

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 3rd May, 2024 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

S Yates (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Jasbir Dhesi, Guy Kilminster, Doug Kinsman,
Councillor Nick Mannion, Dr Kieran Mullan MP, Councillor Jill Rhodes

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Turner, Martin Wood, Elliot Grimshaw, Lindsay Lewis

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place
Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Jez Goodman, Development & Regeneration Manager
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

105 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)**

Apologies for absence were received from Tony Davison, Andy Butler and Rhiannon Hilton.

106 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)**

There were no new or updated Declarations of Interest, other than those already on file.

107 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2024 be approved as a correct record.

108 **ACTIVE CHESHIRE (15 MINUTES)**

The Board received an introduction and update on Active Cheshire from Mike Watson, Chief Executive.

Active Cheshire had existed, under several names, since the 1980s, covering Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington.

It was noted that £250 million had been allocated to Active Cheshire from Sport England, which was a mixture of revenue and capital depending on local need to be spent in inactivity and inequalities, and there was a good deal of flexibility in its dispersal opportunities.

A Sport England place-based matrix was developed to rank areas based on their greatest need of investment – there were five areas within the Active Cheshire area which were in the top 10% of greatest need:

- Crewe Coppenhall and Underwood, Cheshire East
- Ellesmere Port Town and Rossmore, Cheshire West and Chester
- Wolverham and Stanlow, Cheshire West and Chester
- Hulme, Warrington
- Blackbrook, Warrington

Sport England had recently released a £160 million Movement Fund which allowed investment of up to £15,000 directly into community organisations which are willing to improve physical activity.

Although Active Cheshire were not involved in the creation of Sport England's matrix, it was noted that Cheshire East had a lot of information surrounding Crewe; Health and Wellbeing Strategy, a Physical Activity Plan has been adopted which referenced the needs of Crewe and we have strategic emphasis to build on, and connections with local community groups.

Active Cheshire was committed to continue to work with Crewe to tackle inequalities where possible, and requested openness from Crewe Town Board and information where joint investment opportunities arise in the future to help tackle inequality.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted and Mike Watson to update the Crewe Town Board again in September 2024 to provide further updates.

109 CREWE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an introduction and update on the Crewe Business Improvement District (BID) from Andrea Morley.

The Crewe BID started on 1 April 2024 as a Limited Company with six Board Directors from a mixture of areas within Crewe:

- Nantwich Road
- Grand Junction Retail Park
- Crewe Town Centre

The BID had three key themes which it would focus on:

1. Better Crewe experience.
 - a. Marketing Crewe to the consumer
 - b. Support events already happening in Crewe

2. Cleaner, greener, and safer.
 - a. Develop aesthetic projects
 - b. Working with Cheshire Police
 - c. Making sure business are aware of net-zero initiatives and what grants may be available to them
3. Supporting the business community.
 - a. Provide free accredited training events
 - b. Developing networking events

It was noted that the Crewe BID were working collaboratively with the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, and Industry.

A job description for a Project Manager for Crewe was under development and the position would be recruited for soon and it was likely that Groundworks would take over management of the BID.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

110 MARKETING CREWE (10 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on Marketing Crewe from Paul Colman, Chief Executive, South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, and Industry.

The first steering group meeting has taken place and they are in the process of finalising a job description for the role of Activities Lead. The Steering Group would develop a strategy for Marketing Crewe.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

111 MILL STREET CORRIDOR / VALLEY BROOK PROJECTS (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on the Mill Street Corridor and Valley Brook projects.

The Mill Street Corridor Project is a key north – south Active Travel Route linking Crewe Town Centre and Crewe Station. The majority of route would have be compliant with Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20, to enable active travel. The Project is funded from the Towns Fund.

Timetable of activity:

- Consultations were held place from January - February 2023
- Planning approval was received in March 2024

- Main works would start in autumn 2024
- Open to public summer 2025

The project was expected to have an emphasis on biodiversity and sustainable drainage and is being developed in coordination with Valley Brook team who were looking at options to help fund and deliver the Brook Street link.

The Valley Brook Project was also an Active Travel Corridor running east to west, from Mill Street to Queens Park, which will have a high-quality finish, create a desirable route, re-naturalise the river and aims to avoid gaps and / or duplications at interfaces with other projects:

- River works had been completed by the Environment Agency to mitigate flooding
- Preliminary design work was being developed September 2023 – July 2024
- Consultations were expected be held between mid-August – September 2024
- Detailed design phase between September 2024 – April 25
- Planning application submitted between October 2024 – January 2025
- Construction would take place between August 2024 – December 2025
- Handover would take place December 2025

The project would be funded by contributions from the Towns Fund, Environment Agency, and Crewe Town Council.

Difficulties of cycling on Electricity Street / Alton Street and potential alterations to carriageways were noted.

RESOLVED:

Request to consult local Ward Members and Town Council travel Champion on carriageway cycling.

That the updates the noted.

112 TOWNS FUND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (30 MINUTES)

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

Information had been collected for all Towns Fund Projects relating to their forecast budgets, funding gaps, opportunities for reallocation, and outcomes in consultation with statutory consultees, and the details of the implication on the following projects if funding gaps were not secured:

- Pocket Parks;
- YouthZone, Oak Street; and
- YouthZone, Mirion Street

The Board were asked to consider a reallocation of funds from the Repurposing Our High Streets budget under three options, each of which would have an impact of the scope of the projects:

- Option S1 – Reduce budget allocation by 25%
- Option S2 – Reduce budget allocation by 22%
- Option S3 – Reduce budget allocation by 0%

The Board were asked to consider how to reallocate this funding:

- Option D1 – Pro rata across all projects identifying a shortfall
- Option D2 – Reallocate to all projects as to whether need is assessed as absolute or ideal
- Option D3 – Across all projects identifying a shortfall based on absolute need
- Option D4 – Not to reallocate any funding

It was noted that the Youth Zone project had successfully bid for funding totalling over £11 million including the Towns Fund contributions. However through the tender process the costs for works have increased against current budget and there are shortfalls. These shortfalls were largely caused by delays, but the Board noted the disappointment of this.

It was noted that locally there was a “bottleneck” on funding as several requests had been made in short succession to the limited number of capital sources.

Lyceum Square – Additional artwork, painting of the junction, building lighting and recladding of the stage was scheduled for completion in May 2024 and -options regarding traffic permits were being looked in to. Concerns around access requirements to the Lyceum Square were noted, and how this would impact the viability of events on the square, and further investigation would take place.

Repurposing Our High Streets – Options on how to facilitate adaption of empty premises for pop-up uses was being explored.

History Centre and Public Realm – Demolition had commenced and was to be finished by June 2024, with remaining construction work to be completed by October 2024.

Flag Lane Baths – A meeting is taking place in late May with sub-group.

Crewe Youth Club – Expected to complete by Spring 2025, with “soft opening” in Quarter 4 2024 and the official opening in Quarter 1 2025.

Cumberland Arena – A contractor was being procured.

Pocket Parks – Opening ceremonies had taken place at McLaren Street and Derby Docks, with two more pocket parks to open soon.

Jubilee Project – A charitable donation had filled the £10k funding gap and public consultation focusing on noise and light pollution was to be undertaken.

Adaptive Signals – The switch on had been completed.

Warm and Healthy Homes – A contractor was about to be appointed and around 50% of residents had signed up. Historic England had provided £50k support for ancillary heritage works. Work was expected to start in summer 2024 and complete in winter 2025.

RESOLVED:

After consideration the Board resolved unanimously to proceed with Option S2 – to reduce budget allocation of Repurposing Our High Street Fund by 22% (£317,866).

After consideration the Board resolved unanimously to proceed with Option D3 – to allocate funding to both the Youth Zone Oak Street and the Pocket Parks Jubilee Gardens to contribute to shortfalls based on absolute need.

Following recommendations, the next steps would be for further consultation with Kieran Mullan MP, and letter of support, sign off by Cheshire East Council's S151 Officer, submission of PAR documentation to DLHUC, and a report to Cheshire East Economy and Growth Committee to ratify the decision of the Board and to amend the Council Mid-Term Financial Strategy budget amendment.

Councillor Nick Mannion left the meeting at 10:40

113 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (15 MINUTES)

The Board received a Strategic Update from Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place and Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development on:

Royal Arcade Phase 1:

- Bus station to open 7 May, with multi-story car park to open in late May 2024
- Comms in place and official opening tbc, but likely in May / June 2024

- Ongoing snagging to take place

Royal Arcade Phase 2:

- Proposals for grass seeding and perimeter knee-level fencing being developed further
- Officers would continue to engage with delivery partners for “meanwhile” end users
- Interest from long term occupiers on part of the site would require committing to a long lease

Cheshire East are continuing to work with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Department for Transport on the Deep Dive, and with local Mayors and neighbouring authorities on developments post-HS2.

Cheshire East Council has a new Interim S151 Officer, Adele Taylor, following Alex Thompson’s departure on 7 May 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

114 BOARD MEMBERSHIP (10 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on Board Membership from Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development.

The recruitment panel and the shortlist of interview candidates had been finalised, with interviews scheduled for mid-May 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

115 AOB (5 MINUTES)

IT was requested that the work of the Heritage Centre to be added to agenda.

It was noted that Crewe Lifestyle Centre continued to face anti-social behaviour issues at night and the Board were asked to contact the police should they hear of any issues.

116 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

To confirm the venue and date of the next meeting at 17th May 2024 commencing at 14:00pm.

The meeting commenced at 9.32 am and concluded at 11.53 am

S Yates (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)