

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**  
held on Thursday, 19th June, 2025 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

## **PRESENT**

Tony Davison (Chair), Simon Yates (Vice Chair), Kate Blakemore, Andy Butler, Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Jasbir Dhesi, Guy Kilminster, Councillor Nick Mannion, Graham McKnight, Councillor Jill Rhodes and Ian Moston

## **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Pete Turner, Lindsay Lewis, Dan Welch

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Phil Cresswell, Executive Director of Place  
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development  
Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager  
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

## **6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)**

Apologies for absence were received from Doug Kinsman, Pete Turner and Peter Skates.

## **7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)**

There were no declarations of interest other than those already on file.

## **8 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous virtual meetings held on 2 May 2025 and 16 May 2025 be approved as correct records.

## **9 MARKET ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD (15 MINUTES)**

The Board received an update from Market Asset Management Ltd on the Crewe Market Hall, from Stewart Cannon.

The Board were advised that the Crewe Market Hall (CMH) was operating seven days a week over 70 hours. CMH was at maximum capacity with 16 businesses / traders operating from within, with a waiting list for food and beverage businesses wishing to operate from there. There had been a recent shift from operating as a "late night" venue, to a predominantly

family orientated daytime venue, which the Board did not feel had been well communicated.

The CMH remained as a community hub and hosted a number of community events. It was noted that there had been a drop in alcohol sales and an increase in alcohol-free and coffee-based refreshments nationwide, which was reflected in CMH, and the need to match the business in CMH to the ask from customers was being actioned. The management team were looking for events taking place in the vicinity which they could partner with for food and drink opportunities.

Members noted the importance of the CMH within Crewe as one of the initial regeneration projects in the town centre. It was noted that two of the 16 businesses were operated by Market Asset Management Ltd (MAM) themselves, but the remaining 14 were independent, and the heads of terms and fit-out agreement was in place for one vacant retail site within CMH.

It was noted that the CMH had a stable entertainment programme which was advertised weekly via social media and all events were free. The Board noted the importance of advertising on platforms other than social media.

The Board were updated that there were plans to increase the opening hours of the CMH, but there were barriers to doing so, such as the individual hours which any vendor wished to operate and the associated overheads of utilities and staffing costs. It was noted that the CMH was looking to form as many local collaborations as possible to encourage customers, such as blue light discount and student discount. The Board requested that these be promoted more widely. The Board were updated that MAM were looking to promote CMH more widely in the surrounding towns and villages, as currently around 70% of the customers were Crewe based and that the marketing could be improved both internally and externally.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the updates be noted.

#### **10 LEIGHTON HOSPITAL SOCIAL VALUE (30 MINUTES)**

The Board received an update on the Leighton Hospital redevelopment project, from Ian Moston and Ellie Jenkins.

The Board were updated that the redevelopment project would see a total of £1 million invested in social infrastructure projects, which over 10 years, would expect to deliver £2 million of economic and social benefits, and £1.2 million of fiscal benefits.

The Board were updated that the project would:

- Set a clear and connected vision, supported by a long-term plan
- Identify priority outcomes, build these into governance models to ensure every decision linked to key outcomes
- Establish collaborative ways of working early on
- Ensure that placemaking was at the key to ensure a lasting legacy
- Join the dots between infrastructure, residential and social projects to ensure the impact was optimised
- Seek innovative funding models to help ensure the long-term vision
- Reduce emissions through design, building and active travel methods
- Secure public sector investment to stimulate wider demand and funding options.

It was noted that social value aspect of the project would target 20,000 young people with an aim of inspiring 2000 young people to follow a career in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) through their “Dream Big” programme. The Board were updated that the project aimed to target every year 5 and 6 student in Crewe. The importance of targeting primary school students was noted as the key stage to encourage careers in STEM.

The Board requested that Cheshire East Council were consulted as active travel sponsors. Active travel was very important for Crewe and the wider Cheshire area due to its rurality. It was noted that Leighton Hospital was an anchor employer in the area and improving the green and sustainable travel routes to it, would not only would make it more environmentally friendly, but would make the hospital more accessible for people within Crewe without access to a car.

Members noted the benefit of an NHS diagnostic centre in Crewe as residents were having to travel to Northwich for these services at present, and there was an ambition for this to be included within the new Leighton care neighbourhood.

Through the development of Leighton Hospital as the first in the government’s new scheme of hospitals, the impact of securing local procurement frameworks and building sustainable supply chains, which could supply all projects was noted.

It was noted that the goals of the project tied in with Cheshire East Council’s ambitions for devolution:

- A catalyst for lasting social and economic change
- Raise aspirations, create new opportunities, and strengthen wellbeing across the community
- Unlocking a healthy future for all.

The importance of linking in with local charities, the town council, education establishments, community organisations and existing work

ongoing with young children in the area was noted. The Board noted that there was benefit for the whole of Cheshire East from this project, and it would be raised at relevant council committees and requested that the project be promoted widely to the public.

**RESOLVED:**

That the updates be noted.

Officers to determine the best way to seek approvals from Council.

Leighton Hospital redevelopment be added to the agenda of a future meeting for an update.

