

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 5th February, 2021

PRESENT

Doug Kinsman (Chairman)

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

ALSO PRESENT

Jane Dalton, Dr Ricardo Gomez, Lindsay Lewis, Pete Turner and Martin Wood

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Baxter, Democratic Services Officer
Jez Goodman, Development & Regeneration Delivery Manager
Rhiannon Hilton, Communications Officer
Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Peter Skates, Director of Growth & Enterprise
Carol Young, Policy & Partnerships Officer

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman expressed his thanks and appreciation to everyone involved for their contributions and assistance in the submission of the TIP to Government which had taken place earlier in the week. In addition he expressed his gratitude to Cheshire East Council, Crewe Town Council, the consultancy team, the support team from ARUP, the team from Base and organisations, groups and individuals who had chosen to engage in the process. Final thanks were expressed to Adam Knight for all of his work in the past week and Abigail Thorley for all of her support since he had taken on the role of Chairman.

58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

There were no apologies for absence.

59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

There were no declarations of interest.

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

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the virtual meeting held on 8 January 2021 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.

61 TIP UPDATE AND FUTURE PROCESS (10 MINUTES)

The Chairman gave an update in respect of the next steps in relation to the TIP. He advised that the MHCLG had two months to 'check and challenge' the TIP to clarify any matters. The Chairman also advised he had recently attended a meeting with thirty other chairs where the matters was discussed. Concerns were raised at that meeting that out of 11 TIPs submitted in cohort 1 only 6 had been announced therefore it was anticipated it would be unlikely for the Board to receive a response from the MHCLG within the expected two month timeframe.

The Chairman however had been provided assurances that much of the work had been undertaken and issues related mainly to the timing of announcements. He anticipated the rest of cohort 1, 2 and 2a would be announced shortly.

It was suggested that it might be useful to start thinking about a future work programme and how the Board might start to explore future funding streams.

Dr Gomez gave his reflections on the progress made by the Board since last September and whilst the Towns Fund was important there was a need to continually refresh and develop a 'pipeline' of priorities for the town. He also felt that focus should be on the next stage in terms of the business case requirements and the importance of keeping the momentum going in terms of engagement and communication with stakeholders.

Concerns were raised that the Board hadn't been able to publicly share the project information and that the momentum could be lost if there was a prolonged silence. Discussions took place as to the approach that should be adopted in respect of addressing this matter.

The Chairman felt that in order to move engagement forward with the community in the interim period there should be some thought given to a communication plan and it was requested that the Communication & Engagement Sub-Group look at developing this further. Further to this the Chairman requested that the place branding exercise which he considered to be excellent, needed further publicity.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

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

An update on the work undertaken by the Communication and Engagement Sub-Group was provided. In addition, a revised copy of the Communication & Engagement Strategy had been circulated for the Board's consideration. Included within the update was further information on the content of the website including reference to the fact that the accessibility of the website was due to be assessed on 18 February 2021. Reverend Edwards extended his appreciation and thanks to Jasbir Dhesi for his and the college's assistance in respect of the development of the website and social media presence.

Consideration was given to the final version of the Communication & Engagement Strategy which Board Members gave their endorsement to subject to minor amendments to the wording in respect of the political balance.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted and the Communication & Engagement Strategy be approved subject to some minor amendments to the wording in respect of the political balance.

63 BOARD OBJECTIVES (30 MINUTES)

The Chairman advised that now the TIP had been submitted there was a need to look at short, medium and long term objectives. Discussions took place in terms of the future objectives of the Board and the following suggestions were put forward:-

- Ideas around the strategic themes identified last year;
- Involvement of local communities in the TIP projects;
- Public health;
- Reinvesting in local economy;
- University of Buckingham on the old MMU site and how could this be integrated with Crewe;
- Skills and training;
- Infrastructure, including roads bridges;
- Child poverty;
- Living wage foundation accreditation;
- Increase spending in Crewe;
- HS2 station area development;
- Heritage protection/promotion;
- Involvement of local business leaders;
- Supporting community initiatives

