

Economy and Growth Committee

11 July 2023

2022/2023 Annual Performance Review – Growth and Enterprise

Report of: Peter Skates, Director Growth and Enterprise

Report Reference No: EG/06/23-24

Wards Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide the committee with oversight into the performance of the Growth & Enterprise Department during the past year 2022/23.

Executive Summary

- 2 This report gives an update on performance across Growth & Enterprise department for the year 2022-23.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy and Growth Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the performance of the department during the year 2022/2023.

Background

- 3 Growth & Enterprise is responsible for the management of the Council's economic development, it's property portfolio and property disposal

programme, and ensures best use and value of the Council’s assets while contributing to the strategic aims of the Council, and the Corporate Plan.

4 The Department seeks to work with local and national partners with the key function of the delivery and support of Housing and Economic Development, thereby generating growth within our communities, and the objective of creating town environments with a ‘sense of place’.

5 Cheshire East benefits from an abundance of countryside and rural areas, and therefore it is important to develop strategies and action plans that will help support and sustain our cultural, rural and visitor economies going forward. Our environment, heritage, culture and visitor offer is an essential part of Cheshire East’s character.

6 We continue to see some residual scarring and impact from the pandemic, but also the cost of living crisis, general inflation, and constriction inflation are factors that continue to have a strong impact on our recovering Towns and Business network. The Growth & Enterprise Department has again been heavily involved over the past year, and will seek to progress Growth Strategies, Recovery Plans and Actions to support all our communities.

7 The Cheshire East Council Corporate Plan 2021-25 sets out our vision for an open, fairer, greener Cheshire East with three broad aims to be an open and enabling organisation; a council which empowers and cares about people, and a thriving and sustainable place. The Growth & Enterprise department contributes to a number of the priorities under the aim of a thriving and sustainable place:

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods
- Thriving urban and Rural economies with opportunities for all
- To be carbon neutral by 2025

8 Housing

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
A great place for people to live, work and visit	Enable access to well designed, affordable and safe homes for all our residents To reduce the number of long-term empty dwellings To make best use of our surplus buildings and assets to support the borough and our partners

Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods	Crime and anti-social activity and anti-social behaviour to be reduced Victims of crime and exploitation to be supported effectively by the council and partners through collaboration
Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all	Thriving and active rural communities
To be carbon neutral by 2025	To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council

Key Performance Indicators	2021/22 Outturn	Target 2022/3	Mid-year (2022/23)	2022/23 Outturn
Home adaptations for older and/or disabled residents	362	500	207	485
Increase the supply of new affordable housing	640	355	274	465
Maintain the number of long-term empty homes in Cheshire East to less than 1%	0.95%	<1%	End of year target	0.91%
Increase number of preventative and relief actions taken in order to reduce levels of homelessness in Cheshire East	1117	1000	680	1181
Households helped to achieve affordable warmth	691	500	289	532
Households are helped to improve their living conditions	386	200	187	214

- 9 Having met the challenges of the pandemic, we have been faced with the implications of an economic crisis, with the cost of living increasing significantly. Our focus for 2022/23 was to therefore continue to work hard to provide effective, customer focused frontline services to ensure that our residents were prevented from becoming homeless or were relieved from homelessness.
- 10 This has also included developing our services for rough sleepers and we have successfully secured further Rough Sleepers Initiative funding which has enabled us to secure 3 years funding to develop a multi-disciplinary team to support rough sleepers with complex needs.
- 11 In June 2022, the Housing Options Team achieved Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, which is a scheme open to Housing Associations, Local Authority Housing Teams and

Homelessness Providers across the UK to help improve their response to domestic abuse.

