

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 13th November, 2020

PRESENT

Doug Kinsman (Chairman)

John Adlen, Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Jasbir Dhesi, Reverend David Edwards, Sally Hepton, Mark Hills, Adam Knight, Councillor Nick Mannion, Dr Kieran Mullan MP, Councillor Jill Rhodes and Simon Yates

ALSO PRESENT

Kim Cooper, Jane Dalton, Dr Ricardo Gomez, Lindsay Lewis, Pete Turner David Watson and Martin Wood

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Baxter, Democratic Services Officer
Jez Goodman, Development & Regeneration Delivery Manager
Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Frank Jordan, Executive Director - Place
Peter Skates, Director of Growth & Enterprise
Carol Young, Senior Investment & Interim Programme Manager

(Prior to the start of the virtual meeting the Chairman held a one minute silence in remembrance of all those who fought and died in the line of duty).

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Butler and Dr Matt Tyrer.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Mark Hills declared that the YMCA had an interest in a project submitted relating to youth provision facilities and a multitude of other services to be placed within the town using existing premises.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Councillor Jill Rhodes declared that she was aware of projects submitted by Crewe Town Council and Cheshire East Council.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Paul Colman declared that a project had been submitted in relation to a business enterprise hub and he was also a Governor of South Cheshire College who had also submitted a bid.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Adam Knight declared that he had been involved in a joint project with the Cheshire East Cultural Economy team for the physical extension of the cultural hub in and around Lyceum Square.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, John Adlen declared that the LEP had interest in a project it had submitted for the pledge extension.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Reverend David Edwardes declared that he had been involved in the regeneration of Flag Lane baths project.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Councillor Nick Mannion declared that as Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration he was aware of all of the projects in which Cheshire East was a partner however he had not been involved in the creation of each of the projects.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Dhesi Jasbir declared an interest in a project submitted in relation to renewable and green technology skills.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Simon Yates declared a non-pecuniary in the regeneration of Flag Lane baths project.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Lindsey Lewis declared that she had been involved in submissions for Crewe Town Council including Valley Brook, she had supported Ford Lane allotments making an application and had worked with Cheshire East Council for cleaner Crewe regarding alleyways.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Frank Jordan declared as a non-Board Member that there were several projects whereby the Council was the landowner, for example Flag Lane baths.

In the interest of openness in respect of item 4-TIP Projects List, Dr Kieran Mullan MP declared he had encouraged and assisted Whitby Morrison in putting forward a bid.

23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS VIRTUAL MEETING INCLUDING ACTIONS (10 MINUTES)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the virtual meeting held on 16 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

The Chairman went through the list of actions from the previous virtual meeting and updated members on the status of each action accordingly.

24 TIP PROJECTS LIST (1 HOUR)

Dr Ricardo Gomez representing Hatch, Caroline Baker, representing Cushman & Wakefield and David Watson, representing Hatch attended the virtual meeting and gave a presentation on the four key areas:-

- Role of the TIP and its strategic context;
- Linking of the strategic framework to project packages;
- The emerging project packages;
- The next steps

Within the four key areas detailed information was presented on the following matters:-

- The town centre regeneration and FHSF bid;
- The TIP vision and objectives;
- The strategic priorities and emphasis;
- Project submissions;
- Transforming the town centre including creativity, culture and heritage and urban housing;
- Enhanced connectivity including specific reference to the Mill Street Opportunity Area, Valley Brook Opportunity Area and Digital Connectivity;
- Skills & Enterprise Infrastructure;
- Communities including community hubs and facilities and pocket parks and open spaces;
- Emerging packages including a funding summary and funding gaps;
- Details on the next steps to be taken

Given the short period during which project submissions had been made and the extent to which many projects were still at an early stage in development, the Board was not yet being asked to review and approve a shortlist for the TIP. Hatch presented the Board with an overview of the packages of projects which had come forward to date. It was agreed that Hatch would carry out further work with working groups around each of the main project areas in order to reach a view on the recommended shortlist for the Board to consider by the end of November.

An in-depth discussion then took place whereby the Board made the following reflections in response to the presentation:-

- Needed to remain strategically focused and follow a top down approach working down from the vision, through the objectives, through the intervention themes to the broad package themes which would then lead to the projects slotting in;

