

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 16th May, 2025 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Tony Davison, Simon Yates, Andy Butler, Rick Carter, Paul Colman,
Sally Hepton, Guy Kilminster, Graham McKnight and Councillor Jill Rhodes

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Pete Turner, Lindsay Lewis, Daniel Lindsay, Dan Welch

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager
Diane Moulson, Senior Member Development Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Blakemore, Ian Moston,
Doug Kinsman, Councillor Nick Mannion, Connor Naismith MP and Phil
Cresswell.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

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

3 TOWNS FUND SIX-MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (30 MINUTES)

The Board received a presentation and update on the sixth-monthly Towns
Fund performance report for September 2024 – March 2025 from Daniel
Lindsay, Ekosgen, and Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration
Manager.

Programme Level Considerations

In February 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government (MHCLG) approved an extension to project spend into
2026/27 for the following projects:

- Warm and Healthy Homes (up to £750,000)
- History Centre Public Realm (up to £400,000)
- Repurposing Our High Street (up to £318,300)
- Valley Brook Green Corridor (up to £425,500)

It was noted that since the last update, MHCLG had also confirmed that other project spend could fall into 2026 / 2027 provided all spend had been contractually committed by March 2026.

These updates had reduced some of the risks concerning project spend within the Towns Fund timescales.

It was noted that although projects were significantly behind their original expenditure profiles (due in part to the timescales necessary to develop business cases and confirm funding, but also the extended timescales required to deliver projects), through the approval of PARs and funding extensions, there was confidence that the remaining projects would be delivered.

It was noted that significant progress had been made across a number of projects:

- Most of the Pocket Park project activity has been delivered.
- The new Youth Club at Mirion Street (part of the YouthZone project) was almost complete.
- The new Civic & Cultural Space (part-funded using some of the TF grant) completed in April.
- The Repurposing Our High Street grant scheme had supported more businesses to open in the town centre, with visual improvement to the streetscape.
- Physical development was progressing at YouthZone at Oak Street.
- The next period would see further physical works progressing in connection with the Mill Street Corridor, Cumberland Arena, Warm & Healthy Homes projects.

It was noted that there were issues with utility providers, including their capacity and intelligence to provide accurate and timely information relating to physical developments. There had also been an issue with internal capacity and processes which contributed to a project delay (Cumberland Arena), but this was quickly addressed. The underlying risk around capacity remains highlighted as a significant one, as there were ongoing challenges related to organisational delivery capacity, impacted by budgetary pressures and strategic priorities, including Cheshire East Council as:

- Delivery lead for several projects,
- Accountable body & programme manager, and
- The local planning authority. This has been mitigated to some degree by identifying additional project management capacity.

No new programme-level challenges were expected in the next 6-12 months, providing that there were no significant macro-economic changes, although the programme risks identified concerns with cost, capacity and communications. Whilst Cheshire East Council was the lead delivery

partner on most projects, it was not in a position to plug any financial gap which emerged in projects.

Project Level Updates

Cumberland Arena – The project had significant risks, which had been resolved since the end of the reporting period.

Mill Street Corridor - Additional funding would be required to deliver the project to the original scope and quality, which had been sourced from UKSPF.

Warm and Healthy Homes – Some of the spend had shifted into 2026 / 2027, as approved by MHCLG.

History Centre / Public Realm – A groundbreaking event was to take place after the reporting period. It was noted that the project had received a significant amount of match funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Cheshire East Council.

Repurposing Our High Street – The overall outputs of this project was expected to increase due to the extension of the project to December 2026.

Pocket Parks – Aiming to start consultation on the final two Pocket Parks shortly. In relation to the Jubilee site project, delays had arisen due to delays in securing planning permission.

Valley Brook Corridor - £425,000 of spend had been moved to 2026 / 2027. Concerns remained concerning the amount of money still to be spent in 2025 / 2026.

Youth Zone - Concerns remained concerning the amount of money still to be spent in 2025 / 2026 on the Oak Str project. The Youth Club element at Mirion Strete was largely complete.

RESOLVED:

The Chair agreed to approve the performance report, subject to the approval from the Council's S151 Officer.

4 AOB (5 MINUTES)

There was no AOB.

5 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

That the date of the next virtual meeting be agreed as Thursday 19 June 2025 commencing at 09:30.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 10.10 am

Tony Davison (Chair)