**11 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (15 MINUTES)**

The Board received a Strategic Update from Cheshire East Council:

- **UKREIIF** – Council officers had attended and exhibited at the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum over three days, meeting with government agencies, and holding meetings with network rail regarding Crewe.
- **Best Value Notice** – After received its non-statutory Best Value Notice, a meeting had taken place with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 11 June 2025, and subsequent meetings would be held quarterly.
- **CSR** – No firm announcements on infrastructure projects, but officers are working with the Department For Transport for details including local transport grant and highways grants.
- **Transformation Programme and Targets** – The Council was looking at all asset management plans and had a number of pressures which it needed to address to be able deliver balanced budget.
- **Crewe 360** – Crewe 360 would bring together historic plans in and around Crewe with the aim of new station hub and connections with the town centre, Leighton, and other active travel routes.

**RESOLVED:**

That the updates be noted.

**12 DEVOLUTION UPDATE (15 MINUTES)**

The Board received an update on devolution in Cheshire and Warrington.

The Board were updated that Cheshire and Warrington had been confirmed by the government to be in their “priority programme” and were awaiting ministerial review of the consultation and their assessment as to whether the proposals meet the statutory tests. The Council was targeting a decision to be taken in Autumn 2025 and had been holding devolution community focus groups around Cheshire East.

**RESOLVED:**

That the updates be noted.

**13 TOWNS FUND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (15 MINUTES)**

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

**Repurposing High Streets Grants Scheme** – A total of 21 grant applications has been approved as part of the scheme and three new video case studies were being developed – Baileys Wine Bar, Kawaii Boba Tea and Cheer and Chug. The scheme was showing a 100% survival rate for the businesses in receipt of grants. It was forecast that by December 2026, 38 of original 42 targeted business will have been awarded grants, utilising all of the allocated budget.

**Cheshire Archive / Public Realm** – A breaking ground event had taken place on 4 June as PR for the archive, but also to mark the completion of Phase 1 of the project. The target for opening was September 2026 – there was a need for the building to fully dry out prior to the archives being installed.

**TADIC** – The physical works were complete and the building had been handed over to Cheshire East Council. The building was expected to operate with a soft launch in July 2025 prior to specialist operator taking over the space in August 2025.

**Youth Zone** – Works ongoing to address United Utilities works and the steel frame was being erected in three phases from 7 July. The delay had created a further shortfall of approximately £425,000 and works were underway to exploring alternative funding options. The project was forecasting a summer 2026 opening.

**Youth Club** – There was a launch event scheduled for 27 and 28 June with the official launch taking place on 27 June 1100 – 1300. There remained an issue with S278 works on the widening of the highway which had delayed the overall completion.

**Cumberland Arena** – The demolition was advancing with network rail input. The project was expected to complete in February / March 2026. A SPEN legal issue was being managed within this timeframe.

**Valley Brook Corridor** – The project was to be delivered in two packages. The “quality”2 RAG had been downgraded to “amber” due to the risk of the reduction in the KPIs.

**Pocket Parks** – The initial works were underway at Lime Tree Avenue and Samuel Street. Consultation had started on the Westminster Street and Valley Brook pocket parks. The vandalised equipment at the Derby Docks pocket park was to be replaced using the contingency budget.

**Jubilee / Wishing Well** – The planning application was still to be determined. The operational model and hours of operation were a key issue.

**Warm and Healthy Homes** – The Local Listed Building Consent order had been granted. The costs of survey work for the public realm had ruled out some aspects of the project due to the cost. The budget would be used to deliver the core scheme, including tree removal and a CCTV drain survey.

**Southern Gateway** – The main works were expected to complete June 2025, with the project opening in August 2025.

**Mill Street Corridor** – The main works were expected to commence w/c 23 June and complete in January 2026.

**Royal Arcade** – The first phase of works was underway, including the removal of hardstanding and the installation of a new knee height perimeter fencing. The planning application was live and was expecting a decision in July 2025. Conversations were ongoing regarding revenue costs and Phase 2 of the project was expected to be complete by the end of 2025.

#### **RESOLVED:**

A comprehensive update on the Warm and Healthy Homes project would be presented to the Board at its next meeting on 04.07.2025.

A comprehensive update on the Valley Brook Corridor project would be presented to the Board at its meeting on 01.08.2025.

That the updates be noted.

#### **14 AOB (5 MINUTES)**

To note any other items of business.

**Crewe Bicentenary** – It was noted that Crewe Town Council were looking ahead to the 2037 bicentenary of the first arrival of a train at Crewe station on 4th July 1837. It has established a ring-fenced reserve, which it would

build over the coming decade to ensure that Crewe Town Council had a budget available to properly recognise and celebrate the bicentenary of what was known locally as “Crewe Day”. It was envisaged that this would include engagement and community capacity building in the prior two to three years to ensure that the town provides opportunities for carnival-style participation.

**Marks and Spencer** – The Board raised concerns regarding Marks and Spencer’s proposed relocation out of the Grand Junction Retail Park to Basford East, and the impact which this may have on the viability of the Retail Park.

## **15 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the date of the next meeting be confirmed as 04.07.2025 commencing at 09:30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.40 am

Tony Davison (Chair)