

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economy and Growth Committee**
held on Tuesday, 9th September, 2025 in The Capesthorne Room -
Town Hall, Macclesfield, SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)
Councillor F Wilson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Brown, L Buchanan, A Burton, P Coan, A Heler, G Marshall,
H Moss, P Redstone and R Vernon

Officers in attendance

Phil Cresswell, Executive Director Place
Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing
Nic Abbott, Housing Options and Homeless Manager
Steve Reading, Finance Officer
Mandy Withington, Legal Officer
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

The Chair varied the order of business. Notwithstanding this, the minutes are in the order of the agenda.

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor C O'Leary and J Pearson.
Councillor H Moss attended as a substitute.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

14 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Mr Simon Yates, spoke on behalf of the Crewe Town Board in relation to Item 9 - Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme, and stated that the Board welcomed and supported the new proposals for the Crewe

Town Centre redevelopment. He emphasised the need to develop the Royal Arcade site as an interim measure whilst the larger proposals were developed. He stressed that importance of community engagement and the need for effectively communicating the concept of in-town living to Crewe residents and how it could help in the re-generation of the town centre.

Mr David Simcox asked a number of questions in relation to Item 9 - Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme. The questions relating to the multi-story car park, the strategic direction of regeneration of Crewe Town Centre, financial viability and risk and the transparency of details for the redevelopment scheme.

The Chair responded that a written response would be provided to his questions.

15 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2026-2030

The Committee considered the report on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030, which sought approval to launch a 12-week public consultation on the draft strategy.

A review of the strategy had been conducted in 2024-25 and the key findings were set out in the report. These included an increase in the number of individuals with multiple, interconnecting needs that hindered access to housing, and that additional attention needed to be given to those who were facing private rented evictions and also to refugees, domestic abuse survivors and those discharged from hospitals and prisons.

The Committee raised concerns about the national housing policies affecting private landlords and the potential impact these would have on housing availability and affordability.

RESOLVED (unanimously) That the Committee

- 1 agree the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030 go out for public consultation.
- 2 note that following consultation, the final version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030 will be presented to the Committee for approval to adopt.

The Director of Growth and Enterprise advised the Committee that Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing, would be leaving the Council on early retirement at the end of October.

The Chair, on behalf of the Economy and Growth Committee, thanked Karen for the work and support she had provided to the Committee and the Council.

16 FIRST FINANCIAL REVIEW OF 2025/26

The Committee considered the report which set out the First Financial Review 2025-26 position based on income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of June 2025. The First Financial Review 2025-26 reported a forecasted revenue outturn position as an adverse variance of £3.1m after the application of planned use of Exceptional Financial Support £25.3m.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- 1 note the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £3.1m against a revised budget of £440.5m (0.7%) and note the contents of Annex 1, Section 2 to the report and the progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts, and understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
- 2 note the in-year forecast capital spending of £205.5m against an increased capital budget of £208.5m. This was adjusted at outturn following an approved MTFS budget of £173m.
- 3 note that Council will be asked to approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1 to the report at Section 3, Table 1.
- 4 note the available reserves position as per Annex 1 to the report, Section 5.

17 GARDEN VILLAGE HANDFORTH DELIVERY

The Committee considered the update report on the progress being made towards the delivery of the Garden Village Handforth since March 2025.

The report sought approvals to enable officers to progress with the delivery of the project to enable a start on site by September 2026, prior to the expiry of the existing hybrid planning permission, and to make timely changes to the deliverability of the scheme.

A friendly amendment was proposed and seconded and accepted to Recommendation 2 to include the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee in the consultation.

RESOLVED (by majority): That the Committee

- 1 Approve:
 - i. Revisions to the Initial Preparation and Infrastructure Works (IPIW) contract and to amend the scope and/or phasing of the existing preliminary design work to reflect changes to the delivery strategy.
 - ii. To proceed with detailed design of the A34 corridor and associated work.
 - iii. To carry out early construction works on the A34 corridor under the Scape National Civil Engineering Framework.
 - iv. To commission Ringway Jacobs Ltd via the Council's Highways Service Contract to provide project management, commercial support, technical approval and site supervision inputs into the construction, detailed design, and rescoped preliminary design.
 - v. To continue the stabilisation and repair works to Dairy House Farm via a North West Construction Hub framework contract in line with the decision previously taken by Committee on 26th January 2024 but allow the scope and/or phasing of works to be varied.
 - vi. Amendments to the terms, conditions and milestones in the Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) agreements with Homes England to maximise the amount of the grant that is drawn down and applied to the project.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place to take all actions necessary to implement the actions approved by this Committee in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources and the Director of Governance and Compliance and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee.

18 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

It was noted that the next meeting in November 2025 would receive reports on the Second Financial Review 2025/26, Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation, Nantwich Kingsley Fields S106 Town Centre Public Realm Contribution and on the Knutsford BID Ballot.

It was expected that a further report on the Garden Village Handforth would be brought to the March 2026 committee.

It was asked if training could be provided for councillors on how to advise when somebody becomes homeless in their ward.

In relation to future use of assets, it was asked if a workshop could be held with officers to discuss options on them. The Director of Growth and Enterprise stated that a report on the assets' disposal programme would be going to the Finance Sub Committee and there may be an opportunity to do something for both committees.

It was suggested that an item on Tatton Park could be included on a future meeting to allow the committee to consider the proposals in the finance report.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

19 CREWE TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report on the Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme.

The report set out the proposals for further town centre regeneration with a focus on residential-led development.

During discussion the Committee asked questions on the future use of the old Marks & Spencer and Dorothy Perkins buildings which had been sold. It was reported that officers were working with the new owners, but details could not be disclosed at present.

The Committee supported the proposals for in-town living as they were a driver for regeneration, economic activity, and housing solutions and recognised that retail alone could not revive town centres and that mixed use development was required.

RESOLVED (by majority): The Committee

1. direct the creation of a business case relating to a potential Crewe town centre development scheme, and if the business case is positive, delegate to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy & Growth Committee, the decision to recommend to the Finance Sub-Committee the creation of a supplementary revenue estimate of up to £275,000 for the revenue budget to develop scheme proposals, including a) internal staffing costs b) external professional advice regarding development, law, valuation, appraisal, procurement and social value, and; c) a direct contribution towards the costs to be incurred by the developer; and

2. subject to (1), seek approval from Finance Sub-Committee to approve either:
 - a) external grant funding in relation to delivery of development proposals including scheme delivery; or
 - b) the extension of flexible use of capital receipts and that this extension of £275,000 is added to the council's regular reporting on capital receipt generation to relevant committees to ensure appropriate oversight, scrutiny and grip.
3. subject to (2) delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Enterprise to enter into a pre-development agreement with a developer, through an appropriate procurement framework, to develop a masterplan and delivery plan for specific council-owned sites in Crewe town centre, i.e. land at Victoria St / Queensway / Delamere Street ('Royal Arcade'), Chester Street car park and Delamere Street car park;
4. note that this (3) would involve an exclusivity agreement for the developer up to the point that a development agreement may be entered into for the construction of a scheme comprising residential and commercial buildings and public realm, subject to further consideration and authorisation by this committee.
5. authorise the Director of Growth & Enterprise to enter into negotiations regarding potential disposal of other council-owned sites in Crewe town centre where the third party owns adjacent properties, subject to best consideration (Local Government Act 1972, s123);
6. authorise the Director of Growth & Enterprise to build upon the emerging 'Crewe vision' in progressing a regeneration and development framework for the urban area of Crewe.
7. delegate authority to the Executive Director – Place, in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources and the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer, to enter into contracts/agreements and appoint contractors in relation to all of the above.
8. delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Enterprise to agree revisions to the current Terms of Reference of Crewe Town Board.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and concluded at 6.42 pm

Councillor M Gorman (Chair)