

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Crewe Town Board**
held on Friday, 1st March, 2024 at Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

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

Rick Carter, Paul Colman, Jasbir Dhesi, Guy Kilminster, Doug Kinsman,
Councillor Nick Mannion, Dr Kieran Mullan MP, Councillor Jill Rhodes

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Lindsay Lewis, Peter Turner, Martin Wood

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place
Dr Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development
Jez Goodman, Development & Regeneration Manager
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer

82 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (1 MINUTE)

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Butler and Sally Hepton.

83 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (1 MINUTE)

There were no new or updated Declarations of Interest, other than those already on file.

84 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (3 MINUTES)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2024 be approved as a correct record, subject to Martin Wood being listed as an attendee.

85 TOWNS FUND PERFORMANCE UPDATE (30 MINUTES)

The Board received an update from Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager, and individual project sponsors, on several of the Towns Fund Projects and Additional Programme Management updates.

Flag Lane Baths – The Crewe Town Board sub-group had met with the Always Ahead Team. Contractors were in the process of obtaining final costs, with final prices and designs to be made available by 19 April 2024. The sub-group were scheduled to hold a further meeting on 4 May 2024 to check progress once all quotes had been received and analysed.

Crewe Youth Zone – Works were expected to start on site in May 2024 and be completed by August 2025. Consultation with United Utilities was required due to a sewer diversion on High Street. A fundraising strategy was in place to secure funding to support operational costs. A Youth and Community Worker was in post and working actively with young people, and across other related projects. A Chief Executive had been selected and was due to start on 11 March 2024. New trustees being sought, with a closing date for applications of 10 March 2024. Branding work to name the Youth Zone was due to commence and would end with a vote in 2-3 months' time.

Crewe Youth Club – Additional funding was being sought from the Community Ownership Fund, Garfield Weston, and Cheshire East Council's Greener Communities Fund. The tender for the main works contact was to be issued mid-March 2024. Works to start on site in May 2024, subject to the satisfaction of pre-commencement of planning conditions. Engagement with Youth Zone's Youth and Community Worker and Young Peoples' Group had taken place. Works were expected to be completed by spring 2025.

Mill Street Corridor – The planning application determination was imminent and works were expected to commence in summer 2024.

Way Finding – The first installation was expected outside new Bus Station, and further discussions on additional sites were ongoing.

History Centre Public Realm – The main demolition was underway, however there was a slight delay due to RAAC being uncovered in the building. The new parking spaces and public realm were expected by August 2024.

Lyceum Square – Outstanding works relating to community art, the painting of junctions and lighting scheme were scheduled for April 2024 due to required weather conditions. Installation of the display boards was scheduled for May 2024, and additional artwork in May / June 2024. It was proposed to provide a rolling presentation of the Crewe regeneration works on the screen. Parking Enforcement Officers were patrolling the area daily.

Pocket Parks – Works were well advanced on the first four parks, with completion by April 2024, and the first "opening event" to take place on 3 April 2024. The development of "Friends of..." groups underway to help maintain the pocket parks.

Valley Brook Green Corridor – The first phase of river works had commenced.

Jubilee Project – A designer had been appointed for the plans for the site and was to undertake consultation with residents.

Royal Arcade Phase 1 – Completion was expected by May 2024, with a launch and PR campaign to be launched.

Royal Arcade Phase 2 – Cheshire East Council was open to approaches for permanent development on part / all of the site and had recently had discussions with a number of parties with a potential interest in the site. The Board noted the importance of the Royal Arcade Phase 2 site, and the importance of developing the site and securing investment. The Board expressed the view that a solution was required for the vacant site to prevent the Town Centre remaining as a building site and detracting from the success of Phase 1.

Southern Gateway – The main works were expected to commence by April 2024.

Repurposing Our High Streets – One new café and one new restaurant were expected to start trading in April 2024, and seven additional applications in process. Cheshire East Council received an invitation for Crewe to be a “trailblazer” for the government’s High Street Rental Auctions initiative. Marketing activity was underway with the launch of free-standing website www.openincrewe.co.uk.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

86 MARKETING CREWE (10 MINUTES)

The Board received an update on Marketing Crewe from Paul Colman, Chief Executive of South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce.

The Board were updated that a paper had been circulated to them on 29 February 2024, and were encouraged to provide feedback to the Board to consider against its recommendations. The report had also been circulated through the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce which would encourage the activity by “pump priming” the initiative, following the pump priming, third party funding would be necessary to support the project.

It was noted that a Steering Group would need to be set up to push this forward and employ a marketing professional which could feed back to the Crewe Town Board for input.

It was noted that the wording within the document needed to be clearer and not open to interpretation. The tone of the report should reflect the views and tone of voice of the Board and other marketing initiatives, be more inclusive and act as an ambassador for Crewe.