- 12 To demonstrate their further commitment the Housing Options Team developed their Domestic Abuse Policy which clearly outlined the services survivors/victims of domestic abuse will receive from the Service. This was adopted by the Economy and Growth Committee in November 2022.
- 13 We continue to explore access into the private rented sector as a housing option for those facing homelessness and in November 2022, the Economy and Growth Committee approved the introduction of a pilot Private Landlord Offer scheme, which provides a package of incentives for Private Landlords who wish to offer their accommodation to the homeless.
- 14 The Housing Options Team continue to respond to Refugee Resettlement Programmes, seconding a dedicated Homechoice and Prevention Officer to work with the Communities Team to prevent homelessness.
- 15 We published our Unlawful Eviction and Harassment Policy to ensure tenants are aware of their legal rights and landlords are aware too. It also outlined the action the Council can take against landlords or agents who do not follow the law.
- 16 During last winter, we were provided with a top-up of £117,000 on our homelessness prevention grant to help ease the pressure on households' who have fallen into rent arrears as a result of financial pressures following the covid pandemic. The team mobilised very quickly to plan and budget how best to utilise the grant and were successful in allocating the entire grant budget the most vulnerable renters, who received financial assistance to reduce or clear their rent arrears.
- 17 Improving the energy efficiency of our homes and reducing fuel poverty is a priority within the Housing Strategy and we have applied for £6.21million of Round 2 Home Upgrade Grant funding to improve the energy efficiency of 300 off gas homes for the Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester which was successful. This follows on from the first round of Home Upgrade Grant funding, which delivered improvements for 41 off gas homes. This was below our target of 133 homes due to contractual issues in the delivery of the scheme.
- 18 We worked with our Registered Housing Providers to deliver energy efficiency improvements into 164 homes having successfully secured £1.5million Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding.

- 19 We completed the Green Homes Grant schemes this year, delivering 572 energy efficiency measures to 362 households.
- 20 We are continuing to experience issues with contractors and supply chains for materials, due to the challenging economic climate, which has impacted on our ability to undertake adaptation and home repair works as quickly as we would like. The team however undertook the required procurement to secure a new framework contractor and have worked to try and manage customer expectations.
- 21 We responded to the requirement to inspect all sponsors homes under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- 22 Ensuring we continue to increase the number of affordable homes across the authority is a priority set out within both the Corporate Plan, Local Plan and Housing Strategy. Following the establishment of the Council's Housing Development Framework, we are continuing to progress the mini competitions on identified Council owned land assets.
- 23 Providing a safe place to stay for the transient Gypsy and Traveller community and dealing effectively with unauthorised encampments, recognising the impact on our settled communities continues to be a priority, and we have moved a step closer with the completion of our preconstruction activity, including securing planning approval, Homes funding and following tendering we are about to move into the construction phase.

24 **Estates**

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
A financially sustainable council which has increased levels of reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Facilities Management team implement a series of projects and measures to reduce the running cost of the CEC estate The Property Services and Farms teams have a Disposal Programme that aims to deliver capital receipts for the Council. The Property Services and Farms teams manage leases on behalf of the Council and has an annual income target that offsets some costs of the service. The Estates Service completes the implementation and development of its asset management system (Concerto) and corresponding service delivery process adjustments The Estates Service successfully implements a new asset management plan
To make best use of our surplus buildings and assets to support the borough and our partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the community asset transfer policy and provide a clear framework to support effective transfer and further explore 'shared' use with our partners of town centre assets

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Disposal Programme, support other Council initiatives, for example Housing Development Framework.
To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver actions in the Cheshire East Council Carbon Action Plan • Support where appropriate the Introduction of green vehicles across the fleet (including waste and highways) • Reduce use of Gas by decarbonising sources of heating for our buildings • Promote carbon neutrality and carbon zero development across Cheshire East, providing information, advice and guidance for householders and businesses to reduce their carbon use

25 Well reported complexities in global and domestic economies continue to generate uncertainties in the property market and supply chains, with construction cost inflation and interest rates continuing to be significant factors, although these are now better understood in comparison to previous years. Although impacted, the Estates service has continued to deliver in the reporting period.

26 The work to decarbonise buildings across the Estate has continued with projects completed within budget despite the challenging economic conditions in support of the Council’s Carbon Neutral by 2025 policy. The team have continued to be successful in receiving Public Sector Decarbonisation Grants (PSDS 1, 2 and 3a) which have supported the continued installation of air source heat pumps. To ensure the electricity costs from the decarbonisation programme do not increase significantly other energy efficiency/generation measures have been implemented. To date the following have been installed:-

- 14 Air Source Heat Pumps
- 19 PV Schemes
- 12 LED Schemes
- 7 Control Systems

27 A further grant has been awarded (PSDS 3b) which will see the installation of similar systems in schools in the coming year, together with schemes at Tatton Park, the Lyceum Theatre and Crewe Crematorium over the following two years.