- Some of the opportunities identified were longer term and fell outside the scope of the immediate timeframes for the TIP. Needed to focus specifically what would be placed into the TIP but to also look at other submissions to Government and the private sector to enable a longer-term vision to be delivered;
- Needed to look at Crewe's position in the world and the potential to leapfrog other areas;
- Clear some projects had a longer lead in time, for example, HS2, however none of the projects put forward tackled the issue of how families/young people spent their leisure time.
- Lack of detail so far and therefore difficult to endorse;
- Youth Capital Fund needed to be explored more;
- Whilst there was funding for the market hall and Lyceum Square there was a need to see what else was coming forward and how the Board could work with local landowners and vacant premises;
- Opportunity like Southport to use private sector finance and Crewe needed to follow suit;
- Good presentation which linked several things together. Queried how different groups could work together;
- Timescales were against the Board;
- In respect of the eight groupings, it was felt the crossovers were quite subtle. Some projects could be expanded to include other ones;
- Really exciting and great potential for other things to come forward;
- Number of exciting and interesting projects but needed to think about the sustainability of each of the projects;
- Commended Hatch on putting together a long list of projects but need to identify how could move from £82 million to £25 million. It was queried if there were enough compelling projects put forward which went above £25 million;
- Great introduction to see the projects coming forward but didn't get a sense as to what extent those projects were shaping up in terms of match from partners, private sector or the community. There was a feel for the size of projects but not the buy in from partners;
- Crewe needed to maximise the opportunities as and when they came up;
- Spent a lot of time on the visions and objectives and these were reflected in the combination of packages put forward. The headlines were spot on. Wanted connectivity, community involvement, skills and enterprise and so forth and the packages reflected these;
- Had extensive community engagement;
- Timeframe meant larger projects had to be filtered out;
- Lack of enterprise projects had left a real gap;
- There was a need to demonstrate change and momentum for Crewe from the process;
- Agreed with the themes but needed to have projects which prevented the decline of Crewe;

- Towns fund couldn't cover everything on connectivity. More interventions needed to happen and there needed to be another plan.
- Needed to ensure Crewe was inclusive and attractive for all. Not at the detailed stage yet;
- Community hubs were an opportunity to bring together the diverse community which existed in Crewe;
- Deliverability of projects was essential with a plan good for Crewe;
- Gap with skills;
- Needed to develop a TIP not reliant on HS2;
- Initial request for submissions of bids was a relatively short timeframe but now there was a further opportunity to develop a collaborative approach including within the skills area which could cater for every entry level including those projects which looked at the high skills level;
- Fantastic collaboration, welcomed the themes put forward by Hatch and the Board should now look at strengthening some of the existing smaller projects;
- Focus on the geographical remits

Hatch confirmed that it would continue to work with project leads where insufficient information had so far been provided to understand whether a project would be deliverable and have the potential to be included in the TIP shortlist.

In respect of the comment about taking projects forward in excess of £25 million, Hatch advised that the majority of cohort one bids were under £25 million. It was understood that TIPs asking for in excess of £25 million would need to demonstrate regional and national significance, that projects would be subject to detailed scrutiny and that TIPs would be expected to meet in full all of the criteria set out in the Towns Fund guidance. and there would be no flexibility in respect of the criteria.

In response to the skills comment it was acknowledged that there had not been a great volume of capital led skills projects. In addition there needed to be a position within the TIP to deliver the infrastructure to provide the skills training.

There were further discussions about connectivity and whether this was covered in the themes presented by Hatch. The Chairman felt that the required interventions on the road could cost a significant amount and there was a danger the opportunity would be swallowed up in network infrastructure. He suggested a commitment be written into the TIP stating what other interventions could be drawn in. Connectivity was clearly a constraint and it was clear there needed to be a commitment to open up Crewe, but the funding needed to come from other areas. Dr K Mullan MP felt further discussions were on this matter were required. It was recognised that for transport there were alternative sources for funding that could be engaged with but for the purposes of the TIP it was important to make sure that not only was the plan adding to the infrastructure

improvements put forward through the future high street fund but also thinking about how alternative modes of transport could be encouraged.

Concerns were raised that focus was on alternative forms of transport rather than resolving the issues with congestion. The Chairman responded by saying that he wanted a strong commitment from all areas, including highways which had an inclusive plan for Crewe pulling everything together including other interventions which would help to improve the connectivity and where this funding would come from. It was requested if a paper could be provided on alternative funding opportunities available to help members on the Board understand the alternative options. It was agreed the Director of Growth & Enterprise would provide this information.

It was reported that discussions were taking place with HCLG and DfT and soon the Treasury about a growth corridor to support HS2. In addition other funding packages were available from DfT available for some of those schemes. It was clear that the timescales nor the funding was there to support HS2 activity directly.

Further comments made in respect of the projects put forward would have substantial opportunities for co funding. Finally further discussions were needed for the future, in terms of expectations around private sector investment.

The Chairman bringing the item to a close requested that the Board confirmed its agreement with the package schemes put forward by Hatch were acceptable in order for sub-groups to look at short listing projects within the next two weeks.

RESOLVED

That the broad package areas put forward by Hatch be endorsed.

25 TIP DOCUMENT DESIGN (20 MINUTES)

The Chairman confirmed that because this issue had not been discussed in the Sub-Group it was agreed it would be considered at a future virtual meeting.

26 TIP SUB-GROUP (10 MINUTES)

Simon Yates reported that two very in-depth meetings had taken place in order for the Board to have received the presentation by Hatch in the proceeding item.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

27 COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT SUB-GROUP UPDATE (10 MINUTES)

Carol Young, the Policy and Partnerships Manager at Cheshire East Council attended the virtual meeting and provided a verbal update to the Board. She reported that the Sub-Group had met twice and the main areas the group has focused on are the Terms of Reference and the priorities going forward. The main priority was to provide support for the development of the TIP, working closely with Jane Dalton to engage as many people and stakeholders as possible.

The second priority was looking at whether the right platforms were in place for sharing information including a suitable web presence. The Crewe Town Council's website was providing a short-term solution with the Cheshire East site linking to the Towns Council site, however the medium to longer term plan was to develop a bespoke website. Crewe Town Council had kindly agreed to procure that on behalf of the Town Board with some funding from the Capacity Fund.

The third priority was thinking about a Communications Plan so everyone was signed up to the same messages, any press releases were co-ordinated and that the Crewe Town branding was being used appropriately. Looking forward, the group was also starting to consider how it might set out a vision for the future. The Board was asked to provide any feedback as to whether the Sub-Group was moving in the right direction and if there were any areas that the Sub-Group should be looking at which it currently wasn't.

Jane Dalton had to leave the virtual meeting prior to consideration of the item. She provided a short-written update on consultation advising that a consultation matrix had been developed which the Communications and Engagement Sub-Group had access and contributed to. This was to help ensure that consultation was as inclusive and thorough as possible. Many conversations were well under way with plans in place for further stakeholder organisations, community groups and businesses within the plan.

Reverend David Edwards, the Chairman of the Sub-Group also updated the Board verbally stating that a substantial amount of work had already been undertaken by officers and he thanked them for this. The current challenge related to the resources required in producing, implementing and monitoring a Communication Plan. It was clear without the necessary resources it would be very challenging to build a robust communication and engagement campaign and as a result there may need to be a request made to the Board to release a small amount of capacity funding. The positive press releases from Cheshire East Council in relation to the investment in the town were encouraging but the ideal situation would have been for the Crewe Town Board to have had a campaign highlighting the positive work of the TIP which had worked in conjunctions with the Council's recent press releases. It was felt that community digital

engagement was pivotal to the success of the TIP as well as having an engaging website and engaging social media platform was also vital to the Board's success.

There was a request for photographs and pen pictures of the Board members to be provided and as reported earlier Crewe Town Council had agreed to procure the funding for a bespoke website. The Sub-Group was in the process of submitting a brief to local website suppliers and it was anticipated by the next virtual meeting a supplier would be appointed.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

28 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (10 MINUTES)

Peter Skates, the Director of Growth & Enterprise advised that a report on the Crewe Regeneration and Investment Programme had recently been considered by Cabinet. The purpose of the report was to provide delegated authority to the Executive Director of Place regarding the pending award of a grant for future high streets funding. It was anticipated the Council would receive notification of the outcome of any award of grant by the end of November.

In terms of an update on the Royal Arcade it was reported that demolition had commenced.

The Council was in the process of finalising some of the costings in relation to the bus station. Potentially the Council was looking at options for intervention early in the new year. Alongside this the Council was looking at the removal of the sheds being included in the demolition contract for the Royal Arcade. A programme for demolition was scheduled to take place between January and May 2021. The Council was hoping to identify further streams of funding and positive support had been received from Crewe Town Council.

In relation to the Market Hall, the Council had identified interest from six food and beverage operators for the market including crafts, beer, vegan and pizza areas. There had been very positive feedback with strong interest. It was confirmed that the visit by Board members to the market hall had been scheduled to take place on the afternoon of the 9th December 2020.

Outside of the town two significant planning applications for residential development around the north west of Crewe (Leighton Green) totalling over 1000 new homes were due to be considered by the Strategic Planning Board.

Adam Knight, the project sponsor provided a verbal update in respect of Ly2. A project team had been established and engagement continued with key stakeholders including Cultural Forum, Market Asset Management, Crewe Town Council, Cheshire College South and West and so forth. They were now in the process of looking at the detailed designed project, obtaining the necessary permissions, procurement of the new installations, implementation of the physical changes and agreeing the operating model. It was hoped that there would be a more in-depth update at the next Board meeting.

The Chairman welcomed the positive news reported and endorsed all the good the work being undertaken by the Council during the pandemic. He suggested one example of engaging with the community could be for Board members to consider volunteering their services, for example repainting Crewe bus station.

29 COVID (5 MINUTES)

At the previous virtual meeting the chairman had spoken about the harder days ahead with winter coming and the need for the community to come together and support each other through the next six months.

In respect of following up on discussions which had taken place at the previous virtual meeting he repeated the need for action and if Crewe Town Council could act as a catalyst then that would be appreciated. Furthermore, if individuals wanted to assist further with this then he requested that they make contact him directly after the virtual meeting.

Peter Skates, the Director of Growth & Enterprise stated that he would circulate to Board members a website link scheduled to go live on Monday which related to a new business grants regime that the government had brought forward under the second lockdown. The Local Restrictions Support Grant looked at businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors, in addition to this another discretionary grant had been made available to other business significantly impacted by the lockdown. He encouraged this link to be shared with other contacts that colleagues had who may benefit from this information.

30 AOB (5 MINUTES)

There were no items of other business raised.

31 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date of the next programmed virtual meeting be held on Friday 11 December 2020 commencing at 9.30am. In addition the Chairman reported that an additional virtual meeting was required to take place on

Friday 27 November 2020. Details would be circulated after the virtual meeting.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 12.30 pm

Doug Kinsman (Chairman)