It was noted that Crewe has a lot of facilities, shops, businesses, enterprises, which draw people and tourists in, and it would be useful to ensure that this message was reiterated by the document and not inward

looking. And that the report should embrace the same town of voice as the Crewe, as the hub of South Cheshire, and the document should be inclusive and act as an ambassador for the local area.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted, and paper supported by the Board.

87 STRATEGIC UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an update from Peter Skates, Acting Executive Director of Place, and Jez Goodman, Development and Regeneration Manager, on Cheshire East Council's position post-HS2, the "Connecting through Crewe" event, DLUHC "Deep Dive" Update, Cheshire East Council's budget update, Local Transport Fund, and Crewe BID.

Cheshire East Council's position post-HS2 – Cheshire East Council had not yet received a substantive response from government in response to their letter to the Department for Transport.

Connecting through Crewe event – Event to be held on 4 March 2024, which Board members had been invited to. The event aimed to publicise the benefits of connecting through Crewe. There was to be an hour of speeches, including from the Leader of Cheshire East Council, a video from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Jacob Young MP, the Mayors of Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester and the Leader of Warrington Council at the event hosted in Crewe Market Hall. It was noted that the media had been invited and the event was announced at Full Council by outgoing Deputy Leader 27 February 2024. It was requested that going forward, benefit could be derived from organising events collaboratively between stakeholders.

DLUHC "Deep Dive" update – A positive discussion had taken place with colleagues regarding potential funding sites, and investable propositions.

Cheshire East Council budget update – Full Council had passed a balanced budget balances in-year, and officers were moving forwards on the savings proposals. Cheshire East Council had been successful in being awarded "exceptional financial support" amounting to £17 million. It was noted that the money received from government was not compensation for the loss of HS2, and that this wasn't new money, but additional flexibility applied to monies spent.

Local Transport Fund – The government had announced, as part of Network North, that Cheshire East Council would receive £180 million over the next seven years. Officers were awaiting guidance on what it could be spent on.

Crewe BID – The company had been set up and the first meeting of BID company had taken place. Nominations for a Chair of the BID had been invited, but not formalised yet. The BID had a Year 1 forecast income £266,000. It was noted that Crewe Town Council had the right to claim back costs of BID development. Directors were working through appointment paperwork.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

88 BUSINESS HEALTH FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT (10 MINUTES)

The Board received an update from Guy Kilminster on the Business Health Framework Development.

Cheshire East Council had been involved in nationally commissioned work programme to look at links between health inequality, productivity, and workforce health. The programme was also looking at the extent to which these issues were affecting the ability of businesses to recruit and retain a workforce.

There were upcoming workshops for business to provide experiences to research team to help develop the framework, and Board Members were encouraged to attend if possible.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

89 EVENTS STRATEGY (30 MINUTES)

The Board received an update from Pete Turner on the Events Strategy for Crewe.

Crewe Town Council had an events calendar which contained 13 distinct events scheduled, which were made up of a number of civic and live events. Crewe Town Council was also going to explore hosting large scale cultural events in the town. The Crewe Heritage Centre was planning to put on events every weekend from April – October 2024.

The Board was updated that there was a Strategic Events Meeting which took place between local stakeholders, and a shared calendar of events to ensure that events, where possible, did not clash. It was noted that the events were all marketed in a number of traditional and modern ways, to reach the largest audience possible. There were also several smaller events targeted towards the local Crewe residents.

Crewe Town Council has a detailed process of post-event evaluation to determine the success and reach of their events, and it was noted that

there had been a good turnout to recent events over the last 18 months, with sustainable numbers and good feedback.

The evaluation process also looked to capture demographic information from visitors to assist with marketing.

It was noted that some of the activities were taking place within the Lyceum Square, and events were held in the most sustainable locations in terms of budget and ease for the public. There was the opportunity to utilise the screen within Lyceum Square to be used to promote upcoming events in Crewe.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted.

90 BOARD MEMBERSHIP (15 MINUTES)

The Board received an update from Charles Jarvis on Board Membership.

A new advert was due to be published to seek interest from potential Board Members, and informal discussions to illicit levels of interest had taken place.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be noted and interviews to be progressed to be reported back to the next meeting.

91 AOB (5 MINUTES)

It was suggested to visit several of the Crewe Town's Fund locations as part of a summer meeting of the Crewe Town Bord.

92 DATE OF NEXT VIRTUAL MEETING

To confirm the date of the next meeting on 5th April 2024 at 09:30am.

93 FUTURE ITEMS:

To record future items for agendas:

- Repurposing the High Street Fund (April)
- Council Community Team (April)
- Active Cheshire (May)
- Onside (Tbc)

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.28 am
Tony Davison (Chair)