28 The decarbonisation of buildings programme is anticipated to result in CO₂ savings of around 900 tonnes per annum following LED lighting upgrades, solar PV installations, Air Source Heat Pumps, and fabric measures. The total building mounted solar PV capacity is now at 1.6 MWp with a solar yield to reach around 1.3 GWh per annum.

29 The property services team have continued to deliver capital receipts in year, and this is set out in the table below. This work delivers capital receipts to the Council, simplifies the Council's land and property holdings and cost of operation.

30 As the property market continues to stabilise the Estates service has

Key Performance Indicators	2021/22 Outturn	2022/23 Outturn	2023/24 Target
Capital receipts across assets and farms disposals	£1,300,000	£2,823,500	£1,000,000

continued to carefully monitor tenants and their individual positions minimising the impact of lost rent for the Council. Introduction of revised agreements to enable easy in easy out terms for occupiers of business generation centres has also proved helpful. This work was delivered in partnership with the Council's Legal Services team.

31 The Capital Projects team have continued to deliver several property projects in the year, primarily school expansions, in Sandbach, Macclesfield and Crewe, also working alongside the Economic Development team to progress several of the Town centre projects within Crewe. The demolition phase of the Royal Arcade project has been completed and works commenced on the construction of the new multi-storey car park and bus station.

32 The Economy and Growth Committee has also considered the Council's Asset Management plan in year. This sets out the vision, core values and objectives for the use of the Council's land and property assets. The Council has a 'Corporate Landlord' model for the management and ownership of its land and property assets. This means that the responsibility for management and maintenance of assets is transferred from service directorates to the Corporate Landlord, which is a centralised function. This built on the work of the Council's previous plan, set in 2015, referencing where appropriate the plans, policies, strategies, procedures, and protocols that have been developed by the Council to ensure sound asset management and obtains its direction from the Council's Corporate Plan for 2021-2024. This work will be revisited to align it to the Council's future Corporate Plan for the period 2025 – 2030.

33 Work has begun to transition the Farms Team away from the shared service delivery model to a strategic partnership which will continue to provide services to both Cheshire East, and Cheshire West & Chester. The service continues to contribute to the disposals programme (see above) and progress the estate reorganisation as set out in the Farms

Strategy. The service has recorded a notable success with a Cheshire East tenant successfully competing and moving to take on a much larger Crown estate letting, releasing their Council holdings for reletting. The Farms team is contributing to the carbon agenda, managing land use to facilitate climate team initiatives, identifying sites for renewables and woodland creation, and continuing to develop letting arrangements that will require, but also assist and encourage tenant occupiers to play a positive role in managing climate change. The service is also preparing to bring forward initial work on Farms Strategy for the Economy and Growth Committee to consider in year.

- 34 The Service has made good progress towards optimising use of its property information system, Concerto. The Estates Service now handles all its enquiries, cases, and projects through the system, and allows its main contractor Equans access for maximised efficiency. In 2022/23 this amounted to over 6,000 land and property enquiries. Within the Facilities Management team 5,238 response maintenance issues were dealt with, along with 8,071 planned maintenance works and 205 projects.
- 35 A further 823 ownership enquiries were completed by Property Information, whilst the Property Services team have completed onboarding their 592 live cases on to the system. The system allows a detailed view of activity at any council owned or leased-in site by any team within the service, assisting their effective management. Concerto has also satisfied audit requirements by work flowing key legal transactions and ensuring that, moving forward, robust processes capturing all key documentation are in place.
- 36 Upon completion of a large document import, due imminently, the property portal will be enabled once again for staff and Members across the Council so they can self-serve access to core property data. Also being developed is the functionality within the system to update the asset data and condition whilst engineers are on site to enable a live register of our assets within our buildings.
- 37 The team are also progressing a number of complex projects designed to manage corporate risk the Council holds as a landowner. This includes challenging issues such as Poynton Pool, which has been recently reported to Committee.
- 38 Following the delivery of the Grant Thornton public interest report, a follow up audit of land and property transactions were undertaken by the Council's audit team. This builds on the work completed in previous years around assurance in this area. The outcome of this audit has been reported to the scrutiny committee in June 2023, with a finding of good.

