activities, additional seating, planting, activity zones, power supply, landscaping and drainage.
Expected to commence in July 2025 and be open to the public in November 2025.

There would be a public engagement event in March 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

95 TOWNS FUND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (15 MINUTES)

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

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had formally approved the Council's request that £1.893m of funding be rolled into 2026 / 2027 for the Warm and Healthy Homes, History Centre and Public Realm, Repurposing High Street and Valley Brook Green Corridor projects.

Warm and Healthy Homes – Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing, attended the meeting to provide an update and seek direction on the Warm and Healthy Homes project. The Board were updated that the Warm and Healthy Homes project was targeting 65 of the Railway Cottage dwellings, with 45 signed up to date. The project was scheduled to commence in August 2025 and complete by Autumn 2026.

The original scope of the project was to improve the dwellings through general repairs, window replacement, loft insulation and essential fabric repairs, and to the public realm by repairing and replacing the ground coverings in Betley, Tollit and Dorfold Streets, however due to subsoil issues, estimates for the public realm were estimated to be up to £3 million, due to possible Red Ash present under the sub soil.

A public realm survey would be required to enable Crewe Town Council and Highways to identify long term public realm issues, however these are likely to be expensive options.

The Board were presented with several alternative recommendations to the project scope, to ensure that improvements to the dwellings could be improved as much as possible, and proposed works to the public realm be reduced.

Repurposing Our High Street – Twelve grant recipients had businesses that were now open, two were pending opening dates, there were three grant offers made to organisations and eight new grant applications in process. Other units were becoming vacant as some national businesses were closing. Vinyl artwork had now been installed on the former Iceland site.

History Centre / Public Realm – Building work commenced in January 2025 and a showcasing event was held on 20 February 2025. A groundbreaking event is scheduled for 3 April 2025 as PR for the History Centre, but also to mark completion of Phase 1 Civic & Cultural Hub works.

Youth Zone - Bentley Motors and the Steve Morgan Foundation were the latest supporters. Recruitment to senior leadership and administration team roles were underway. Forecasting spring / summer 2026 opening.

Crewe Youth Club – The only outstanding issue related to s278 remedial works on Mirion Street which had additional costs. A PR campaign was underway to support the opening in May 2025.

Cumberland Arena – Due to complete December 2025.

Pocket Parks – Final designs had been completed for Lime Tree Avenue and Samuel Street, however there had been some local objection. Design work had been completed for Westminster Street and Valley Brook prior to public consultation, and both were expected to complete by December 2025, incorporating feedback from the Nantwich Road Action Group.

Jubilee / Wishing Well – Planning application had been submitted with a decision due mid-March 2025.

Southern Gateway (FHSF fund project) – Main works to be completed by May 2025.

Mill Street Corridor – Required land had been acquired and easement issues resolved. Highways were exploring options regarding options for a related project at Nantwich Road Bridge.

RESOLVED:

Warm and Healthy Homes – The Board resolved to amend the project scope as follows, Highways to carry out an initial scoping survey (£7500), to receive a cost / benefit analysis of the public realm survey to be provided prior to a decision on whether to continue with the full survey, and a site visit be arranged:

- Dwellings
 - Repairs up to property

- Window replacement
- Loft insulation
- Fabric repairs
- Door replacements
- Public Realm
 - Tree removal and replacement
 - Rainwater goods (all properties)

That the updates be noted.

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

The Board received a Strategic Update from Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise.

Cheshire East Council Finances – Cheshire East had held its budget setting Full Council meeting in February 2025 and was able to pass a budget using Exceptional Finance Support, however the Council remained in challenging financial position.

Local Transport Plan – The consultation on the draft vision for the local transport plan was currently taking place.

Jobs Fair - A jobs fair facilitated by Cheshire East Council and the Department for Work and Pensions had been held at Crewe Market Hall on 27 February 2025, with over 900 potential applicants, and 45 interviews arranged.

Cheshire East Transformation Plan – Cheshire East was advancing its transformation plan, and recruitment had taken place for senior leadership roles within the Council – Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer and Assistant Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

97 **DEVOLUTION UPDATE (10 MINUTES)**

The Board received an update on devolution in Cheshire and Warrington, from Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise.

The Government's consultation on devolution in Cheshire and Warrington had launched on 17 February 2025, and would last for 8 weeks until 13 April 2025. The consultation would seek views from interested who live and / or work in Cheshire and Warrington on the effect of creating a Mayoral Combined Authority in the area.

The combined authority would be known as Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority and each council would appoint two representatives to be Constituent Members – six in total from the three founding councils, and the first Mayor Election would take place on 7 May 2026. Mayors would be considered a Constituent Member to form a total of seven.

It was noted that the boundary of Cheshire and Warrington would differ from the boundaries of the local health and police authorities.

A Mayoral Combined Authority could have devolved funding from central government, including those related to:

- Housing and Regeneration
- Local growth
- Adult skills
- Local transport.

The Government's June 2025 Spending Review would determine the budget for the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

98 CREWE TOWN BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW (15 MINUTES)

The meeting fell below the quorum level from this point, so no substantive decisions were made.

The Board received an update on proposed amendments to the Crewe Town Board Terms of Reference, from Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development.

A draft Terms of Reference update had been developed which looked towards the future as the scope of the Crewe Town Board had progressed.

It was noted that the Board should look as to how it could increase the transparency of their meetings, and to challenge the initial instructions from government to keep them private.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted and the draft Terms of Reference would come back to a subsequent meeting.

99 AOB (5 MINUTES)

RESOLVED:

It was suggested that that High-Speed Rail Group be invited to present at a future meeting of the Crewe Town Board, accompanied by Council Officers.

100 **DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING (1 MINUTE)**

RESOLVED:

To confirm the date of the next meeting as 04.04.2025 commencing at 09:30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 12.05 pm

Tony Davison (Chair)