

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 5th December, 2025 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

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

Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Jasbir Dhesi, Sally Hepton, Guy Kilminster,
Councillor Nick Mannion, Graham McKnight, Connor Naismith MP and
Councillor Jill Rhodes

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise
Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Delivery Manager
Rhiannon Hilton, Communications Business Partner
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Liz Byrne, Joel Buckle

64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Moston, Kate Blakemore,
Andy Butler, Doug Kinsman and Lindsay Lewis.

65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

There were no declarations of interests from Members.

66 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous virtual meeting held on 7 November 2025
be approved as a correct record.

67 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR (5 MINUTES)

In line with the Crewe Town Board Terms of Reference, the Chair of the
Crewe Town Board was required to be reviewed annually by the Board.

RESOLVED:

That following a ballot of Members conducted by the Vice Chair, Tony Davison be reconfirmed as the Chair of the Crewe Town Board for the next year.

68 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.

The Board were updated that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had merged the Towns Fund with other government funding programmes which were now collectively known as the “Local Regeneration Fund”. In addition to this, the grant could now be spent up to 31 March 2028, and had a tolerance to allow for more flexibility for local decisions around revising KPIs and any reallocation of funding between projects, as PARs no longer needed to be approved by government, providing that the projects still represented value for money. There was also a change to the reporting systems, and changing to reporting systems, with no additional reports required for April – September 2025.

Repurposing Our High Street Grant Scheme – So far 26 applications had been approved, and since the previous meeting four new businesses had opened in town centre, one more opening in December 2025, and another in January 2026.

Cheshire Archives – Insulation and cladding work was underway, with glass panels currently being installed. A small budget pressure had been identified which may require additional funding. The ice cream van wrapping and rebranding element of the project was now in progress.

Youth Zone – The project was forecasting summer 2026 completion, with a 12-week fit out to following, with occupation in September / October 2026. The Youth Investment Fund had now been fully spent, so the Towns Fund Grant was now being drawn down and would be spent by March 2026, followed by Cheshire East Council's contribution.

Cumberland Arena – The project was expected to be watertight by mid-December 2025. Options for the redevelopment of changing facilities and potential for upgrade of athletics track were being explored.

Valley Brook Corridor – Cheshire East Council's Environmental Commissioning had engaged in the design and costing the off-road work to include synergies with the Valley Brook Pocket Park Project. It was not evident that on-highway works were affordable within the budget or current time frame, so the budget would focus on works within the park areas.

Pocket Parks – The Samuel Street Pocket Park officially opened on 4 November 2025, and a media release was issued on 6 November 2025. The tenders for the play equipment at the final two pocket parks at

Westminster Street and Valley Brook were being evaluated, and would likely be installed from January – March 2026, with opening events being planned as part of Crewe Town Council's summer programme.

Warm And Healthy Homes – The report on the recent CCTV drain survey was being reviewed to identify costs. An engagement session with the resident's association was held on the 25 November 2025, and sessions with individual property owners would be held in January 2026 regarding the various options for works to their properties. It was noted that some key improvement works were currently out of scope due to cost and risk and other funding opportunities would be explored.

Wishing Well – The drainage strategy had been agreed, and a formal planning decision was expected within the next few weeks.

Ly2 – A Christmas Lights Switch On event was held on 29 November 2025, with further events in the square planned, including the Start of Light on 10 December 2025. Cheshire East Council was to appoint a contractor to curate and animate Ly2.

Mill street corridor – The project was expected to complete in April 2026. It was noted that an updated cost forecast was expected, which would determine the budget available for phase 2b.

Southern Gateway – The project opened on 28 November 2025, and an official opening event was likely to be held in tandem with opening of the Mill Street Corridor.

Royal Arcade Meanwhile Use – The planning consent for the project was now in place. The contract had been finalised with Manchester and Cheshire Construction to undertake the works. The site was to be mobilised in January 2025 and was targeting completion by end of March 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

69 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (15 MINUTES)

The Board received a Strategic Update from Cheshire East Council:

Highways – There was a need to focus to improve engagement with highways team. The Place Directorate leadership format was currently under review.

Transformation – The Council's primary focus was its transformation project, with the need to make significant efficiencies and savings.

Finance – The Council's latest financial reporting showed an overspend of £2.345m at FR2 for the end of the Financial Year. There was a need to identify in year savings.

Director of Transport and Infrastructure – The post holder left Cheshire East Council on 5 December 2025, and the role would be split temporarily between the Directors of Growth and Enterprise and the Director of Environment and Communities.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted

70 DEVOLUTION UPDATE (15 MINUTES)

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

The Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board had met twice and there had been productive engagement between the three authorities. The job adverts for Chief Executive Officer, and a Director of Growth post had been advertised, along with other secondment opportunities from the three Local Authorities, to provide additional expertise into the Combined Authority.

Mayoral elections would take place in May 2027, with the statutory legislation to go before Parliament prior to Christmas 2025, which would allow for further planning to take place for the Combined Authority.

A Mayoral Investment Fund of £10.7million would be available to the Combined Authority in 2026/2027, and work was underway to identify projects which could be eligible for funding.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

71 AOB (5 MINUTES)

Town of Culture – A series of meetings had taken place with local stakeholders and bid writers ahead of the Crewe Cultural Forum Meeting. An agreement was in place to develop a bid for "Crewe Town of Culture 2028", alongside a proposal to create Town of Culture Board who could develop the bid. Support for the bid had already been received from a number of bodies and businesses within the wider area.

Indices Of Deprivation – The Index of multiple Deprivation was an official measure used in England to assess levels of deprivation across small geographic areas. Rankings were published every few years, with the most recent publication being in 2019 and 2025. Historically Crewe has been in the most deprived and had ranked in the top 1000 most deprived

nationally. Crewe Central and Crewe South Wards were ranked within the bottom decile, being the most deprived 10% in England. In Crewe, child deprivation was more prevalent than in England as a whole.

72 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

That the date of the next meeting be confirmed as 09.01.2026 commencing at 09:30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.20 am

Tony Davison (Chair)