The team has plans to progress assurance, as part of a continual improvement process in this area in the coming year.

39 Rural & Cultural Economy

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
A great place for people to live, work and visit	Continue to grow the Cheshire East visitor economy
Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods	<p>Crime and anti-social activity and anti-social behaviour to be reduced</p> <p>To protect residents and improve our environment</p> <p>Improved green spaces for all. Enabling people to exercise and socialise in our parks and open spaces</p>
To reduce our impact on our environment	To improve biodiversity and natural habitats in the borough
A transport network that is safe and promotes active travel	More residents to use walking routes
Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all	<p>Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Crewe</p> <p>Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Macclesfield</p> <p>Successful town centres in our other key towns</p> <p>Thriving and active rural communities</p>
To be carbon neutral by 2025	To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council

Key Performance Indicators	2020/21 Outturn	Mid-year (20/21)	Mid-year (21/22)	Target 2021/22
Ease of use of Public Rights of Way network <small>(due to effect of Covid, a proxy source of data has been used which calls upon a greater percentage survey than the previous method although not random in geography across the borough)</small>	94%	n/a	n/a	85%
Audience figures for Lyceum Theatre	39,881	0	41,962	75,000
Tatton Park visitor numbers	615,000	410,000	405,000	700,000
Tatton Park net budget	£633,371	£743,914	£903,781	£849,781

Value of the Visitor economy (annual retrospective STEAM measure)	£735m	n/a	n/a	2022 annual figure due Sept 2023
% Carbon emissions being offset by the Council	40.5%	n/a	na	65%

- 40 The Rural and Cultural Economy Service seeks to grow the contribution of countryside, cultural and visitor economy assets or opportunities to the Cheshire East economy helping it to be a thriving and sustainable place. The Service recognises the importance of our environment, heritage, culture and visitor offer to the area's character, economy, quality of place and wellbeing.
- 41 The Public Rights of Way (PROW) team has once again delivered a very high standard of service to the public despite the high demands and some capacity issues. The Public Rights of Way Sub-Committee has oversight of this statutory service.
- 42 In 2022-23, the PROW team responded to more than 348 new issue reports about path furniture, signposting, surface and bridges, replacing and repairing where necessary and resolving over 292 issues through work allocated to contractors or completed by landowners. This work has involved nearly 450 items of path furniture being installed, plus projects completed in partnership with local user groups. Whilst public expectations of the standard of the network remain high, user group volunteer surveys (with thanks to the East Cheshire Ramblers and the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society) have returned a result of 94% of the network being classed as good/acceptable. Officer vacancies on network
- 43 The Countryside Ranger Service works closely with the PROW team to improve access to the wider countryside, with the teams often working together on safety and practical tasks. The Service was supported by volunteers who gave 1034 volunteer day to help maintain the country parks and trails.
- 44 The Countryside Ranger Service is responsible for Cheshire East Councils Country Parks, Nature Reserves and Linear Trails, which together attract over 1,000,000 visits each year. The level of satisfaction with the quality of our countryside facilities and events remains consistently high.
- 45 In 2022/23, the Ranger Service received Green Flag awards at Teggs Nose Country Park, Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve and Riverside Park. This is a first time for Macclesfield Riverside Park local nature reserve in the Bollin Valley, where former farmland has been transformed

into wildflower rich grassland. From spring through to autumn, the Bollin Valley's rare breed of Longhorn cattle graze here.

