

OPEN: Report and Appendices 1 – 2

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Economy and Growth Committee

Date: 09 September 2025

Crewe Town Centre Regeneration Programme

Report of: Phil Cresswell, Executive Director - Place

Report Reference No: EG/20/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: Crewe Central

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide an update on the regeneration of Crewe town centre, particularly projects delivered utilising Government funding.
- 2 To set out proposals for further town centre regeneration with a focus on residential-led development, subject to future decisions to be taken under delegation or by this committee.

Executive Summary

- 3 This report updates committee members on the recent and current Crewe town centre regeneration projects and identifies opportunities for future regeneration as part of a new vision for Crewe.
- 4 It identifies the changing role of town centres nationally and the strong interest in residential development, and explains a specific opportunity put forward by one developer in relation to some council-owned sites in Crewe town centre.
- 5 The report sets out an approach and recommendations to support work to start developing plans with for residential-led, mixed use development on these sites, and explore options for other council-owned sites in Crewe town centre.

- 6 The role of Crewe Town Board is identified and the need to review its current Terms of Reference.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy & Growth committee is recommended to:

1. direct the creation of a business case relating to a potential Crewe town centre development scheme, and if the business case is positive, delegate to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Economy & Growth Committee, the decision to recommend to the Finance Sub-Committee the creation of a supplementary revenue estimate of up to £275,000 for the revenue budget to develop scheme proposals, including a) internal staffing costs b) external professional advice regarding development, law, valuation, appraisal, procurement and social value, and; c) a direct contribution towards the costs to be incurred by the developer; and
2. subject to (1), seek approval from Finance Sub-Committee to approve either:
 - a) external grant funding in relation to delivery of development proposals including scheme delivery; or
 - b) the extension of flexible use of capital receipts and that this extension of £275,000 is added to the council's regular reporting on capital receipt generation to relevant committees to ensure appropriate oversight, scrutiny and grip, or;
3. subject to (2) delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Enterprise to enter into a pre-development agreement with a developer, through an appropriate procurement framework, to develop a masterplan and delivery plan for specific council-owned sites in Crewe town centre, i.e. land at Victoria St / Queensway / Delamere Street ('Royal Arcade'), Chester Street car park and Delamere Street car park;
4. note that this (3) would involve an exclusivity agreement for the developer up to the point that a development agreement may be entered into for the construction of a scheme comprising residential and commercial buildings and public realm, subject to further consideration and authorisation by this committee.
5. authorise the Director of Growth & Enterprise to enter into negotiations regarding potential disposal of other council-owned sites in Crewe town centre where the third party owns adjacent properties, subject to best consideration (Local Government Act 1972, s123);

6. authorise the Director of Growth & Enterprise to build upon the emerging 'Crewe vision' in progressing a regeneration and development framework for the urban area of Crewe.
7. delegate authority to the Executive Director – Place, in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources and the Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer, to enter into contracts/agreements and appoint contractors in relation to all of the above.
8. delegate authority to the Director of Growth & Enterprise to agree revisions to the current Terms of Reference of Crewe Town Board.

Background

- 9 Like many town centres across the UK, Crewe town centre has experienced significant challenges, with competition from out-of-town retail schemes and online retail making a significant impact on its town centre offer.
- 10 In 2015-16 the council developed a Town Centre Regeneration Delivery Framework which focused diversification of the town centre away from a retail dependency utilising its own property assets. With success in securing over £40m funding from Government (Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund, Local Growth Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund), as well as its own funding, many projects have been delivered that have made a major impact, including the Lifestyle Centre (2016) and Market Hall (2021), and others are now being constructed, such as The Dome Youth Zone and Cheshire Archive. Progress has been reported back to committee members on a regular basis, as well as to Crewe Town Board which oversees those projects being delivered by the support of Towns Fund grant. These developments are all uses that create activity, helping to sustain and increase footfall and dwell time. A summary of these projects and their current position is provided in Appendix 1.
- 11 Previous plans for the town centre included the redevelopment of the former Royal Arcade scheme, which comprised the former bus station and a retail block along Queensway/Victoria Street. These were demolished in 2021 as part of the planned Peveril Securities Ltd (PSL) development - a leisure-led, mixed-use scheme. The first phase of that scheme, funded by the council, was the new bus station and multi-storey car park (MSCP), providing 389 additional parking capacity to compensate for the loss of spaces at other car parks, including Lyceum

Square and Oak Street car parks. Currently, development in Crewe town centre have led to a net increase of 233 parking places.

