

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 6th September, 2024 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Tony Davison (Chair)
Simon Yates (Vice-Chair)

Kate Blakemore, Andy Butler, Guy Kilminster, Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Sally Hepton, Doug Kinsman, Councillor Jill Rhodes, Connor Naismith MP, and Graham McKnight

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Pete Turner, Lindsay Lewis, Martin Woods

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place
Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager
Rhiannon Hilton, Communications Business Partner
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nick Mannion and Jasbir Dhesi.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

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

28 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 02.08.2024 be approved as a correct record.

29 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR (5 MINUTES)

RESOLVED:

That Simon Yates be re-appointed as Vice Chair of the Crewe Town Board for the next 12 months.

30 FLAG LANE BATHS (30 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on Flag Lane Baths project from Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager.

The Board was updated that the cost of delivering the Phase 1 project had increased significantly, and that of the originally assigned £3.935 million, £590,000 had been spent to date, with approximately £3.345 million remaining which could potentially be reallocated to other projects.

The Board were briefed on a number of possible options for the future of the Flag Lane Baths site:

- a. Retention of the building “as is”,
- b. Demolition of all of the Flag Lane Baths building,
- c. Demolition of most of the Flag Lane Baths building but retaining the original façade / lobby,
- d. Alternative community uses for the building or cleared / partially cleared site could be sought, or
- e. Alternative public uses for the building or cleared / partially cleared site could be sought.

In order to facilitate these proposals, the Board would seek to secure £1.2 million – £1.5 million of the Towns Fund Grant to increase the allocation of Crewe Youth Zone. Cheshire East Council could then look to reallocate released funding from Crewe Youth Zone, to be put towards the capital use of delivering the “future use” of the Flag Lane Baths site.

The Board was updated that engagement with the Department for Education had highlighted significant interest in developing the site for an Alternative Provision School. With this option Cheshire East Council would be able to make revenue savings, meet the significant requirement for education services within Crewe, and this would have strong synergies with other ongoing projects.

However, the Board were advised that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government could oppose the substitution of the Towns Fund Grant for Cheshire East Council funding, that there was significant community and heritage value to the site, and that any future use would rely on a large number of independent decisions.

The Board discussed potential options for the reallocation of any released funds. The projects deemed most in need of any further available funding were, in no particular order:

- YouthZone at Oak Street,
- YouthZone at Mirion Street,
- Mill Street Corridor,
- History Centre Public Realm,
- Pocket Parks, and

- Cumberland Arena.

RESOLVED

The Board resolved to:

- 1 Formally withdraw Towns Fund and Town Board support for the Flag Lane Baths project and request that Cheshire East Council terminates its Grant Offer Letter with the Always Ahead charity, subject to the payment of any reasonable costs incurred by the charity that have been incurred since the previous payment.
- 2 Endorse proposals outlined for Cheshire East Council to enter in Heads of Terms with the Department for Education to progress with an option to utilise the site for an Alternative Provision School, relating to the future use of the Flag Lane Baths and, in support of that, agree to seek Cheshire East Council and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government approval to reallocate of £1,353,000 Towns Fund grant to the Crewe YouthZone (Oak Street) project, on the basis that this releases Cheshire East Council capital funding that can be used to support future uses at the Flag Lane Baths site, with every effort to be made to maintain building heritage.
- 3 Request on-going communications with stakeholders and residents.
- 4 Note that Cheshire East Council has primary responsibility in delivering a future use for the Flag Lane Baths site.
- 5 Agree to seek Cheshire East Council and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government approval to reallocate other Towns Fund grant, summarised as:
 - YouthZone (Mirion Street) - £458,000
 - Mill Street Corridor - £433,000
 - History Centre Public Realm - £200,000
 - Pocket Parks - £200,000
 - Cumberland Arena - £701,000

Sally Hepton and Peter Skates left the meeting at approximately 10:30.

31 TOWNS FUND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (45 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.

LY2 – Snagging work and final artwork had been completed.

Repurposing Highstreets – Two further video case studies had been made and would be shared in late September - early October. Vinyl artwork had been installed at the former Poundland site, and consultations on the design for shutter doors on the Victoria Centre was underway. Iain Nicholson would be undertaking further work on pop-up uses / white boxing of some units. The High Street Rental Auction Trailblazer Programme was being recommenced but there were significant challenges in progressing it.

***Town Centre Attractions** – Main dismantling and demolition work had now been completed and a steel frame and decking had been erected.

***Crewe Youth Zone** – Site to be handed over to contractors on 30 September 2024, with work to commence on 7 October 2024. Utility companies were being engaging with. A “Stand On The Land” event would take place on 11 September 2024, including the announcement of the brand, and approximately 80 guests had been invited. The branding and naming exercise had now been completed, which would be formally announced at the Stand On The Land event. Three new trustees for had been appointed.

Crewe Youth Club – Works commenced 19 August 2024 and a successful groundbreaking event had taken place on 27 August 2024.

Cumberland Area – A contractor for the preconstruction services had been appointed with work expecting to start on site in November 2024, subject to variation to electric vehicle charging points, and other minor issues.

***Valley Brook Corridor** – Finalisation of the route details at Electricity Street required modification and some value engineering.

***Pocket Parks** – Public consultation on the next two Pocket Parks on Samuel Street and Lime Tree Avenue, including in-person events would take place.

***Jubilee Project** – Tree survey work was being undertaken to address Tree Protection Orders. The planning application was expected to be submitted in autumn 2024. A public consultation would be undertaken with an in-person event.

Warm and Healthy Homes – The planning application would be in October 2024. So far, 40 of 65 properties had signed up with works expected to start in early October 2024.

Southern Gateway – Main works commenced on 10 June 2024 and were scheduled to complete in early 2025.

Mill Street Corridor – Detailed designs were being developed and efficiencies were being sought with the Southern Gateway and Nantwich Road Bridge projects. Key land acquisitions were progressing.

*Projects not funding through the Town's Fund.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

32 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (15 MINUTES)

The Board received a Strategic Update from Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development, on:

- **Cheshire East Council's Transformation Plan:** The Transformation Plan had been submitted to government on 27 August 2024 following approval by the Council's Corporate Policy Committee on 21 August 2024.
- **TADIC:** Work was underway and discussions with prospective tenants were taking place for the new technology and digital innovation campus.
- **Devolution:** The three local authorities – Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council – were working together on devolution plans and had taken a report to Cheshire East Council's Corporate Policy Committee to seek permission to engage with government officials to explore devolution opportunities.
- **HS2:** Future rail projects were being discussed.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

Pete Turner left the meeting at 11:15

33 REVIEW OF CREWE TOWN BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE (15 MINUTES)

The Board reviewed and suggested amendments to the Crewe Town Board Terms of Reference and Project Sponsors.

RESOLVED:

The Project Sponsors list would be circulated to Board Members to be updated.

34 AOB (5 MINUTES)

The Board was updated that the next six-monthly Performance Report was required to be submitted by 24 November 2024 and would require Board sign-off prior to this.

The Board were updated that work was ongoing within Marketing Crewe and a fuller update would be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

An additional meeting of the Crewe Town Board would be held on 15 November 2024 to facilitate the review and sign-off of the six-monthly Performance Report.

35 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

To confirm the venue and date of the next meeting at 04.10.2024 commencing at 09:30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.25 am

Tony Davison (Chair)