- 46 The Visitor Economy team supports an important sector for Cheshire East that because of the pandemic fell in economic value from nearly £1bn in 2019 to £548m in 2020. The data is always retrospective and 2021 shows some recovery in the sector with it growing again to £735m. However, it should be noted that the cost of living is impacting across the country on both visitor numbers and visitor spend in 2022 and it is expected that progress will slow down.
- 47 The Visitor Economy team has worked with Marketing Cheshire on promotional campaigns to position Cheshire as a Family Destination and is supporting a 'Destination Cheshire' network of non-Chester based tourism businesses and attractions. This ensures communication of best-practice, coordination of marketing activity, peer support and provides an ability to consult businesses directly on strategy going forward.
- 48 Since the pandemic, hospitality businesses have had real issues around recruitment, to the point where this is hampering their ability to trade in a way that ensures their survival. The Visitor Economy team have been working in partnership with DWP & Cheshire College to develop a bespoke approach to the significant issues of recruitment, retention, and skills since 2021 and this is starting to see results, giving some local people new career opportunities and helping local businesses access potential employees to cover their vacancies. The project is fully funded through a partnership with Job Centre Plus & Cheshire College.
- 49 The new Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy was approved by Council in January 2023 and has an objective to reach an economic value of £1bn by 2028.
- 50 Regarding Cultural economy, the bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for a the 'Archives - A Story Shared' programme, including building of a new History Centre in Crewe, was successful in achieving £4.9 million with all funding now secured. Planning permission for sites in Crewe and Chester was secured in March 2023. The programme is continuing to progress on time and to budget.
- 51 Following a period of public consultation, final designs for the 'Heritage Wall' were agreed and work will continue in line with the Capital build timeline for Royal Arcade.
- 52 The Lyceum Theatre, after a difficult post-covid period achieved an audience of 82,1213 which is an improvement on the target and moving towards pre-covid levels.

- 53 Following the successful commissioning of a mural of Ian Curtis in Macclesfield, the Cultural Economy Team were able to commission a further mural to adorn one of the lift shafts at Macclesfield station. Funded by Avanti, supported by Network Rail, commissioned and produced by CEC, the mural by Peachzz depicted Swifts by Charles Tunnicliffe, a reputed wildlife artist born in 1901 in Langley, Macclesfield. Both murals have been attracting a lot of attention for the town and generating a significant amount of positive social media for Macclesfield and Cheshire East.
- 54 A Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) has been established for Crewe and surrounding areas. This brings together 20 schools and educational organisations with cultural organisations to improve cultural experiences and opportunities for children and young people.
- 55 Conservation work has been undertaken on items of West Park Museum collection including the well-loved panda. The panda has been returned to Macclesfield alongside updated interpretation and educational programmes.
- 56 The Council's Cultural Framework and Cultural Priorities have been refreshed to cover the period from 2023 – 2028. The framework was approved by the Economy and Growth Committee in March 2023 and is now operational. It is now available on the Council's website at [Arts and culture support \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/arts-and-culture-support).
- 57 Tatton Park, which received 'Green flag' and 'Green Heritage site' awards and won Marketing Cheshire's 'Business Events Venue of the Year' award this year, continues to be a key driver of the borough's visitor economy, and an important environmental and community resource. The 2022/23 season provided a period of consolidation, following the impacts of the covid pandemic, with an emphasis on the core offer to regain and maintain Tatton's market position. However, the changing macro environment had an effect on recovery. The increases in cost of living, cost inflation, the attraction of holidays abroad, general recruitment challenges and skills shortages all impacted the season, with reductions of up to 20% on visitor numbers and visitor spend being experienced across the visitor attraction sector.
- 58 Measures have been taken to stimulate demand, including re-introducing the traditional Christmas Mansion experience, following a break of two years due to covid. Initiatives aimed at the family market have also continued, and this along with flexible ticket pricing for peak and off-peak periods, online admission discounts and targeted promotional incentives have all helped to attract audiences to the different attractions. Catering and retail have also improved at weekends, while park entries are not too far off target.

- 59 Events are an important area of activity to Tatton’s finances, and despite the loss of a few events from the calendar due to pandemic impacts, Tatton was able to host much of its usual programme, including the RHS Flower show which welcomed nearly 64,000 visitors in July 2022. Tatton, along with partners including CEC’s digital arts programme was successful in attracting grant funding this year to progress the digital element of the Canaletto exhibition planned for 2025.
- 60 Tatton has launched a new website for the Tatton Park Charitable Trust this year, with functionality to receive online donations, including gift aid for the first time. The Farm’s Animal Adoption scheme has also been relaunched and featured on this website, creating a future income stream for conservation, restoration and education projects.
- 61 The Rural and Cultural Economy service is also leading the Natural Capital workstream (including nature-based offsetting) as part of the Council’s Carbon Action Plan. The programme, which includes tree planting and peatland restoration, has continued as part of its Carbon Action Plan commitments to help be carbon neutral by 2025. The programme has been developed in partnership with Mersey Forest and in collaboration with Cheshire Wildlife Trust. It has included new planting in parks and open spaces, at Tatton Park and in Countryside sites, while work on a pipeline of further sites has been developed
- 62 Members of the team are also developing a catchment-wide approach to the Bollin Valley with a range of partners as well as developing proposals to improve the Crewe Valley Brook corridor and supporting the Local Nature Partnership.