Members made the following comments:-

- Priority should be the TIP;
- Retail and traffic reconfiguration already two large driving projects;
- Do less but well;
- Proactive Engagement with the Chief Executive of the NHS at Leighton was essential as significant development potentially taking place;
- Reinvestment of public money into local businesses;
- Development of smaller projects and publicising the vision;
- Information flow into the Board;
- Roles and responsibilities of individuals on the Board;
- Number of objectives aligned closely to Cheshire East Council's Corporate Plan;
- Leighton an area of activity which should be focused on;
- Education and skills were a key way out of poverty;
- Need to champion success stories of Crewe;
- Establishment of Inequalities Board to look at specific issues around the tartan rug;
- People were just as important as place initiatives;
- Cheshire East had a social value policy which was the first step in a move to the Preston model;
- Strong possibility Leighton would become part of Crewe town

The Chairman emphasised the need to focus in order for the Board to make a difference. Principally he felt there was a need to work better together, be more engaged and drive things forward as much as possible. He felt the business community needed to play a greater role and this could be discussed further outside of the Board. He also saw an opportunity for the Board to look at the possibility of devising a new model of civic engagement.

RESOLVED

That the comments be noted and that a report be brought back to the next virtual meeting.

64 TRANSPORT PRESENTATION (15 MINUTES)

Andrew Ross, the Director of Highways & Infrastructure at Cheshire East Council gave a briefing on the highway and infrastructure developments within Crewe. Highlighted in the presentation was information on the following:-

- Central Crewe Transport Study Area
- Crewe Railway Crossing Study

Members made comments in respect of the following:-

- Comprehensive set of studies was necessary in order to resolve congestion issues within the town;
- Nantwich Road bridge and its role;
- Endorsement of the six areas of focus as outlined in the presentation;
- Establishment of a Transport Sub-Group

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted and that a Transport Sub-Group be established outside of the virtual meeting.

65 SUB-GROUPS (20 MINUTES)

In terms of sub-groups, the Chairman advised that the heritage centre had been incorrectly classed as a sub-group. Meetings had taken place to see how the Board could assist the trustees of the heritage centre and discussions were taking place to look at potentially putting in place a revised governance structure.

Further reference was other sub-groups including sports provision and open spaces, town centre re-provision and transportation. Town Centre re-provision was one of key areas which needed addressing with a short, medium and long term plan for the high street being essential.

It was felt that there needed to be a 2 tier structure on the town centre re-provision with another group engaged at a lower level. Lindsay Lewis advised that a meeting was taking place on the 24th February for all stakeholders in the town centre. It was hoped that these discussions would lead to the formation of two separate groups of individuals with different interests.

In terms of sports provision and outdoor spaces sub-groups this needed further work in addition it was queried who should be involved in the transport sub-group. Discussions took place as to whether or not individuals outside of the Board should be invited to sit on the sub-group. In response it was suggested that structures should be established before attempting to widen the memberships to individuals who had an interest in the subject. It was recognised that the new group should not duplicate the work Cheshire East Council and Crewe Town Council were already undertaking.

66 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (10 MINUTES)

Peter Skates, the Director of Growth & Enterprise attended the virtual meeting and gave an update in respect of the following matters:-

- Progress on the demolition of Royal Arcade;

- The handover of the bus station back to Cheshire East Council which had now taken place;
- Developments with the market hall and the positive news that a number of occupiers had been identified;
- The submission of an updated bid at the end of January to the Future High Streets Fund;
- Lyceum Square-Gillespie's had now presented a baseline report;
- Arriva stage 2 report had been issued on 22 February 2021

He advised that Peveril Securities wished to attend the next virtual meeting and make a presentation to the Board.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted and that Peveril Securities be invited to the next virtual meeting.

67 COVID (5 MINUTES)

There was no further update in respect of this matter.

68 AOB (5 MINUTES)

In terms of the Local Transport Plan a response had been drafted on behalf of Dr Mullan MP and submitted in advance of the Board meeting.

It was agreed that the response as drafted should be the Board's formal response to the Plan.

In terms of youth representation on the Board there were discussions about who this individual should be. Councillor Rhodes felt that any representation should be someone who was from the area of Crewe. It was agreed that a separate discussion on this matter should take place outside of the virtual meeting.

69 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

RESOLVED

That the date of the next virtual meeting take place on Friday 5 March 2021 commencing at 9.30am.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.48 am

Doug Kinsman (Chairman)