- 12 However, due to major changes in the economy and the leisure sector post-pandemic, exacerbated by the decision to stop HS2 north of Birmingham, PSL could not proceed due to lack of commercial viability.
- 13 This was seen by many as another failed scheme, following on from the collapse of a larger retail-led scheme developed with Modus by the former Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council in 2009, when that developer fell into receivership during the global economic crash.
- 14 The undeveloped area of land that now sits next to the new bus station and MSCP is still owned by the council. After the second phase of the previous development scheme fell away, the council secured grant funding to develop a 'meanwhile' (temporary) use for the site. This project (known as Royal Arcade Meanwhile) is the subject of a live planning application and, if approved, will be delivered by March 2026 and remain in use for 3-5 years, before it is redeveloped.
- 15 Crewe is typical of many mid-sized towns, in needing to consider its position and long-term future when most commercial investment is focused on large cities.
- 16 Crewe is challenged, with most of its wards being the most deprived in the borough, and amongst the most deprived nationally. However, Crewe has a diverse and growing population which is attractive to many people, given its great connectivity and affordable housing options. It also has major opportunities to build upon the £1.2bn new health community at Leighton and the continued growth of key employers such as Bentley, Radius, AO, Assurant and Likewise. The council continues to have dialogue with senior policymakers regarding the potential to increase rail capacity and speed between Crewe and larger cities, and these will influence plans for *Crewe 360*, the council's emerging plans for the area around its station.
- 17 With the potential of a Combined Authority for Cheshire & Warrington being established, there is a possibility of securing funding to support further regeneration in Crewe, which is established as being one of the sub-region's spatial priorities. In association with this, there is also potential for additional grant funding to be made available by Government for 'quick wins.'
- 18 The council's ambition is to build upon these opportunities, and the success of its previous regeneration plans, by developing Crewe into being the best small city by 2050. This vision, whilst not formalised, has been tested with partners across the local community and it has struck a

chord, capturing the essence of the town's motto *semper contendo* – 'ever pressing forward.'

- 19 In order to provide a firm foundation for secure new investment and external funding for projects, the council and other key stakeholders now need to refresh previous plans and establish a new 'regeneration and development framework' – not just for the town centre, but for the urban area of Crewe as a whole. This will capture wider developments, including the £1.2bn+ health and care neighbourhood at Leighton and around Crewe station with its potential as a 360° hub, and ensure synergy between investments with alignment to the shared vision.
- 20 In relation to the Royal Arcade site, whilst delivering short-term plans for its use, the council has had informal dialogue with several parties regarding its longer-term redevelopment. These have predominantly been residential-led schemes, but in all cases identified a significant viability gap that would need to be addressed through public investment. The council's current financial position prevents it from investing in this way, although officers have been engaged with Government to develop an approach that uses other public funding.
- 21 Over recent months, the council has engaged with a well-known developer of residential-led mixed use schemes in places with similar economic challenges as Crewe. Their operational model is built on close collaboration with local councils to move tailored projects from initial concept and design through to construction and subsequent long-term management, such that they retain an interest in maintaining the quality of the property and environment and with a strong emphasis on delivering positive social impact. Critically, they have established a very strong relationship with Homes England, the government's housing and regeneration agency, which is a key funder of such schemes.
- 22 The developer is proposing a unique, tailored model for Crewe, which addresses the current financial constraints the council is facing. They have developed, at their own cost and risk, initial plans for a significant redevelopment scheme in Crewe town centre. They have also undertaken a high-level development appraisal (viability assessment). Despite the challenges this presents they are confident that they can deliver a scheme in Crewe that will transform it, with at least 300 residential units of different forms (e.g. single-storey apartments, town houses, etc), with active ground floor uses, suitable for retail, restaurants/cafes, offices or other complementary uses, potentially including some public sector functions such as health and learning.
- 23 Their development would strike a balance between public and private space, forming a central element in a transformed modern town centre. This will also involve the developer's ongoing stewardship of this core

part of the town centre, reflecting their long-term role in managing buildings and spaces, potentially including the establishment of a new social landlord (registered provider) to address social housing needs.

- 24 However, to assist in making a scheme viable, they require:
- (a) early and close collaboration with the council, that reflects the financial and capacity challenges it faces, through a pre-development agreement to allow them to develop a masterplan, development appraisal and other technical studies which will inform a planning application and business case to secure funding for delivery of a scheme on three council sites. They also require exclusivity over negotiations relating to these sites, such that the council cannot dispose of these sites to another party.
 - (b) 'gap funding' to bridge the viability gap – the difference between the cost of design, construction and management, and the income likely to result from any completed development. It has been made clear that the council is unlikely to fund any of this gap itself, but the council will work alongside the developer to seek gap funding, e.g. from Homes England and, if established, a new Combined Authority.
 - (c) a larger scale of development land, which would be delivered in phases and designed to accommodate a wide range of housing needs, such as private-rented, social housing and extra-care housing. This means that, as well as the cleared Royal Arcade site, they would seek to incorporate the council-owned Delamere Street and Chester Street car park sites.
- 25 The car park sites referred to above previously featured in plans under the council's 'In Town Living' project, which sought to utilise these sites for two separate residential schemes. Due to issues around procurement and viability, these plans did not progress. However, officers expected that a further opportunity would arise as the residential market shifted. With developer demand for housing on privately-owned sites growing (proposals in the pipeline for Breeden House, Burford House, former Boots, Wellington House), this is evidently an opportune time to revisit the use of these sites alongside the Royal Arcade site.
- 26 The MSCP, with 389 parking spaces, was developed to provide capacity for when existing car parks are redeveloped. It should be sufficient to accommodate future demand in Crewe, including for a new residential population, although this will be subject to the nature of future development, including consideration of low car or car-free dwellings, as part of the planning process. A further capacity assessment as part of any planning application or contractual

agreement will provide assurance that town centre development is supported by sufficient parking capacity as part of an overall transport and movement strategy for the central area. If development extends to encompass Delamere Street car park (112 short stay spaces) and Chester Street car park (127 long stay spaces), there may be need to review the operation of parking stock within the town centre, giving consideration to the balance between short and long-stay spaces, hours of car park operation and extending provision for charging of electric vehicles.

- 27 There may also be scope for the developer to extend their scheme to other sites within the town centre. It is likely that these would be through commercial negotiation between third parties, but the council may, in the future, wish to explore utilising its powers under the Compulsory Purchase Order legislation.
- 28 Appendix 3 (a Part 2 item) provides further information on the developer and provides an indicative image of their potential scheme.
- 29 The council has the ability to draw upon an existing capital programme item within the MTFS specifically relating to Crewe town centre regeneration; this identifies £1.323m forecast spend in 2025/26, which includes external grant funding to support the Royal Arcade Meanwhile project. Approximately £300k of this will be required, with the additional £275k referred to in the recommendations, to support the costs associated with developing the pre-development agreement.
- 30 In addition to the potential of the sites referred to above, there may be opportunities to progress redevelopment of other council-owned sites and properties in Crewe town centre. Where these are proposed by owners of adjacent sites, legislation allows the council to undertake a direct sale to facilitate redevelopment, subject to other factors such as best consideration, etc.
- 31 Crewe Town Board has played a key role in shaping regeneration plans and projects since it was first established in 2020. It is independent of Cheshire East Council, with a private sector chair and representatives from across the local community, including the council leader. It is supported by Cheshire East Council from a governance and reporting perspective, with officers attending each of its meetings. It has established Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) which are now subject to a periodic review.

Consultation and Engagement

- 32 In collaboration with developers and their representatives, the council will undertake public and stakeholder engagement and consultation to ensure there are significant and timely opportunities for local members,

local residents, businesses, property owners and others to help shape the design and composition of development proposals.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 33 The recommendation to delegate authority to enter into a pre-development agreement is based on the council's understanding that the specific developer is uniquely placed to deliver a residential-led development in Crewe town centre that:
- (a) is based on their strong track record of delivery alongside local authority partners
 - (b) is transformative, with high quality design, construction and management of buildings and spaces;
 - (c) can evolve through a pre-development agreement where the costs and risks to the council are minimised;
 - (d) can be delivered with gap-funding from other public sector sources secured, or brokered, by them;
 - (e) managed on a long-term basis, such that they retain responsibility for maintaining the quality of the property and environment; and
 - (f) have a strong emphasis on delivering positive social impact through all stages of the development lifecycle;
- 34 For the developer to consider progressing with its plans for Crewe town centre, they require the council to give some initial commitment. This report seeks to allow officers to develop a business case, secure funding and enter into formal dialogue to enable them to undertake masterplanning, detailed development appraisals, funding applications, etc. This does not include giving authority for the developer to undertake a redevelopment, so it is entirely within the council's power not to proceed with the development, or to choose to develop the sites through another developer.
- 35 This stage of work constitutes a period of due diligence, whereby all parties are required to satisfy each other over the viability of a high-quality development. The developer will benefit from exclusivity during this period, where the council will not engage with other parties regarding the agreed sites.
- 36 Subsequent stages of delivery would only progress when both the developer and the council are satisfied that a high quality development scheme is viable (with gap funding) and satisfies legal and commercial considerations, such as agreeing a value for land assets it may sell or

lease to the developer. The council will then seek further authority from this committee to enter into a formal contractual arrangement with the developer to commence the development process.

- 37 The council intend to utilise the Pagabo construction/development framework to appoint a developer. This is a procurement framework used by public sector organisations in the UK to contract for construction projects. It provides a compliant and efficient way to procure works, services, and consultancy, offering options like direct award or competitive tendering. Pagabo frameworks focus on social value, ensuring projects deliver positive economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- 38 On a similar basis, the council has other property assets in Crewe town centre that may be of interest to developers that own sites adjacent to council assets. This report also seeks authority for officers to enter into dialogue regarding freehold or leasehold sale of such sites.
- 39 For clarity, the council would still require formal decisions to enter into a development agreement and/or commercial sale with a third party where the value is greater than £1m by reason of the same falling to be considered as a significant decision, and separate decisions would also need to be taken in relation to planning, closure of car parks, etc.
- 40 Other reasons related to these recommendations are commercially sensitive and are therefore included as a Part 2 item in Appendix 4.

Other Options Considered

- 41 All options are at risk of global and national market volatility, but the Government's commitment to investing in significant housing growth represents a timely opportunity to move forward now.

Option	Impact	Risk
1) Do nothing	The Royal Arcade site would be likely to remain as a 'meanwhile' use site. Other sites would remain in their current form.	With lack of revenue funding to maintain the 'meanwhile' site, its condition would deteriorate.
2) Progress dialogue with a developer through the Pagabo framework	Potential to develop a comprehensive and impactful residential-led scheme with minimal council investment. This would	The scale of the developer's interest, their appetite for a large residential-led scheme, and their track record in securing gap-funding to address viability, represents a unique opportunity

(recommended option)	also secure more commercial uses on the ground floor, improved public realm and social value benefits.	for Crewe and is the primary rationale for utilisation of the Pagabo framework. However, gap-funding is not guaranteed and demand from residential and commercial occupiers may fall short, although the phased approach proposed would help mitigate this.
3) Seek to appoint a development partner through an open public procurement	This could be as impactful as (2) but, given the viability challenges, may not be attractive to a developer unless viability is underwritten by the council / other funders.	<p>This approach was utilised in appointing the developer for the leisure-led scheme. Whilst a development partner was appointed, the scheme was not delivered due to lack of commercial viability.</p> <p>Repeating this approach would almost certainly require the council securing tens of millions of pounds of grant funding to address the expected viability gap.</p> <p>This is both time and labour-intensive; it would require the allocation of additional staffing resources and consultancy support.</p> <p>Without sufficient additional budget for staff and consultancy support, there is a greater risk that such a procurement would take too long and result in failure.</p>
4) Sell council-owned sites to a third party.	This would be less likely to deliver a scheme in the near future.	This would remove most of the controls over the nature of a scheme, instead relying on the planning process to secure the best outcome. In reality, given the nature of the commercial and residential markets in Crewe, it is unlikely that any sale would result in redevelopment of the site without significant additional grant funding.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 42 Local authorities usually allocate land for specific purposes under different statutory powers. They may have acquired the land pursuant to a statute which then regulates how the land must be allocated or managed (e.g., under the Public Health Act 1875) or they may have acquired land for general purposes. It will be necessary for Legal Services to investigate how the Council acquired any land involved with this scheme and if it was for a specific purpose.
- 43 S122 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA) and s232 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) offer two mechanisms under which local authorities may appropriate land for planning purposes. The procedures are largely the same but for one crucial difference, whether or not the land is currently appropriated by the Council for planning purposes.
- 44 Appropriation simply means transferring the allocation of the land from one purpose to another.
- 45 If the local authority decides that it needs to transfer land from one purpose or function to another, perhaps for redevelopment then it may appropriate the land under s.122 LGA 1972, unless the land is currently already allocated for planning purposes, in which case s.232(6) TCPA states that s.232 TCPA must be used.
- 46 “Planning purposes” is not expressly defined but s.246 TCPA states any reference to appropriation of land for planning purposes is reference to the appropriation of it for the purposes for which land could be acquired under s.226 & s.227 TCPA. Therefore, “planning purposes” means an acquisition or appropriation which will facilitate the carrying out of development, re-development or improvement which is likely to contribute to the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area, or which is required in the interests of the proper planning of the area in which the land is situated.

Appropriation Under Section 122 Local Government Act

- 47 S122 LGA 1972 provides that:
- “The council may appropriate for any purpose for which the council is authorised by statute to acquire land by agreement any land which belongs to it and is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation.”
- 48 The key procedural points are as follows:

- a) The land must already belong to the council
 - b) The land must be no longer required for the purpose for which it is currently appropriated; and
 - c) The purpose for which the council is appropriating must be authorised by statute.
- 49 It is important to note that it is a matter for the local authority to satisfy itself whether or not the land is still required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation and its decision cannot be challenged in the absence of bad faith.
- 50 S122 LGA 1972 provides that the council may not appropriate land constituting or forming part of an 'open space' or land forming part of a common (unless it is a common or fuel or field garden allotment of less than 250 square yards) unless they:
- i. advertise their intention to do so for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the local area; and
 - ii. consider any objections to the proposed appropriation which may be made to them.
- 51 'Open space' is defined by s.336(1) TCPA 1990 as "any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground" this impliedly includes de facto open space land not formally dedicated under the Open Spaces Act 1906.
- 52 The council generally has taken a wider view as to what constitutes open space. The land contained within public car parks may be deemed to be open space within the Council's wider view.
- 53 However, if appropriation of the land were to take place under the Local Government Act 1972, the land would still be subject to any third parties rights and/ or interests that exist or incidental to the land. A recent title review has established that the central carpark is burdened by restrictive covenants that the land can only be used for housing purposes, therefore the use of the land for any other purpose would be in breach of the covenants.
- 54 If the council were to develop the land for any of the options detailed in the report, there is a low risk that the council could be subject to an injunction by the person who has the benefit of the covenant; likelihood of any beneficiaries of those covenants being traces is negligible.

Appropriation Under Section 232 TCPA

55 S 232 TCPA 1990 provides that:

“Where any land had been acquired or appropriated by a local authority for planning purposes and is for the time being held by them for the purposes for which it was so acquired or appropriated, the authority may appropriate land for any purpose for which the council is authorised by statute to acquire land by agreement.”

56 The key procedural points are as follows:

- a) The land must already belong to the council and have been acquired or appropriated for planning purposes
- b) The land must be held by the council for purposes which it was appropriated; and
- c) The purpose for which the council is appropriating must be authorised by statute.

57 It is important to note that s.232(4) of the TCPA provides that the council must follow the same advertising requirements for ‘open space’ as above.

58 S 237 TCPA 1990 provides that the erection, construction or carrying out of any building work (by the council or a person deriving title from the council) on land which has been appropriated by a local authority for planning purposes is authorised if it is done in accordance with planning permission, notwithstanding that it interferes with certain private rights such as restrictive covenants and easements. The private rights are converted into a claim for compensation.

59 The decision to appropriate land is, like many administrative actions by public authorities, subject to challenge by judicial review. If private rights are to be overridden the council must be especially careful. The council must be able to demonstrate the purpose for the appropriation and that it has taken all the relevant considerations into account and not taken any irrelevant considerations into account.

60 To enable the council to demonstrate that the decision has been made properly and in accordance with Wednesbury reasonableness, the proposal to appropriate must be the subject of a comprehensive report and decision record or minute. The minutes should show that the land is not currently appropriated for planning purposes, and that the council intends to formally appropriate the land under s.122 LGA 1972 or that the land is currently held for planning purposes and that the council intends to appropriate the land for alternative planning purposes. If

s.122 LGA 1972 is being utilised the minutes must record the resolution that the land is no longer required for the purpose for which it is currently appropriated.

- 61 Advertisements in accordance with s.122(2A) LGA 1972 or s.232(4) TCPA 1990 in respect of open space must give clear information and refer to the intended appropriation. Further, the council's minutes must then record that any objections received have been duly considered.
- 62 Any decision related to the appropriation of land would need to be taken by full council.
- 63 If the decision is made to dispose of the land, then;
 - (i) In accordance with section 123 of the local government act 1972, the council is under an obligation to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable upon the disposal of its property.
 - (ii) There will be a requirement to review the terms when they are prepared to ensure any issues regarding best value, procurement, and or subsidy control are resolved. The terms will also need to reflect any easements and rights for both the land to be disposed of and that retained by the council. Issues may include rights to light/ air, open space and restrictions on building use or development.
- 64 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the general power of competence, which allows the council to do anything an individual can do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. These powers have replaced the previous well-being powers: however, the use of these powers must be in support of a reasonable and accountable decision made in line with the public law principles.
- 65 The council has a fiduciary duty at all times to the taxpayers and must fulfil this duty in a way that is accountable to local people.
- 66 If it is intended to enter into agreements to sell any land it will be necessary for the council to enter that it complies with the requirements of s123. Section 123(2) Local Government Act 1972 allows for a disposal at less than best price reasonably obtainable with the consent of the Secretary of State. The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 allows for consent to be deemed to have been given in specified circumstances. These are; -
- 67 The local authority considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objects in respect of the whole or any part of its area or all or any persons resident or present in its area:

- (a) the promotion or improvement of economic well-being
- (b) the promotion or improvement of social well being
- (c) the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being

- 68 the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and the consideration does not exceed £2 million.
- 69 It should be noted that the 2003 consent does not apply to all public bodies, it does not apply to land acquired or appropriated for planning purposes, it does not preclude judicial review of the decision to make a disposal at undervalue, and it does not remove the need to comply with subsidy control rules.
- 70 The council must therefore ensure that the disposal is not for an undervalue in excess of £2m and should satisfy itself if specific disposal consent is required from the Secretary of State.
- 71 If the council in future determines that it will be using its Compulsory Purchase power, it needs to ensure that it complies with the Guidance which indicated that compulsory purchase powers should only be used where there is a compelling case in the public interest that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the interference with private rights and interests. Compulsory purchase powers are only to be used as a last resort and the land proposed to be acquired should be the minimum considered to be reasonably required. The council must demonstrate that there are no impediments to implementation of the CPO. To do so, the council must provide substantive information as to the sources of funding available for the acquisition of the land the council must also show that the Scheme is unlikely to be blocked by any physical or legal impediments to implementation; including any need for planning permission or any other consent or licence.
- 72 Legal along with the council's Procurement team are reviewing the Pagabo construction/development framework to establish the basis upon which the council might proceed to directly award a pre-development agreement with a specific developer. That developer has supplied a copy of the Pagabo standard form pre-development agreement which it is understood would be used if proceeding as planned, from a review of this document it would appear to be cast on reasonable terms but instructions will be required in order to finalise this document on any key aspects that the council would require to see reflected in it.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 73 The proposal to take forward and fund this scheme remains subject to the production of a satisfactory business case.
- 74 The Council's revenue funding position is challenging at this stage and options will need to be considered including the use of flexible capital receipts. That will be available if the Council can secure additional capital receipts and the potential calls against the receipts for transformation costs can be managed within the envelope available.
- 75 It is noted that officers are also looking to other sources of funding outside of the Council to support this project.
- 76 Within the Pagabo Developer Led Framework all Developers within the framework (core and reserves) can be directly awarded projects by all public sector bodies. This route would be used where the development can only proceed if a particular developer is appointed (for example, the developer has an interest in an adjoining site) or there is a specific reason not to run a further competition)
- 77 Direct Awards are permissible where:
- Officers of the Council have reviewed the Framework tender price and quality responses and the Framework template Project Agreement.
 - Having done that, Officers have been able to determine that a particular developer is best placed to deliver the development.

Human Resources

- 78 There are no direct HR implications for this report. Alternative options to that recommended, would be likely to require additional staffing resources.

Risk Management

- 79 The key risks associated with this report are summarised below:

Risk 1: That insufficient funding is identified to support the costs of developing the proposals, resulting in plans stalling or being terminated

Mitigation 1: The council is seeking to secure external grant funding, but is committing to underwrite its proportion of these costs, subject to a capped contribution to the developer.

Risk 2: That insufficient funding is identified to support the costs of bridging the viability gap for the proposed scheme, resulting in the scheme stalling or being terminated.

Mitigation 2: The council is working with the developer to secure external grant funding to deliver the scheme.

Risk 3: Planning and environmental factors require a development scheme to be fundamentally changed.

Mitigation 3: The potential developer has a track record in working alongside planning teams and utilities providers to deliver schemes that address any concerns whilst delivering schemes that are vibrant and viable.

Risk 4: A decision is not taken by committee at this stage resulting in the developer prioritising other towns/schemes ahead of this.

Mitigation 4: This report is framed as being the starting point for a proposed development and does not involve significant levels of reputational or financial risk to the council. Significant decisions regarding the use of its land assets and planning will be taken at a later date when more detailed information on the scheme will be available.

Impact on other Committees

- 80 The regeneration of Crewe town centre should have wide-ranging positive impacts, benefiting others including children, young people, adults and public health more broadly. Given the focus of the proposal on the local economy and growth, it is appropriate that this committee considers it, but the report has been considered by the Leadership Teams of other council directorates.
- 81 As plans are developed in more detail, it may be appropriate to seek approval from other committees.

Regeneration and Planning Policy

- 82 The Town Centre Regeneration Framework and ambitions for the wider Crewe Area (see 'All Change for Crewe: High Growth city, 2013), informed development of the Council's formal land use policy for the town which is set out in the Local Plan Strategy (LPS), primarily at policy LPS 1 'Central Crewe' which supports delivery of circa 400 new homes, commercial and retail development and improved connectivity. A more detailed approach to Crewe Town Centre is also provided via part two of the local plan, the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD), at Policy RET10: 'Crewe Town Centre' with a

focus on public realm improvement, better connectivity and new residential accommodation in the town centre.

- 83 These two core policies, alongside multiple other general but supportive policies in the development plan, set out the council's land use strategy for Crewe which strongly supports further residential development in the town.
- 84 Government has recently increased the housing requirement for Cheshire East which means many development sites will be proposed at the edges of settlements around Cheshire East, including at Crewe. In this context it is essential for the council to make best use of its own assets to demonstrate how a model which focuses on improved density, sustainability and quality can deliver the housing that our communities need whilst contributing to the five year supply for the borough and making best use of brownfield sites to bring direct investment, and jobs, into the town centre.

Policy: Cheshire East Plan

The Cheshire East Plan is the council's guiding vision of enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East. The recommendations in this report contribute to the following commitments in the plan, as follows:

Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all	Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing	Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
1.4 Shared vision for Crewe delivers a masterplan for jobs, affordable homes and regeneration for the benefit of the whole borough.	2.6 Lasting solutions are delivered through strong and committed partnerships.	3.3 Innovative solutions are developed through a culture of collaboration across the council and with residents, businesses and partners.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 85 This report contains no recommendations with direct and immediate implications related equality, diversity and inclusion. As the development proposals progress, full consideration to equalities, diversity and inclusion will be given including, where appropriate, an Equalities Impact Assessment, as well as a more detailed assessment as to the social impacts of any proposals.

Other Implications




- 86 This report contains no recommendations with direct and immediate implications for rural communities, children and young people, public health and climate change related to this report's recommendations. As the development proposals progress, full consideration to these will be given including engagement with relevant council services.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	09/07/25	18/08/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Acting Monitoring Officer	26/08/25	28/08/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Mandy Withington	Principal Lawyer (Commercial Property and Projects)	09/07/25	21/07/25
Adrian Leslie	Lawyer (Contracts & Procurement Team)	09/07/25	21/07/25
Steve Reading	Finance Manager (Place & Corporate Services)	09/07/25	28/07/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director - Place	Click or tap to enter a date	28/08/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Charles Jarvis, Head of Economic Development charles.jarvis@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Summary of current Crewe town centre regeneration projects. Appendix 2: Crewe Town Board current Terms of Reference Appendix 3: Background on developer and images of potential development scheme (not for publication). Appendix 4: Additional Reasons for Recommendations (not for publication)
Background Papers:	None

Summary of recent/current Crewe town centre regeneration projects.

Project name and location	Description, timescale and delivery lead.	Image
Town Centre attractors		
Repurposing Our High Streets Grant Scheme, <i>Across Crewe town centre</i>	Grant scheme targeted at supporting businesses/ organisations to take on vacant town centre premises, reducing vacancy and diversifying the town centre with more independent businesses. Operating now until December 2026. (Cheshire East Council)	
Cheshire Archive & public realm, <i>Memorial Square</i>	New public-facing building to accommodate part of the relocated historic Cheshire Archive with the associated facilities and public realm. Open Summer 2026. (Cheshire East Council with Cheshire West & Chester Council)	
Office workspace & co-working <i>Vernon Way / Heath Street</i>	Conversion of former council offices to provide attractive, flexible modern office space for small businesses and entrepreneurs, stimulating both economic growth and town centre footfall. Open now. (Cheshire East Council)	

Indoor Community spaces & places

Crewe Youth Club

Mirion Street

New boxing club on site of former Youth Club, providing some of the best training facilities in the UK. Open now. (Crewe Youth Club with South Cheshire Amateur Boxing Club)



The Dome YouthZone

Oak Street

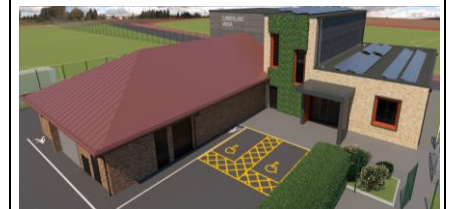
Major new youth facility serving for all young people in the borough providing a range of activities and support services to help tackle deprivation and exclusion. Open Summer 2026. (OnSide Youth Zones)









Cumberland Arena




Thomas Street


Remodelled and extended sports building with additional studio space to meet growing demand, and spectator facilities. Open Spring 2026. (Cheshire East Council with Everybody Health & Leisure)



Outdoor spaces & places		
Ly² event space <i>Lyceum Square</i>	<p>New outdoor event and activity space adjacent to Lyceum Theatre and Market Hall, with stages, giant screen, seating, exhibition space and bespoke seating and lighting. Opened Summer 2023. (Cheshire East Council)</p>	
Civic & Cultural Space <i>Memorial Square</i>	<p>Demolition of former deck and undercroft car park to create a new public space and improved pedestrian linkages, including a new surface car park and courts entrance. Opened Spring 2025. (Cheshire East Council)</p>	
Pocket Parks <i>Eight existing Pocket Parks across Crewe</i>	<p>Major improvements to existing Pocket Parks to make them more attractive and better equipped spaces for local residents to spend time and enjoy physical activity. First parks completed Summer 2024, final parks to complete Spring 2026, (Cheshire East Council)</p>	

<p>Valley Brook Corridor</p> <p><i>Valley Brook and adjacent area</i></p>	<p>Improvement to existing pedestrian/cycle route along Valley Brook to enhance connections between different areas and encourage physical activity. To be delivered in phases from Autumn 2025- Autumn 2026 (Cheshire East Council)</p>	
<p>Jubilee Multi Use Games Area</p> <p><i>Adjacent to Jubilee Gardens and Jubilee House</i></p>	<p>Redevelopment of problematic public space to provide a managed multi-use outdoor facility for local people to practice physical activities. Open Spring 2026. (Cheshire East Council)</p>	
<p>Meanwhile @ Royal Arcade</p> <p><i>Victoria St – Queensway – Delamere Street</i></p>	<p>Temporary development of land adjacent to Crewe bus station and multi-storey car park to provide a new footpath, public space, including grassed areas and hardstanding with seating, recreation facilities space. Delivered in phases and to complete March 2026. (Cheshire East Council)</p>	

Better Quality Housing		
Warm & Healthy Homes <i>Chester Street and Victoria Street</i>	Targeted housing improvement programme to deliver repairs/improvements to energy-inefficient heritage properties. To complete by late 2026. (Cheshire East Council)	
Accessibility & Permeability		
Flag Lane Link	New road link improving east-west vehicular connectivity for cars and cyclists. Completed Summer 2024. (Cheshire East Council).	
Southern Gateway <i>High Street – Forge Street</i>	New pedestrian and cycle link providing a more direct link between the town centre and the railway station / south Crewe, including the Lifestyle Centre and new YouthZone. Open August 2025. (Cheshire East Council)	

Mill Street Corridor <i>Railway Street – Mill Street – Vernon Way</i>	Improved pedestrian and cycle link between Southern Gateway and the railway station / south Crewe, delivered in phases and to complete Summer 2026. (Cheshire East Council).	
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Crewe Town Board

Current Terms of Reference (subject to periodic review).

1. Key Objectives of the Crewe Town Board

- 1.1. The Crewe Town Board will provide expertise, guidance and support to all key stakeholders (including Cheshire East Council and Crewe Town Council) to:
- Set a Vision and Strategy to secure the long term economic, physical, environmental, cultural and social development of Crewe.
 - Agree an action plan which includes the short and medium-term actions required to deliver the Vision and Strategy
 - Inform any key investment and funding decision to be taken by any individual stakeholder in the town

2. Main responsibilities of the Crewe Town Board

- Develop a long-term vision, strategy and plan for Crewe
- Review and advise on any partner strategies and plans that relate to economic, physical and social development in Crewe.
- Consider and advise on funding applications that support the key objectives of the Board
- Ensure all strategies/plans and investment proposals are aligned
- Influence new proposals so that they maximise their contribution to the key objectives of the Board.
- Influence the development and delivery of sub-regional and national policies and programmes that have a bearing on the key objectives.
- Promote and market the town to residents, partners, businesses, inward investors and visitors (existing and potential)
- Build and maintain strong effective relationships with key local, sub-regional and national stakeholders to help secure further investment and ensure a positive impression of the town.
- Ensure appropriate engagement arrangements are in place with all stakeholders
- Specifically, to ensure the voice of all groups is fed in to the vision and its strategy and delivery e.g. young people, vulnerable groups, BAME community.

3. Scope

- 3.1. The focus of the Board will be on the urban areas of Crewe. However, in some instances it may be appropriate to consider Crewe as having a wider economic geography extending across south Cheshire and/or the CW postcodes.
- 3.2. The Board's remit shall encompass the economic, physical, environmental and social development of Crewe. For purposes of clarity this should include the following:
- Physical development including buildings and infrastructure

- The retention and creation of jobs and increased productivity through Crewe's employers
- The skills, education, aptitudes and experiences of people that live or work in Crewe
- The physical built and green environment of Crewe
- The public health and broader welfare of Crewe's residents.

4.0 Membership

- 4.1 The Board will comprise up to 17 members, reflecting the different types of stakeholders required to support effective working whilst representing the different interests of the town. These will include the MP for Crewe & Nantwich and representatives from Cheshire East Council, Crewe Town Council and Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 4.2 Organisations represented on the Board will determine and review their own appointments in accordance with their internal arrangements.
- 4.3 Individual members of the Board will be responsible for the induction of new members as appropriate.

5.0 Chair and Vice Chair

- 5.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair will, unless otherwise agreed, be elected for a period of three years but this will be reviewed annually by the Board.
- 5.2 The annual review by the Board for the Chair and Vice Chair review will follow this process:
 - 5.2.1 The current Chair will email the Board on an annual review basis to ask if anyone wishes to put themselves forward as Chair or Vice Chair and if the current elected representatives are happy to continue in their roles.
 - 5.2.2 Should further nominations be received for either positions, this will result in an anonymous vote by the Board conducted by either the current Chair or Vice-Chair, dependant on the role being considered.
 - 5.2.3 The Chair or Vice-Chair will collate the votes and communicate the results.
 - 5.2.4 The Chair or Vice-Chair elected will take up their position upon announcement of the outcome.
- 5.3 The Chair should normally be a private sector representative.
- 5.4 The Vice-Chair may be from any sector.
- 5.5 In the event that the Chair resigns or is otherwise unable to continue in office, the Vice-Chair will perform the functions of the Chair until the Board has elected a new Chair.
- 5.6 Similarly, if the Vice-Chair is unable to continue in office, the Chair will prompt an election for a new Vice-Chair.

6.0 Lead Authority and Accountable Body Arrangements

- 6.1 Cheshire East Council will be the Lead Authority and will carry out the role of Accountable Body for the Towns Fund.

7.0 Secretariat

- 7.1 Cheshire East Council will provide secretariat support for the meetings of the Board.
- 7.2 The Deputy Chief Executive of Cheshire East Council will act as Secretary of the Board for the purpose of co-ordinating advice to the Board.
- 7.3 The Head of Democratic Services and Governance of Cheshire East Council will be responsible for providing secretariat support for the Board.
- 7.4 Agendas and reports will be published at least five clear working days in advance of a meeting and sent to all members of the Board.
- 7.5 Agendas, reports and minutes will be published on the Council's website, and will be publicly accessible documents, subject to the requirements of confidentiality.

8.0 Board Meetings

- 8.1 To be quorate, two thirds of members must be present, of which two must be from the private sector. No decisions may be taken by the Board if a meeting is inquorate.
- 8.2 Substitute members at a meeting will not be permitted without the prior agreement of the Chair.
- 8.3 Meetings are to be held at least four times per year.
- 8.4 Minutes of the meeting will focus on actions rather than provide a record of all discussion points.
- 8.5 The board may invite appropriate organisations/individuals to give presentations on priority issues.
- 8.6 At every meeting, the chair will confirm: all decisions taken; actions agreed; and media messages.
- 8.7 Where a decision is required, the Board will try to reach a consensus view. Where this is not possible, there will be a vote. Each member of the Board will have one vote and matters will be determined by a simple majority of those present at the meeting. In the case of an equality of voting, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.
- 8.8 A matter needing board approval can be considered by exception by correspondence if the matter is time critical. A majority of the board will have to approve the matter and copies of emails confirming the position and any comments will be kept by the Secretariat. The matter will then need to be formally ratified at the next board meeting and minuted.
- 8.9 The Board will make its governance structures, profiles on key stakeholders, meeting agendas and minutes (in accordance with the Local Government Act

1972) evidence and any supporting documents for Town Investment Plans publicly available (e.g. through the website of Cheshire East Council).

- 8.10 Where it is necessary for a matter to be dealt with in confidence, all relevant papers will be marked as confidential and shall not be disclosed outside the Board.

9.0 Declarations of Interest and Conduct of Members of the Board

- 9.1 Members must declare a personal, pecuniary, prejudicial or other interest in any matter under discussion at a meeting and this must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 9.2 Declaration includes stating the nature of the interest.
- 9.3 Where a pecuniary or prejudicial interest is declared, the member in question must absent themselves from the meeting for that item and take no part in the discussion or voting.
- 9.4 Elected members of Cheshire East Council who sit on the Board are bound by the Council's Member Code of Conduct.
- 9.5 The Board will establish a register of interests to be completed by all members of the Board. The register will be maintained by the Lead Authority.
- 9.6 All members of the Board are expected to adhere to the Nolan Principles: The Seven Principles of Public Life:
- Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership

10.0 Changes to the Terms of Reference

- 10.1 These terms of reference will be reviewed annually or sooner if deemed appropriate.
- 10.2 Any changes to the terms of reference must be approved by a majority of the Board's membership.

Annex 1: Board structure and membership

The number of positions on any board has to balance the need for operational efficiency in considering issues and taking decisions, with the need to be inclusive of a wider range of interests. Given that Crewe Town Board's remit is principally advisory, rather than decision-making, and that development of Crewe covers such a wide range of issues, the Board has been established with 15 'fixed' positions.

The Board comprises the following mix types of members:

Sectoral (5) - to address requirements of the Towns fund requirements and to ensure that key strategic decision-makers are well-placed to advise and act upon the advice of the Board.

Thematic (7) – to ensure that all key issues relating to Crewe's functioning as a 'place' are considered, with a key focus on how these impact on its people, with relevant professional inputs from a range of local organisations (may be public, private or voluntary sector).

Skills-based (5) – to ensure it is utilising the broader skills/knowledge of the local business community. This should include the Chair of the Board.

In addition, officers from relevant organisations will also be invited to attend Board meetings as advisers, where appropriate.

The Board therefore comprises

Category A - Sectoral

1. Member of Parliament
2. Cheshire East Council: Elected Cabinet Member
3. Crewe Town Council: Leader
4. South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry
5. Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership

Category B – Thematic Representatives from

6. Education & Skills
7. Environment, housing, infrastructure and transport
8. Healthcare
9. Sport and Leisure
10. Culture
11. Local community
12. Young people

Category C: - Business/Commercial

Up to five individuals with skills from industry such as commercial operations, marketing, property, retail and hospitality.