63 Economic Development

Corporate Plan 2021-25: Key priorities	
Priority: Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all	Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Crewe Delivery of a strategic regeneration plan for Macclesfield Successful town centres in our other key towns Maximise the commercial and regeneration opportunities associated with HS2 for the whole borough Thriving and active rural communities
Priority: To be carbon neutral by 2025	To have delivered the milestones in becoming a carbon neutral council

- 64 The Economic Development service comprises three main teams the Regeneration and Development team, the Business Support team and the Projects team – focused on carbon reduction/energy and digital connectivity – all three have continued to be incredibly busy this financial year.
- 65 The Corporate Plan specifically identifies activity in Crewe and Macclesfield as the borough’s largest towns as key objectives, and both are at exciting stages of development having established regeneration frameworks and significant funding streams secured. The Regeneration and Development team deliver this activity.
- 66 During the past year committee, members received an extensive report in November 2022 and considered the progress that has been made in the regeneration of Crewe. This report provided an update on the £14.1m Future High Street Fund programme and the £23.1m Towns Fund Programme.
- 67 Challenging times exist in the regeneration and property sectors, and the team responsible for delivering and overseeing the regeneration of Crewe town centre are continuing to progress all projects despite the significant and persistent cost inflation in the construction sector which represents a major risk to all capital projects.
- 68 Ten projects under the Future High Street Fund have already been mobilised while the ten projects under the Towns Fund have addressed funding conditions to advance and in October were submitted to the next key government gateway. The development of detailed business cases using HM Treasury’s five case business case model have been successfully completed and all were signed off by the Government in September 2022
- 69 Responding to the cost inflation pressures the Town Board and this Committee made the decision in November 2022, to withdraw the Lyceum Powerhouse project from the Towns Fund programme, and obtained the approval from the Government to reallocate the remaining unspent grant relating to this project against the other Towns Fund projects/activities that are experiencing cost pressures as a result of construction cost inflation.
- 70 The Economic Development Team working in conjunction with the Culture Team, successfully submitted two planning applications in November 2022, associated with the new History centre. Namely, the Dismantling of old library and development of a new court entrance, car park and enhanced public realm, and the Construction of History Centre. Both projects utilise a cocktail of funding including Towns Fund, Future High St Fund, National Heritage Lottery Fund and council funding. Both

applications received planning consents, enabling the projects to proceed.

- 71 The Accelerated Towns Fund project utilizing £0.75m government grant has been used to develop designs and costings for Ly2 project and a planning permission has been granted and contracts were signed with the construction contractor in October 2022. Work has now been completed on the former carpark to develop an outdoor entertainment space, with stage, digital screen and new artworks . The first events are scheduled for the end of June 2023
- 72 During the year 2022-23, Royal Arcade Phase 1 has progressed to the timetable confirmed in spring 2022, with the new permanent bus station is expected to be operational in early 2024. During the same period work commenced on the new multi-storey car park and was on track to be completed in the same period. However, this time table is currently under review following a recent incident on site.
- 73 The newly refurbished Market Hall continues to operate successfully. Opened in May 2021 and the data continues to show that it is becoming an anchor retail, leisure, and entertainment venue in the town.
- 74 Macclesfield regeneration activity has been limited in scale over the last year due to lack of availability of capital funding.
- 75 Whilst a considerable amount of resource went into developing a second round Levelling Up Fund bid, seeking circa £7,8M for investment in the town centre public realm, in January 2023 the Council heard this had been unsuccessful.
- 76 Officers have reviewed the statistics released on bids submitted and those which were successful. 529 bids were submitted in the second round of the fund of which 21% were successful (111). It is important to note that Cheshire East is classified as a category 3 area, deemed to be the least priority category for the Levelling Up Fund. Analysis of the data suggests that of the 111 successful bids, only around 4 were in category 3 areas in England, Wales or Scotland. This highlights the very real challenge of securing central funding for areas such as Macclesfield.
- 77 A £50,000 fund secured from Avanti towards the Treacle TART (Treacle Town Art Trail) project, have been spent over the year to April 2023 with significant visual impact and extremely positive community response. With CEC contributions in the form of officer time from Cultural Economy and Economic Development, the money has been used to fund an impactful mural at Macclesfield Train Station, and a series of additional artworks along Sunderland Street. This project highlights the potential to secure impactful works at a relatively low cost.

