

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 2nd May, 2025 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Tony Davison, Kate Blakemore, Andy Butler, Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Jasbir Dhesi, Sally Hepton, Guy Kilminster, Councillor Nick Mannion, Connor Naismith MP, Councillor Jill Rhodes and Ian Moston

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Pete Turner, Lindsay Lewis, Andrew Baker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Jez Goodman, Regeneration and Development Officer
Rhiannon Hilton, Communications Business Partner
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Simon Yates, Graham McKnight, Doug Kinsman and Phil Cresswell.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

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

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 April 2025 be approved as a correct record.

14 CREWE MARKET HALL (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on the Crewe Market Hall from Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager.

The Board were updated that Cheshire East Council had agreed to extend the lease for Crewe markets to the current operator, Market Asset Management Ltd (MAM).

MAM continues to explore new ways of driving footfall, through events, collaborations and marketing. They are also keen to extend opening hours wherever possible.

It was noted that MAM had a list of businesses who wish to take on vacant units.

The Board noted concerns around the reputation and vibrancy of the Market Hall and the importance there being a consistent food and drink offering every day.

RESOLVED:

Market Asset Management Ltd to be invited to a future Crewe Town Board meeting.

That the updates be noted.

15 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.

Cumberland Arena – Scottish Power Energy required a new lease on a substation on the site which may cause a delay. The main contract for construction, with Manchester & Cheshire Construction, was expected to be awarded w/c 8 May 2025, with works mobilising on 12 May 2025, with a target to complete February / March 2026. Any works to the changing rooms would be considered as part of future fund bidding opportunities.

A project review had been undertaken to understand “lessons learned” as to why the late identification of costs arose, and three reasons of failure were identified: dedicated officer support, design issues and communication delays. A new Project Manager resource had been allocated to the project, as part of an project management team delivering the ongoing project and the positive response from Council officers was noted by Board Members.

Repurposing Our High Street – Two new video case studies would be going live shortly for “Crewe Creates” and “Kerala Peppery”. The grant scheme was looking to be extended to December 2026.

History Centre / Public Realm – The Phase 1 site had opened on 28 April 2025 which included a new surface car park. The Phase 2 project was ongoing, and the remaining Towns Fund grant would be utilised towards this project. The groundbreaking event had been postponed due to a by-election but would be rescheduled imminently.

TADIC* - The physical works had been completed. The building would be leased and managed by a specialised operator.

Crewe Youth Zone – Sewer diversion works had resulted in a delay despite Southern Gateway works being suspended to allow for these, so work on site had been rephased. This had created further cost issues for the project but OnSide were pursuing other strategies to minimise delay and associated costs. The project was forecasted to open in Summer 2026. The Council was awaiting information on use of the hoarding for alternative display purposes.

Crewe Youth Club – The first of two official launch events was set for 27 June 2025 from 1100-1300.

Valley Brook Corridor – Cheshire East Council's Environmental Commissioning were engaged in planning the off-road works, deliverables, surfacing, draft Valley Park design, and a handover meeting for the off-road sections.

Pocket Parks – Design works had commenced for Westminster Street and Valley Brook pocket parks. Consultation on the Westminster Street pocket park was due to commence in May 2025 and the project was scheduled to be completed by December 2025. The vandalised equipment at the Derby Docks pocket park site was to be repaired using contingency funds.

Jubilee / Wishing Well – The outcome of planning application was still to be determined. Cheshire East Council's Environmental Commissioning were now leading on the project delivery. There is potential for murals to be included as part of the project.

Warm and Healthy Homes – The indicative cost relating to the public realm area site investigations was £12,000 with an estimated timeline of five weeks from instruction, plus time for Cheshire East Council approvals. The findings of the survey would determine the costs of the remaining works.

Southern Gateway* – The project was expected to complete in June 2025.

Royal Arcade Phase 2* – A recent customer engagement session had taken place with a number of potential site users. Research had been collated on seating options, recreational furniture and access gates. Public concerns remained over the maintenance of the area and the potential for vandalism. Phase 1 of tidying site and new perimeter fencing would commence in May 2025, with Phase 2 works to commence in September 2025.

*Not part of the Towns Fund

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

16 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (10 MINUTES)

The Board received an update, from Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise:

UKREiiF – Cheshire East officers would be attending the UK's Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum being held in Leeds from 20 – 22 May 2025 to discuss investment and property related matters. Officers would be promoting “Crewe 360” and holding a roundtable session on how to develop Crewe as the best small city in Europe by 2050.

Homes England – Cheshire East were liaising closely with Homes England in relation to potential acquisitions and investment opportunities within Crewe.

Royal Arcade – Progress was being made in relation to securing long term investment on the site.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

17 DEVOLUTION UPDATE (10 MINUTES)

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

The Board were updated that on 13 April 2025, Cheshire East Council submitted its response to government on the devolution consultation and were awaiting government to review the responses. It was expected that an announcement of the outcome would be made in the next 2 - 3 weeks. Cheshire East were currently running a “myth busting” campaign of what devolution would, and would not, offer.

Education, health and business professionals on the Board noted their support for devolution in Cheshire and Warrington.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

18 AOB (5 MINUTES)

The Chair advised the Board that from 13 – 17 May 2025 there would be a “pop-up” play of *Keep On Keepin' On* being performed at The Market Shopping Centre, Unit 4-5, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2NG.

19 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the date of the next meeting be confirmed as 16.05.2025 commencing at 09:30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.10 am

Tony Davison (Chair)