

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economy and Growth Committee**
held on Tuesday, 14th November, 2023 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)
Councillor N Mannion (Vice-Chair)

Councillors D Brown, D Clark, J Clowes, B Drake, M Gorman, A Heler,
C Naismith, C O'Leary, P Redstone and F Wilson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Karen Carsberg, Head of Housing
Andy Kehoe, Head of Estates
Jo Wise, Development and Regeneration Delivery Manager
Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Delivery Manager
Steve Reading, Finance Officer
Wendy Broadhurst, Lead Finance Partner (Place)
Mandy Withington, Team Manager Legal Services
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor G Marshall.

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Item 9 Notice of Motion: Commission an Independent Hydrogeology Report for the South Macclesfield Development Area, the following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor P Redstone declared that he had previously been a member of the Strategic Planning Board.

Councillor C O'Leary declared that he was the proposer of the Notice of Motion and that he was also involved with the Save Dane Moss campaign group.

Councillor J Clowes declared that she was the seconder of the Notice of Motion.

31 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

32 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Mr Simon Yates spoke in relation to the items on the Crewe Business Improvement District and the Royal Arcade Phase 2.

33 THE GREAT BRITISH INSULATION SCHEME AND ECO FLEXIBILITY

The Committee considered the report which outlined proposed changes to the Council's Statement of Intent for ECO4 Flexible Eligibility to support low-income and vulnerable households to maintain their health and wellbeing in a warm home, in response to the Government's introduction of the Great British Insulation Scheme.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 approve the publication of the Flexible Eligibility Statement of Intent for ECO4 and the Great British Insulation Scheme, as outlined in Appendix A to the report.
- 2 delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Enterprise, in consultation with the Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee, to make minor amendments to the policy to ensure its smooth operation and in line with any future Government guidance changes.

34 SECOND FINANCIAL REVIEW 2023/24

The Committee received the report which provided an overview of the Cheshire East Council forecast outturn for the financial year 2023/24 and the financial performance of the services relevant to the committee remit.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- 1 note the report of the Finance Sub Committee of 2 November 2023.
- 2 note the factors leading to a forecast Net Revenue financial underspend of (£1.9m) against a revised budget of £24.8m (7.6%).
- 3 note the forecast and any further mitigations to be identified.
- 4 note the in-year forecast Capital Spending of £55.0m against an approved MTFS budget of £71.6m, due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years.

- 5 note the contents of Annex 1 and Appendix 4 and note that any financial mitigation decisions requiring approval will be made in line with relevant delegations.
- 6 note that Council will be asked to approve the fully funded supplementary revenue estimate over £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, as detailed in Annex 1, Appendix 4, Section 3 Corporate Grants Register, Table 2.

35 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2024/25 - 2027/28

The Committee received the report which set out the indicative financial envelope for the Committee to support consultation on the development of the Cheshire East Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28.

It was reported that there was a typographical error in paragraph one of the report which stated the Committee were being asked to approve the indicative financial envelope. It was confirmed that this was for noting only and no decision was required at this stage.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- 1 note the indicative budget envelope for the Committee, as approved at the Finance Sub Committee on 2 November 2023, as a way of setting financial targets in support of achieving a balanced budget for 2024/25.
- 2 note that officers will develop further proposals in consultation with Members to enable wider stakeholder consultation prior to approval by Council.
- 3 note that Committees will be presented with the opportunity to further review financial proposals, designed to achieve a balanced budget, as part of their January cycle of meetings prior to recommendations being made to Council for approval.

36 2023/2024 MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE REVIEW - GROWTH AND ENTERPRISE

The Committee considered the Mid-Year Performance Review report for the Economy and Enterprise Department for the first 6 months of 2023/24.

The report detailed the performance against the key priorities and key performance indicators of services in Housing, Estates, Rural & Cultural Economy, and Economic Development.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the performance of the department during the first 6 months of the year 2023/24.

37 NOTICE OF MOTION: COMMISSION AN INDEPENDENT HYDROGEOLOGY REPORT FOR THE SOUTH MACCLESFIELD DEVELOPMENT AREA

The Committee considered the report on the Notice of Motion: Commission an Independent Hydrogeology Report for the South Macclesfield Development Area, which had been referred by Council on 19 July 2023 to the Committee for consideration.

The proposer and seconder of the Notice of Motion - Cllr Chris O'Leary and Cllr Janet Clowes, spoke in support of the Motion.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

- 1 note the Notice of Motion.
- 2 note that the Council as a responsible developer will address the works that are required to provide robust information to enable the Strategic Planning Board to make informed decisions.

38 CREWE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The Committee considered a report on the Crewe Business Improvement District ballot and the way the Council should vote in the ballot.

The Council was responsible for the payment of business rates for thirteen hereditaments within the proposed Business Improvement District (BID) and therefore would be entitled to vote thirteen times in the BID ballot and, if the ballot was successful, be liable to pay the levy for its hereditaments falling within the scope of the BID proposal. The estimated BID levy on the Council was £16,447 and would be payable over the five-year term of the BID.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 approve that the Council shall vote 'Yes' in support of the Crewe BID proposal in the Crewe BID ballot, delegating authority to the Director of Growth and Enterprise to complete, sign and return ballot papers on behalf of the Council.
- 2 in the event the Council is requested to attend the Business Improvement District meetings in an advisory capacity, the Director of Growth and Enterprise accept and agree the most appropriate officer representation and empower that officer to provide such

advice to Business Improvement District meetings as they consider necessary.

- 3 in the event of a yes vote and the Business Improvement District proceeding, delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director Place, having regard to any advice given by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee, determine whether to put forward a Cheshire East Council representative for appointment onto the Business Improvement District Board, and if so, select the appropriate appointee and empower the appointee to make any decisions required on behalf of the Council.

39 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

40 ROYAL ARCADE PHASE 2, CREWE

The Committee considered the report on the current position with the delivery of Phase 2 of the Royal Arcade development scheme in Crewe and the options for the next steps.

Phase 1 of the redevelopment, comprising a new bus station and multi storey car park, were well advance and expected to be completed in Spring 2024. Phase 2 of the Royal Arcade scheme, comprising the proposed commercial elements, had been expected to commence following the completion of Phase 1. At the time of the development agreement being entered into in October 2020, this had been viable. However since that point, viability had been seriously impacted by the Covid pandemic, post Covid-construction cost and supply issues and other economic influences.

Four options had been identified for Phase 2 – details and appraisal of these options were set out in paragraphs 8 and 10 of the report. It was recommended that Option 4 be taken forward whilst continuing to explore funding alternative opportunities as proposed in Option 1 and reviewing options for longer-term development of the site (Option 3).

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee

- 1 note the assessment of the current viability challenges of Phase 2 of the Crewe town centre Royal Arcade redevelopment scheme ('Phase 2').

- 2 establish a 'member reference group' for the purpose of further consultation with elected members and delegate responsibility, where necessary, to the Executive Director Place and the Director of Governance and Compliance to:
- a) advance plans for meanwhile uses (Option 4) and undertake further assessment of options for 'meanwhile' uses for the site, including commissioning feasibility studies, etc.
 - b) procure/appoint third parties and/or enter into lease agreement(s) with parties for an initial period of up to five years for the operation and occupation of the site, with a Council option to extend; and
 - c) utilise the remaining budget in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy already allocated to the Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme, and/or other Town Fund grant allocations, for the purposes of implementing the preferred option(s), including the procurement/purchase of any works, equipment, infrastructure and professional services.
 - d) continue to explore alternative funding opportunities for the scheme as proposed (Option 1) and review options for the longer-term development of the site (Option 3), including undertaking public consultation and viability assessment.
- subject to the Budget Policy & Framework Procedure Rules and Finance Procedure Rules, set out in the Council's Constitution; and
- 3 Delegate responsibility to the Executive Director Place and the Director of Governance and Compliance to, where necessary and at the appropriate time, terminate the Council's development agreement with Peveril Securities Ltd and to take any decisions necessary related to this.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.03 pm

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)