- 78 Acknowledging the issue of lack of funding, work in Macclesfield has focused on progressing lower cost feasibility work investigating options to improve the indoor market and unlock development opportunity sites, and on addressing the locally important issue of the loss of central publicly available toilets with the closure of Marks and Spencer. Officers continue to work collaboratively with Macclesfield Town Council on joint priorities and a collaborative effort has secured a solution for replacement toilets, principally financed via a significant contribution from the Town Council and utilising a CEC asset.
- 79 In terms of town centre vitality, the loss of Marks and Spencer to the town centre is a significant concern but the property has been purchased by a third party with plans to remodel in flight. The impacts of the opening of the Barracks Mill out of town retail park in late 2022 are being monitored. Data shows that Macclesfield has not yet recovered to pre- pandemic footfall levels with annual footfall in 2022 being -8.7% on 2019 figures.
- 80 Our Market towns - The Regeneration and Development team also focus on maximising the vitality of our other nine towns (listed below), addressing another of the key priorities in the corporate plan. Comparing annual footfall data for the 22-23 financial year to pre-covid year data (4 year change) reveals significant variations in footfall recovery across centres, with Handforth and Middlewich showing very significant higher footfall levels than pre-covid, Crewe, Nantwich and Sandbach also with higher footfall levels, Poynton and Congleton with footfall having returned to pre-covid levels but Macclesfield, Wilmslow, Knutsford and Alsager all having reduced footfall when compared to the pre-covid position.

Year	2022-23 Visits	4 Year Change
Alsager	4,771,202	-8%
Congleton	11,782,037	0%
Crewe	18,564,597	+10%
Handforth	5,987,747	+51%
Knutsford	11,949,548	-1%
Macclesfield	19,674,547	-9%
Middlewich	5,172,344	+27%
Nantwich	8,005,644	+8%
Poynton	5,861,583	0%
Sandbach	10,288,228	+13%
Wilmslow	14,127,133	-11%

- 81 In 2022 Town Centre Vitality Reports were finalised for these nine key service centres. These plans identify key opportunities to support town centre vitality in these centres as and when funding can be secured.

Opportunities are wide ranging and do not necessarily require significant capital funding. Many opportunities can be potentially taken forward by Town Councils or other bodies, such as the new Wilmslow Business Improvement District Body, established in November 2022, and now raising funding via a new BID levy from Wilmslow Town Centre businesses.

- 82 Over 22-23 the Regeneration and Development team has also taken a lead in driving forward the UK Shared Prosperity Funding programme. The Council has been successful in gaining approval of the necessary UKSPF Investment Plans and has been allocated almost £14M UKSPF funds across the three financial years 22-23, 23-24 and 24-25. This total figure comprises c£11.8M from the core UKSPF, c£1.5M for Multiply (Adult numeracy) and c£0.8M UKSPF Rural Funding.
- 83 The £1,406,039 core UKSPF allocation for 22-23 was not received until February 2023. Despite this, the Council managed to spend £676,789 by end March 2023 on a range of projects including Ly2, active travel schemes, establishing a business support hub and providing community grants. Given the lateness in agreeing 22-23 allocations, DLUHC are expected to agree to unspent core UKSPF allocations from the first year of UKSPF to be added to 23-24 allocations.
- 84 At the time of writing this report, confirmation on this point is still awaited. A call-out for further project ideas is now in the pipeline to enable a full programme of works to be UKSPF funded projects to be developed. The final programme will be agreed using delegated authorities as soon as soon as practicable in the coming weeks.
- 85 The Regeneration and Development team is also responsible for delivering three major housing schemes (known as the 'Strategic Sites'), combining land owned by the council with other landowners' sites to provide development of significant scale. This includes a potential 1675 dwellings at Garden Village, Handforth, 1000 dwellings at Leighton, Crewe and 950 in South Macclesfield.
- 86 At Leighton Green, the road infrastructure is now under construction and progressing well. On completion this will unlock land parcels and enable a delivery strategy to be finalised. Planning for the Council's development land was approved in Spring/Summer 2021.
- 87 At Handforth Garden Village the hybrid planning application was approved in January 2023 subject to a comprehensive list of conditions. This Committee then considered a report on the scheme in February 2023, and resolved to note progress to date. A number of comprehensive reports will be presented to committee in 2023/2024. Positive dialogue with stakeholders and other landowners continues.

