

Economy and Growth Committee

14 November 2023

2023/2024 Mid-Year Performance Review – Growth and Enterprise

Report of: Peter Skates, Director Growth and Enterprise

Report Reference No: EG/20/23-24

Wards Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide the committee with oversight into the performance over the first 6 months of 2023/24 of the Growth & Enterprise Department.

Executive Summary

- 2 This report gives an update on mid-year performance across Growth & Enterprise department for the year 2023-24.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy and Growth Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the performance of the department during the first 6 months of the year 2023/24.

Background

- 3 Growth & Enterprise is responsible for the key function of the delivery and support of Housing and Economic Development across Cheshire East, thereby generating opportunities for growth, and also creating a 'place' for housing to sustain our communities both urban and rural.
- 4 The Department seeks to work with local and national partners to promote economic development. The Estates and Assets Team manages its property portfolio and property disposal programme, to ensure best use and value of the Council's assets while contributing to the strategic aims of the Council, and the Corporate Plan.
- 5 The Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 sets out our vision for an open, fairer, greener Cheshire East with three broad aims to be an open and enabling organisation; a council which empowers and cares about people, and a thriving and sustainable place. The Growth & Enterprise department contributes to a number of the priorities under the aim of a thriving and sustainable place:
 - A great place for people to live, work and visit
 - Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
 - Thriving urban and Rural economies with opportunities for all
 - To be carbon neutral by 2025
- 6 The countryside and rural areas of Cheshire East represent the heartland of the borough, and therefore it is also important to consider strategies and action plans that will help support and sustain our cultural, rural and visitor economies going forward. Cheshire East's character is embodied by our environment, heritage, culture and visitor offer, all of which is a strength in making Cheshire East a place to work, live and enjoy.
- 7 Moving beyond the residual impacts of the pandemic, the significant challenge for the Council and the Growth & Enterprise Department, is the economic climate, with the cost of living crisis, general inflation, and constriction inflation, all factors that continue to have a strong impact on our recovering Towns and Business network.

8 Housing

Key Performance Indicators	2022/23 Outturn	Target 2023/4	Mid-year (2023/24)
Home adaptations for older and/or disabled residents	485	500	184
Increase the supply of new affordable housing	465	355	219
Maintain the number of long-term empty homes in Cheshire East to less than 1%	0.91%	<1%	End of year target
Increase number of preventative and relief actions taken in order to reduce levels of homelessness in Cheshire East	1181	1000	533
Households helped to achieve affordable warmth	532	500	163
Households are helped to improve their living conditions	214	200	72

- 9 Our focus for 2023/24 is to continue to work hard to provide effective, customer focused frontline services to ensure that our residents are prevented from becoming homeless or are relieved from homelessness. That our residents are able to reside in safe and warm homes and that homes are adapted to enable residents to retain their independence.
- 10 We have continued to develop our services for rough sleepers having successfully secured further Rough Sleepers Initiative funding. Our multi-disciplinary team is working to support rough sleepers with complex needs.
- 11 Our Housing Related Support services are fundamental to relieving homelessness and we are in the process of recommissioning these services, with implementation from 1st April 2024.
- 12 Access to social housing is in high demand and we want to ensure that it is allocated to those in the highest housing need. Following this Committee's decision in July 2023, we are currently consulting on proposed changes to the Cheshire East Common Allocations policy to ensure that the policy is able to adequately balance the availability of the resource with the housing needs of our residents. The Policy will address customer expectations and also reflect the Council's and Registered Housing Providers' priorities.

- 13 The Housing Options Team continue to respond to Refugee Resettlement Programmes and Asylum Seekers currently accommodated in the area, continuing to second a dedicated Homechoice and Prevention Officer to work with the Communities Team to prevent homelessness. This work has had a significant impact in reducing the potential numbers of people leaving asylum and resettlement placements from presenting as homeless. This has been achieved by securing extended placements and supporting people with planned moves.
- 14 Local Authority Housing Funding has been secured to enable the purchase of 8 homes in partnership with 3 of our Registered Housing Providers for Afghan families who are currently residing in temporary accommodation across the country.
- 15 Good progress is being made in our work with Registered Housing Providers to secure funding through the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme to provide supported accommodation for those aged 18 to 25 and homeless. This action has been welcomed by colleagues in Children's Services as their need for move on accommodation for our care experienced young people increases.
- 16 Teams a reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation as a temporary accommodation offer and improving and increasing our own provision of Temporary Accommodation units which represent better value for money.
- 17 Increasing the level of affordable and specialist housing continues to be a priority and we are working to undertake an open procurement process to secure both affordable and specialist housing on 3 council owned land assets following a market engagement session.
- 18 Improving the energy efficiency of our homes and reducing fuel poverty is a priority within the Housing Strategy and having successfully secured funding through Round 2 of the Home Upgrade Grant, and we are identifying suitable properties while we complete the procurement of suitable energy performance assessors and installers in order to improve 300 off gas homes across Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester.
- 19 Good progress is being made towards the completion of 163 energy efficiency upgrades with our Registered Housing Providers having successfully secured Housing Decarbonisation Funding.
- 20 We are starting to overcome some of the challenges around supply chains and contractor availability in the delivery of home adaptations although inflation continues to put pressure on our capital budgets. The

service is carrying out a range of procurement activity to renew and update framework contracts with suppliers.

- 21 Providing a safe place to stay for the transient Gypsy and Traveller community and dealing effectively with unauthorised encampments, recognising the impact on our settled communities continues to be a focus of the team. We have started the construction phase on the Transit Site in Middlewich, with work having commenced in August 2023 and due to complete in Spring 2024.

Estates

- 22 Well reported complexities in global and domestic economies continue to generate uncertainties in the property market and supply chains, with construction cost inflation and interest rates remaining as significant influencing factors, although these are now better understood in comparison to previous years. Although impacted, the Estates service has continued to deliver in the reporting period.
- 23 The work to decarbonise buildings across the Estate has continued with projects completed within budget despite the challenging economic conditions in support of the Council's Carbon Neutral by 2025 policy. The team have continued to be successful in receiving Public Sector Decarbonisation Grants (PSDS 1, 2 and 3a) which have supported the continued installation of air source heat pumps. To ensure the electricity costs from the decarbonisation programme do not increase significantly other energy efficiency/generation measures have been implemented. To date the following have been installed:-
- 14 Air Source Heat Pumps
 - 19 PV Schemes
 - 12 LED Schemes
 - 7 Control Systems
- 24 Additional grants have been awarded (PSDS 3b) which will see the installation of similar systems in schools in the coming year, together with schemes at Tatton Park, the Lyceum Theatre and Crewe Crematorium over the following two years.
- 25 The decarbonisation of buildings programme is anticipated to result in CO₂ savings of around 900 tonnes per annum following LED lighting upgrades, solar PV installations, Air Source Heat Pumps, and fabric

measures. The total building mounted solar PV capacity is now at 1.6 MWp with a solar yield to reach around 1.3 GWh per annum.

- 26 The Property Services team have continued to deliver capital receipts in year, and this is set out in the table below. This work delivers capital receipts to the Council, simplifies the Council's land and property holdings and cost of operation. The current outturn reflects successful auction sales of two vacant/redundant property assets known as the former Morton Hall Community Centre and the former Shavington Youth Centre.

Key Performance Indicators	2021/22 Outturn	2022/23 Outturn	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Outturn
Capital receipts across assets and farms disposals	£1,300,000	£2,823,500	£1,000,000	£450,000

- 27 As the property market continues to stabilise the Estates service has continued to carefully monitor tenants and their individual positions minimising the impact of lost rent for the Council. Introduction of new revised agreements to enable easy in easy out terms for occupiers of business generation centres and template leases for Industrial unit renewals has proved effective in minimising legal work and costs for the tenants. This work was delivered in partnership with the Council's Legal Services team.
- 28 The Property Projects team have continued to deliver several construction projects in the year, primarily school expansions, in Sandbach, Macclesfield and Congleton, the Lifestyle Centre refurbishment at Congleton. The Team are also working alongside the Economic Development team to progress several of the Town centre projects within Crewe. Ly2, on Lyceum Square is now in operation and construction works on the Royal Arcade new multi-storey car park and bus station are progressing well and due for completion in Spring 2024.
- 29 The Economy and Growth Committee has also considered the Council's Asset Management plan in year. This sets out the vision, core values and objectives for the use of the Council's land and property assets. The Council has a 'Corporate Landlord' model for the management and ownership of its land and property assets. This means that the responsibility for management and maintenance of assets is transferred from service directorates to the Corporate Landlord, which is a centralised function. This built on the work of the Council's previous plan, set in 2015, referencing where appropriate the plans, policies, strategies, procedures, and protocols that have been developed by the Council to

ensure sound asset management and obtains its direction from the Council's Corporate Plan for 2021-2024. This work will be revisited to align it to the Council's future Corporate Plan for the period 2025 – 2030.

- 30 The Farms service continues to contribute to the disposals programme and the progress the estate reorganisation as set out in the existing Farms Strategy. Three farms have been successfully let to new entrants this autumn from a wide pool of applicants establishing the continuing levels of demand for Council Farms and generating additional rental income. The team is contributing to the carbon agenda, managing land use to facilitate climate team initiatives, identifying sites for renewables and woodland creation, and continuing to develop letting arrangements that will require, assist, and encourage tenant occupiers to play a positive role in managing climate change. Committee approved in September 2023 the start of a fundamental policy review during the next nine to twelve months.
- 31 The Estates Service now handles all its enquiries, cases, and projects through the Concerto system, and allows its main contractor Equans, access for maximised efficiency. The workload for the Service continues to remain high, with initial enquiries received more than 3,500 by the end of Q2. Property Information completed 444 ownership enquiries and 3,012 orders placed by the Facilities Management helpdesk. The Facilities Management team are also managing 4,228 items of planned maintenance works and 186 projects at various stages of development. The Property Services team are currently managing 882 live cases on the system.
- 32 The Concerto system allows a detailed view of activity at any council owned or leased-in site by all teams within the service, assisting their effective management. The document upload from previous legacy sources is now completed, allowing Estates and Legal services to access the agreements associated with a site readily, thus facilitating greater efficiency. Allowing live access to the property portal to Cheshire East colleagues will be the next development activity.
- 33 The Service is also progressing several complex projects designed to manage corporate risk the Council holds as a landowner. This includes challenging issues such as potential flood risks at Poynton Pool and land contamination at Malkins Bank Golf Course, where works are being progressed to mitigate issues in conjunction with the Environment Agency.
- 34 The Estate Team have been subject to a recent audit of land and property transactions, and in June 2023 the outcome of the report was presented, with a finding being of 'good' assurance. The team has plans to progress

assurance, as part of a continual improvement process in this area in the coming year.

35 Rural & Cultural Economy

Key Performance Indicators	2022/23 Outturn	Mid-year (22/23)	Mid-year (23/24)	Target (23/24)
Ease of use of Public Rights of Way network <small>(due to effect of Covid, a proxy source of data has been used which calls upon a greater percentage survey than the previous method although not random in geography across the borough)</small>	94%	n/a	n/a (data due at the end of 23/24)	85%
Audience figures for Lyceum Theatre	39,881	0	36,697	38,738 (end of Sept)
Total Performances	NA	NA	119	110
Tatton Park visitor numbers	636,100	432,300	494,700	700,000
Tatton Park net budget	£1,176,642	£388,933	£264,000	£1,130,685
Value of the Visitor economy (annual retrospective STEAM measure)	£879m	n/a	n/a	2023 annual figure due Sept 2024
% Carbon emissions being offset by the Council	40.5%	n/a	n/a	65%

- 36 The Rural and Cultural Economy Service seeks to grow the contribution of countryside, cultural and visitor economy assets or opportunities to the Cheshire East economy helping it to be a thriving and sustainable place. The Service recognises the importance of our environment, heritage, culture and visitor offer to the area's character, economy, quality of place and wellbeing.
42. The Rural and Cultural Economy Service completed a re-structure earlier in the year to bring together the work of Countryside Ranger Service and the Public Rights of Way team under the Green Infrastructure Manager. The re-structure is designed to better facilitate the council's strategic approach to Green Infrastructure. It will achieve this by enhancing the linkage between the management of countryside sites and the statutory public rights of way network, whilst developing wider green infrastructure, natural capital and access opportunities. The new structure enables the engagement of communities and partners in accessing, contributing to and developing green infrastructure benefits. The service will also work in partnership with other organisations to improve green infrastructure and its natural capital value.
- 43 In the first six months of the year, the PROW (Public Rights of Way) team has responded to 347 new issue reports about path furniture, signposting, surface and bridges, replacing and repairing where necessary. The team has resolved 213 issues through work being allocated to contractors or completed by landowners. This work has involved 220 items of path furniture being installed, plus projects completed in partnership with local user groups.

- 44 The Countryside Ranger Service works closely with volunteers who so far this year have delivered the equivalent of 300 volunteer days to help maintain the country parks and trails.
- 45 The Countryside Ranger Service is responsible for Cheshire East Councils Country Parks, Nature Reserves and Linear Trails, which together attract over 1,000,000 visits each year. The Service has again been awarded Green Flag awards at Teggs Nose Country Park, Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve and Riverside Park, in recognition of the outstanding quality of visitor services and improvements to the nature conservation value of the countryside facilities.
46. The value of the Visitor Economy for Cheshire East has recovered well since the Covid pandemic decimated the sector in 2020, with a fall in economic value from nearly £1bn in 2019 to £548m in 2020. The most up to date STEAM tourism economic impact modelling data for 2022 shows an increase of 60% on 2020 figures and over 44% on 2021 figures to £879m, with almost 13m visitors enjoying Cheshire East last year. The most encouraging data shows that staying visitors grew by 25% from 2021 to 2022, overshadowing the growth of 6% in day visitors. This is good news as staying visitors spend more in the local economy and support more jobs than day visitors. FTE jobs in the Visitor Economy also showed great resilience, growing by 6.6% in 2022 to 9,217 FTE jobs. Future caveats include the impact of the cost of living across the country on both visitor numbers and visitor spend in 2023. It is anticipated however that the implementation of the new Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy will ensure that the sector remains strong.
47. The Visitor Economy team has worked with Marketing Cheshire on campaigns to position Cheshire as a family destination and is supporting a 'Destination Cheshire' network of non-Chester based tourism businesses and attractions. This ensures communication of best-practice, coordination of marketing activity, peer support and provides an ability to consult businesses directly on strategy going forward.
- 48 Marketing Cheshire, with support of the three Local Authorities (Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Warrington) have recently been awarded LVEP status (Local Visitor Economy Partnership). This will enable greater partnership working with Visit England/Visit Britain as well as other local partnerships. It is anticipated that LVEP will also open opportunities to funding.
- 49 Since the pandemic, hospitality businesses have had significant issues around recruitment, to the point where this is hampering their ability to trade in a way that ensures their survival. Since 2021, the Visitor Economy team have been working in partnership with DWP and Cheshire College to develop a bespoke approach to the significant issues of recruitment, retention, and skills. This work is now starting to see results, giving local people new career opportunities and helping local businesses access potential employees to cover their vacancies. The project is fully funded through a partnership with Job Centre Plus and Cheshire College. An innovative schools/hotels project has also been developed, where a main Hotel is partnered with a local school, enabling training and experience opportunities for young people in the hospitality sector.

- 50 The new Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy was approved by Council in January 2023 and has an objective to reach an economic value of £1bn by 2028.
- 51 The Cultural Economy team's work on the bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the shared service 'Archives - A Story Shared' programme, including the building of the new History Centre in Crewe, was successful in achieving a £4.9 million grant, with all funding now secured. Planning permission for sites in Crewe and Chester was secured in March 2023. Infrastructure and Construction company 'Kier' have been contracted to develop both sites and have completed RIBA 4 stage on time and to budget.
- 52 'The Heritage Wall', public art piece has been installed on the façade of the new multi-story car park in Crewe, as part of the Royal Arcade scheme.
- 53 Following the successful commissioning of a series of mural artworks in Macclesfield, an interactive art map has been produced, available in both hard copy from the Visitor Information Centre and online. This has generated good awareness for the town including positive social media for Macclesfield and Cheshire East.
- 54 A Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) has been established for Crewe and surrounding areas. This brings together 20 schools and educational organisations with cultural organisations to improve cultural experiences and opportunities for children and young people.
- 55 Conservation work continues on items of West Park Museum's collection, including a number of paintings.
- 56 The Cultural Economy Team successfully applied for funding of £50,000 to deliver a programme of events and activities on Lyceum Square over the Summer 2023 period. This programme has been successfully completed and has seen new groups, audiences and individuals using the space. A full evaluation is now being undertaken to inform future activity and assess usage.
- 57 The Lyceum Theatre in Crewe, along with theatres across the UK, still face challenges with audiences yet to return to pre-covid levels. This, along with cost-of-living pressures has impacted venues ticket sales. The Lyceum has experienced lower admittance versus a higher number of performances to give an occupancy rate lower than targeted. However, much of this can be attributed to final covid reschedules and clashing tribute shows. More recently, positives have included the Rocky Horror Show, which had an occupancy rate of over 60% and 3,300 audience; Panto which is currently tracking ahead of last year, with many more schools already booked in and a sponsorship agreement for the 'relaxed performance', which, due to demand, has had another performance added in. The Lyceum will be dark for 10 days in January to install a new counterweight flying system, and for remedial work on the plasterwork in the auditorium.
- 58 Tatton Park, which has again received 'Green flag' and 'Green Heritage site' awards this year, continues to be a key driver of the borough's visitor economy,

and an important environmental and community resource. The financial year 2023/24 continues to provide challenges to the operating of visitor attractions across the country, with remaining shifts in visitor dynamics post-pandemic, the effects of the national economic situation and concerns on inflation rates and the cost of living, all having an impact on visitor numbers to the park and its attractions along with secondary spend.

- 59 This year there has been a number of both established and new events held at Tatton. The Easter Festival, helped by good weather over the bank holiday weekend, produced a healthy contribution. A partnership with publishers Harper Collins has enabled a refreshed offer to the important family audience through 'Tiger who came to Tea' and 'Mog the Cat' themed interactive experiences and trails in the Gardens, Mansion and Farm. These have been well received by visitors with positive feedback onsite and via social media, as well as helping to boost visitor numbers and secondary spend in the shops and restaurants.
- 60 July 2023 also saw the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Flower Show held at Tatton in July. Despite tight national economic pressures, visitor numbers to the event totalled 58,000 over 5 days. This was a better-than-expected attendance and will realise the budgeted income contribution.
- 61 High and low season planning to review activity ensures new approaches to stimulate visitor demand. Both Halloween and Christmas events at Tatton involve new themes and external partnerships leveraged to refresh the offer and broaden visitor appeal. Pricing and promotional initiatives are ongoing such as flexible ticket pricing for peak and off-peak periods, online admission discounts and targeted promotional incentives, which all help to attract audiences to the different attractions. Catering and Retail continue to report brisk trading on good weather weekends and Park admission entries are holding up against budget targets.
- 62 Filming opportunities and income at Tatton this year have included multiple large-scale productions such as Paramount's 'A Gentleman in Moscow' and BBC's 'Sherwood'. However, some bookings were postponed due to the Hollywood Writers and Actors strike.
- 63 The pandemic had a significant impact on the Groups coach visitor market with UK visitor attractions struggling to engage this sector to return. It is therefore pleasing that Tatton is now experiencing an increase of 8% over last years group bookings revenue, with Christmas bookings up by over 12% year on year.
- 64 Tatton has launched a new website for the Tatton Park Charitable Trust this year, with functionality to receive online donations, including gift aid, for the first time. The Farm's Animal Adoption scheme has also been relaunched and featured on this website, creating a future income stream for conservation, restoration, and education projects. To further develop the trading space within the Stableyard courtyard, our partnership with the Tatton Park Charitable Trust has seen the opening of a Pre-Loved Bookshop" on the site previously occupied

by the Tuck shop. This operation has been moved into the Gift Shop to provide a boost in visitor footfall.

- 65 The Rural and Cultural Economy service is also leading the Natural Capital workstream (including nature-based offsetting) as part of the Council's Carbon Action Plan. The programme, which includes tree planting and peatland restoration, has continued as part of its Carbon Action Plan commitments to help the Council achieve its carbon neutral target by 2025. The programme has been developed in partnership with Mersey Forest and in collaboration with Cheshire Wildlife Trust. It has included new planting in parks and open spaces, at Tatton Park and in Countryside sites, while work on a pipeline of further sites has been developed.
- 66 Members of the team are also developing a catchment-wide approach to the Bollin Valley, with a range of partners, as well as developing proposals to improve the Crewe Valley Brook corridor and supporting the Local Nature Partnership.

Economic Development

- 67 The Corporate Plan specifically identifies activity in Crewe and Macclesfield as the borough's largest towns as key objectives, and both are at exciting stages of development having established regeneration frameworks and significant funding streams secured. The Regeneration and Development team deliver this activity.
- 68 Challenging times exist in the regeneration and property sectors, and the team responsible for delivering and overseeing the regeneration of Crewe town centre are continuing to progress all projects despite the significant and persistent cost inflation in the construction sector which represents a major risk to all capital projects.
- 69 With support from the Government's Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) for Crewe, the Council has made progress with:
- 70 Flag Lane Link: a highways and cycle scheme improving connectivity into the town centre from the west of Crewe. The main part of this scheme completed in summer 2023 and is now operational;
- 71 Adaptive Signals: innovative new traffic signalling technology installed to the south of the town centre. This is expected to become operational by December this year;
- 72 Southern Gateway: the creation of a new pedestrian and cycle link between Oak Street/High Street and Forge Street, as part of a wider scheme to improve connectivity between the railway station and the town centre. Progress has been made in acquiring the necessary land and site works are expected to start in early 2024;

- 73 Civic Centre/History Centre preparation: as part of a linked project to deliver a new History Centre, technical and legal work has progressed in relation to the demolition of the former library, deck and undercroft car park. Work is expected to commence in November this year;
- 74 Technology and Digital Innovation Campus (TADIC): plans have advanced for the creation of new co-working space at the former Municipal Building offices (NB not the historic civic amenities). Contractors have been appointed to undertake works commencing late 2023 and completing summer 2024, whilst marketing of the opportunity for a tenant/operator is underway. Separately, although no longer expected to be co-working space, plans to improve and safeguard Christ Church have been developed with works expected in early 2024.
- 75 Sustainable Energy Network: Investment in energy improvements being implemented including to Lifestyle Centre, Lyceum Theatre and Delamere House to deliver carbon reduction and enable future heat network.
- 76 Following the July decision of Economy & Growth Committee, it was agreed that the In Town Living project could not be delivered within the timescales of the Future High Streets Fund. Whilst the department is seeking an alternative means of delivering housing schemes on Chester Street and/or Delamere Street car parks, the grant funding is being reallocated to other projects in the Crewe FHSF programme.
- 77 The Council has continued to fulfil its role as accountable body for Crewe Town Board and the governance of the Towns Fund (TF) and Accelerated Towns Fund (ATF) grants which support regeneration in Crewe. The Economic Development team has led in delivering a number of these projects including:
- 78 The Ly² project at Lyceum Square launched in July, providing a new public entertainment and performance space at the heart of the town centre, adjacent to the Lyceum Theatre and Market Hall. The project includes stages, a giant video screen, new artwork, seating and planting areas to provide an attractive setting for visitors.
- 79 Mill Street Corridor improvements, as part of the wider scheme to better connect the railway station to the town centre (also refer to the Southern Gateway FHSF project above). Designs have been developed and costed, alongside consultation with local residents and stakeholders ahead of a planning application expected this autumn. As part of this project, detailed designs have been developed for new wayfinding in Crewe town centre; although expected to be delivered in a phased programme, subject to availability of funding, this will ensure a consistent

style and format to help orientate visitors to Crewe's established and new amenities.

- 80 History Centre public realm improvements secured planning consent and will be delivered alongside the FHSF and National Lottery Heritage Fund elements of the project to provide new public realm and parking.
- 81 The Repurposing Our High Streets grant scheme was launched. Established to support businesses/organisations taking on vacant town centre premises, this project is being delivered by the service's Business & Growth team.
- 82 The Crewe Youth Zone project secured planning consent, and officers are working across the council with Onside and Crewe YouthZone charity to progress the development of this site at Oak Street carpark, with works expected to commence early 2024.
- 83 Royal Arcade Phase 1: Works continue to progress in delivering a new bus station and multi-storey car park at the heart of Crewe town centre, although a site incident has caused a delay to the project, which is now expected to complete in spring 2024. The new car park will provide capacity for other existing surface car parks to be used for other, more active uses, including the Ly², History Centre and YouthZone projects referred to elsewhere.
- 84 The newly refurbished Market Hall continues to operate successfully. Opened in May 2021 and the data continues to show that it is becoming an anchor retail, leisure, and entertainment venue in the town.
- 85 Macclesfield regeneration activity has been limited in scale over the last year due to lack of availability of capital funding and lack of support from competitive central funding sources. However, the team has submitted a number of bids to the Council's open call for projects to be funded under the UKSPF.
- 86 A £50,000 fund secured by the Development and Regeneration Team from Avanti towards the Treacle TART (Treacle Town Art Trail) project, has now been fully utilised with the production of a new art trail map. With CEC contributions in the form of officer time from the Cultural Economy Team and the Regeneration and Development Team, the Avanti funding secured has been used to fund impactful murals across the town centre, now documented in the [Town Art Trail \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://cheshireeast.gov.uk/town-art-trail)
- 87 Officers in the Development and Regeneration Team continue to work collaboratively with Macclesfield Town Council and other members of the Macclesfield Town Centre Recovery Working Group. Through a positive collaboration between the Development and Regeneration Service and the Town Council, a Changing Places Grant and a significant financial contribution from Macclesfield Town Council have been combined to enable the toilets in Macclesfield Indoor Market, formerly only accessible to market traders, to be upgraded and enlarged to provide modern facilities suitable for public use. Work

on site has been ongoing in the last reporting period and the new facilities are due to be officially opened on 15th November 2023.

- 88 When opened the facility will deliver general toilet facilities open to the public in the heart of the town centre, as well as a brand-new Changing Places Toilet Facility as well as a new baby changing and unisex facility. Providing toilets for public use in Macclesfield Market should increase footfall in the market, boosting trade for indoor market traders. This project will also allow the closure of dated inaccessible public toilets in Park Green, which are to be sold at auction to generate a capital receipt and, hopefully to be put to a use which will better support town centre vitality.
- 89 In terms of town centre vitality, the loss of Marks and Spencer to the town centre is a significant concern but the property has been purchased by a third party with plans to remodel in flight. The impacts of the opening of the Barracks Mill out of town retail park in late 2022 are being monitored. Data shows that Macclesfield has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic footfall levels with average footfall in April-September 2023 being -10% lower than the same period in 2019. This is in contrast to Crewe where the data indicates footfall has incased by 15% during the same period.
- 90 Our Market towns - The Regeneration and Development team also focus on maximising the vitality of our other nine key service towns (listed below), addressing another of the key priorities in the corporate plan. In 2022 Town Centre Vitality Reports were finalised for these nine key service centres. These plans identify key opportunities to support town centre vitality in these centres as and when funding can be secured. Opportunities are wide ranging and do not necessarily require significant capital funding. Many opportunities can be potentially taken forward by Town Councils or other bodies, such as the new Wilmslow Business Improvement District Body, established in November 2022, and now raising funding via a new BID levy from Wilmslow Town Centre businesses. Some Town Council's have referenced the Town Centre Plans in project proposals submitted seeking Shared Prosperity Funding, and some have been successful in attracting such funding. (See section on UKSPF)

Town	Recorded footfall data Apr-Sep 2019	Recorded footfall data Apr-Sep 2023	% change
Alsager	2,423,083	1,775,019	-27%
Congleton	5,544,967	6,779,777	22%
Crewe	7,426,696	8,527,541	15%
Handforth	1,693,362	3,575,247	111%
Knutsford	5,632,532	5,254,322	-7%
Macclesfield	9,970,236	8,957,240	-10%
Middlewich	1,967,039	2,478,071	26%
Nantwich	3,570,825	4,021,986	13%
Poynton	2,743,695	2,747,132	0%
Sandbach	4,188,655	4,987,742	19%
Wilmslow	7,659,768	6,869,057	-10%

- 91 Comparing annual footfall data for the six month period April-Sep 2023 with the same six month period in 2019 (pre-covid) continues to reveals significant variations in footfall recovery across centres, with Handforth showing very significant higher footfall levels than pre-covid, Handforth, Congleton, Crewe, Middlewich, Nantwich and Sandbach also with higher footfall levels, Poynton with footfall having returned to pre-covid levels but Macclesfield, Wilmslow, Knutsford and Alsager all having reduced footfall when compared to the pre-covid position.
- 92 Over the last six months of 2023 the Regeneration and Development team has continued to progress the UK Shared Prosperity Funding programme and a new UKSPF Programme Manager has now been appointed.
- 93 The £1,406,039 core UKSPF allocation for 22-23 was not received until February 2023. Despite this, the Council managed to spend £676,789 by end March 2023 on a range of projects including Ly2, active travel schemes, establishing a business support hub ([Cheshire East Council - Business Support Hub \(cebusinesshub.org.uk\)](https://cebusinesshub.org.uk)) and providing community grants. Given the lateness in agreeing 22-23 allocations, DLUHC agreed that unspent core UKSPF allocations from the first year of UKSPF could be added to 23-24 allocations. Unfortunately, confirmation of this and the current year's allocation was not received until the second quarter of this financial year creating unwelcome pressure to spend in a compressed timeframe.
- 94 A call out for project proposals has been undertaken and a range of projects to be taken forward both by the Council and external organisations has been appraised by independent appraisers and this was presented to the Local Strategic Group for the scheme for guidance. At the time of drafting this report, the Acting Executive Director Place, utilising the delegation from full Council is in the process of agreeing these projects. These are expected to be announced shortly.

Consultation and Engagement

- 95 This report is an update report on performance and therefore does not require further consultation.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 96 The Economy & Growth Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Growth & Enterprise department.

Other Options Considered

97 This an update report for committee on performance during the year

Option	Impact	Risk
Do Nothing	Committee would not be aware of the performance of the Growth & Enterprise Department	Lack of Scrutiny and understanding of the department's performance.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

98 As a performance report there are no direct legal implications

Section 151 Officer/Finance

99 The financial implications of changes in performance requirements or responding to current performance levels are provided in separate Finance Review reports to the Committee.

Policy

100 As a performance report there are no direct policy implications

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

101 As a performance report there are no direct equality implications

Human Resources

102 As a performance report there are no direct human resources implications.

Risk Management

103 As a performance report there are no direct risk management implications.

Rural Communities

104 As a performance report there are no direct implications for rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

105 As a performance report there are no direct implications

Public Health

106 As a performance report there are no direct public health implications.

Climate Change

107 As a performance report there are no direct climate implications

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	
Background Papers:	