- 88 Great British Rail HQ at Crewe: The Business and Growth Team led on and developed the inward investment proposal for locating Great British Rail HQ in Crewe. GB Rail is the planned state-owned public body that will oversee rail transportation in Great Britain from 2024.
- 89 Forty-two towns submitted expressions of interest and Crewe was shortlisted alongside five other railway towns and cities for the public vote and final ministerial selection.
- 90 As part of this process the team also organised and hosted a ministerial visit from the Rail Minister.
- 91 There were four key stages in the process:
- Stage 1 Deadline for expression of interests from potential bidders put in by March 16.
 - Stage 2 Shortlists announced in May.
 - Stage 3 Following shortlisting, ministers will visit the shortlisted towns and a public vote will be held.
 - Stage 4 The location for the new HQ will be announced
- 92 In March 2023, the Government finally announced a decision on the location, and unfortunately Crewe was unsuccessful in its bid, with Derby being identified as the successful location. Feedback on Crewe's bid was very positive , and Crewe had the third highest total of public votes cast in the competition , and the highest per capita of the population of the shortlisted towns involved.
- 93 The Economic Development Team, at short notice submitted bids for Investment Zones, on the 9 October 2022. The team led on and submitted business cases for six investment zones in-line with the Government's growth priorities set out in the mini-budget dated 23 September 2022. The development of these proposals was an intensive two-week process to provide detailed economic analysis for each zone. All six were submitted by the 12 noon deadline on the 7 October 2022.
- 94 Subsequently, in the Autumn Statement on the 17 November 2022 the Chancellor announced a change of approach and that expressions of interest would not now be taken forward. The government announced it will now use this investment zone programme to catalyse a limited number of the highest potential knowledge-intensive growth clusters, including through leveraging local research strengths.
- 95 The Cheshire East Council's Connecting Cheshire initiative 'Digital Cheshire' has enabled an additional 3,000 full fibre connections across the Cheshire. The initiative - in partnership with broadband provider Airband – allows additional properties which were once deemed unviable,

to connect to commercial providers and access ultrafast broadband speeds.

96 Digital Cheshire is already seeing residents and businesses benefiting from the newly-installed ultrafast broadband across Cheshire, as broadband speeds and bandwidth demands continue to increase. Malpas, Hampton Heath, Wrenbury and Ridley are just some of the towns and villages to benefit from the full fibre technology.

97 In March 2023, Committee considered a report on progress within digital connectivity in the Cheshire sub-region and approved the Connecting Cheshire Digital Investment Plan. This plan is important as it shapes the future Digital Support and take-up activities, responds to changes in the wider market and identifies the strategic areas of delivery for the broader sub-regional level Cheshire environment.

Consultation and Engagement

98 This report is an update report on performance and therefore does not require further consultation.

Reasons for Recommendations

99 The Economy & Growth Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Growth & Enterprise department.

Other Options Considered

100 This an update report for committee on performance during the year

Option	Impact	Risk
Do Nothing	Committee would not be aware of the performance of the Growth & Enterprise Department	Lack of Scrutiny and understanding of the department's performance.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

101 As a performance report there are no direct legal implications

Section 151 Officer/Finance

102 As a performance report there are no direct finance implications

Policy

103 As a performance report there are no direct policy implications

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

104 As a performance report there are no direct equality implications

Human Resources

105 As a performance report there are no direct human resources implications

Risk Management

106 As a performance report there are no direct risk management implications

Rural Communities

107 As a performance report there are no direct implications for rural communities

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

108 As a performance report there are no direct implications

Public Health

109 As a performance report there are no direct public health implications.

Climate Change

110 As a performance report there are no direct climate implications

Access to Information

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Appendices:

Background Papers: