

A Vision for Crewe

Crewe's Community plan



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Introduction

During the years since the inception of Cheshire East Council, Crewe only had one-tier of democratic governance. This changed in April 2013, when for the first time a newly elected Crewe Parish Council was formed to represent the wishes of Crewe residents and the wider Crewe community - taking over from what was known as the Charter Trustees. This followed a referendum when the residents of Crewe strongly supported the creation of such an organisation.

The new council swiftly adopted the constitution of a town council, ensuring the chair of the council was in fact mayor of the town. Councillor Irene Faseyi became the first Mayor of Crewe under this new arrangement in 2013 and with it, the first black Mayor of the town in its history.

In the last two years, the Town Council has sought to establish itself as an active part of the town and it is believed to be one of the top five largest councils of its kind in the country. The council as a 'Voice for Crewe' has endeavoured to increase civic pride in the town; contribute to the community and support others and those groups who do the same and furthermore, the council is determined by working with other organisations to boost the economic fortunes of Crewe.

Crewe Town Council is aware of its legal limitations to effect change as a body in its own right. It goes without saying, this organisation can be confident in its potential to improve our town by carrying out the functions it can as an autonomous body successfully but also by working in partnership with organisations that have a stake in your community and in your town. This community plan will embody this 'working in partnership' ethos. It is the culmination of 12 months of hard work by Crewe Town Council and its partners to agree positive steps to improve the quality of life in the town.

Therefore, it is with great pleasure that we present Crewe's community plan. Let us all get to work and create a new vision for our town – a Vision for Crewe.



A Brief History of Crewe

In the early years of the 19th Century, the place which is now the town of Crewe consisted of the twin townships of Church and Monks Coppenhall. It was a dairy farming area, famous for its Cheshire cheese, of small, mainly tenant farmers and farm labourers. The 1831 Census for Monks Coppenhall, where the new town was to be built, lists just 27 families: 11 farmers, 11 farm labourers, 3 shoemakers (probably outworkers for the Nantwich shoe trade) and a schoolteacher.

When the Grand Junction Railway Company built the line from Birmingham to the Liverpool-Manchester line, a first class station was opened where the line crossed the turnpiked Wheelock-Nantwich Road. The first train came through on 4th July 1837 and by 1841 there was a network of railway lines radiating out from Crewe. Then, because the company could not expand their works at Edgehill in Liverpool, it was decided that a whole new complex would be built in the Crewe area.

A site was chosen in Coppenhall and Crewe Works were built in the V between the Chester and Warrington lines. Skilled men were needed and had to be brought from the existing site. They needed housing and the company engineer, Joseph Locke, was instructed to lay out plans. A Birmingham firm was given the contract to build houses, and in 1842, the first workers moved in.

The company took great pride in their new town and provided excellent homes and many other facilities. The first locomotive, Columbine, was completed in 1843 and the Works grew rapidly, extending well beyond the original site (where Dunelm, Tesco and the Heritage Centre now stand) to become the largest railway works in the world. The 5,000th engine was completed in 1911, by which time, the Works was able to produce everything it needed from the steel to the finished engines.

Some 7,500 men were now employed in the Works which covered 137 acres, 48 roofed over, and there were also those who worked on the permanent way, the sheds, the shunting yards and the station. The town had also grown rapidly in population from the 148 of 1831 to almost 43,000. Clothing factories had been established providing work for women, and in 1877, the town got its charter of incorporation and became a borough.

By 1920, the workforce had reached 10,000, but the inter-war period also saw the beginning of the decline of the railways, and, as in the rest of the country, depression and unemployment. In 1937, as part of the rearmament programme, it was decided to site a Rolls Royce factory in Crewe, building aircraft engines (the Merlin) during the war, then post war, turning to the production of cars. The two factories between them provided work for thousands of Crewe people.

Today, the locomotive work is much reduced, while the factory built for Rolls Royce is owned by VW and produces Bentley cars very successfully. Well-established industrial and business parks provide further employment. Little is left of the old townships (just a few old houses, that were once farmhouses, and some original street patterns) or of the railway town, with most of the company houses lost to redevelopment. The scale of the Works has now reduced to only 30 acres and much has been replaced by houses and apartments, a health centre, a leisure area, restaurants, a pub and a supermarket.

Crewe Today

Crewe is the largest town in south Cheshire and is located in the borough of Cheshire East. According to the 2011 Census, the population of Crewe (Crewe Town Council administrative area) is 53,370 people living in 22,401 households. There are more young people, and fewer older people in Crewe than would be typical for Cheshire East or England as a whole. In 2011, there were 10,699 residents under the age of 16, 20% of the total population. The proportion of under 16s in Cheshire East as a whole is 18%, and in England is 19%. Only 14% of Crewe's population (7,634) were over 65, compared to 19% in Cheshire East and 16% in England.

Crewe has excellent transport links to the rest of the UK. It is located less than 5 miles from the M6 motorway and Crewe Railway Station, one of the largest rail stations in the North West, is located 1 mile from the town centre. London can be reached in around 90 minutes by train and direct connections are also available to Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester, Chester and Holyhead (for ferry connections to Ireland). The closest airport is Manchester Airport which is around 30 miles away and Liverpool John Lennon Airport is around 40 miles away. The map below shows the central location of Crewe in relation to several major cities in the UK.



Mapdata © 2015 Google

In terms of industry within the town, the railway still plays a significant part in local employment terms, with companies like Bombardier Transportation and DB Schenker Rail carrying out train maintenance and inspections in the town. Luxury Bentley cars are manufactured at a factory which employs over 3,000 people. There are a number of business parks around the town hosting light industry and offices, including Crewe Gates Industrial Estate and Crewe Business Park, a 67 acre site with offices, research and IT manufacturing. In terms of retail, the largest facilities are the Market Shopping Centre in the town centre and Grand Junction Retail Park.

There are a number of leisure facilities in the town including a multiplex cinema, a Grade II listed theatre, known as the Lyceum, and the Axis Arts Centre on the Manchester Metropolitan University campus. Queen's Park is the town's main park, and is currently undergoing a major renovation. Football League One team, Crewe Alexandra, play locally at the stadium on Gresty Road. Cheshire East Council are currently constructing a new lifestyle centre in the town which will offer leisure facilities (including a 25m swimming pool), modern family and adult social care provision and community facilities. It is due to open in early 2016. In terms of education, the town has 4 main secondary schools and 2 facilities for post-16 study – South Cheshire College and the Cheshire campus of Manchester Metropolitan University.

Despite the town's many strengths, Crewe has the highest levels of deprivation in the borough of Cheshire East. Average household income ranges from £19,499 to £24,200 compared to a Cheshire East average of £32,600 (CACI 2010 from JSNA). Unemployment levels are higher than the average for Cheshire East and qualification levels are generally poor - 3.1% of working age adults claimed Job Seekers Allowance in 2014 (compared to 1.5% Cheshire East and 2.4% England). In addition, 12.9% of working age residents were on key work related benefits, compared to 7.3% in Cheshire East and 10.6% in England. There were fewer owner occupiers in Crewe than the average for Cheshire East or England and more households rent from social landlords (19.2%) or private landlords (19.5%) than is average for England (17.3% social and 16.8% private). The proportion of households in Crewe with no car (31%) is almost twice that of the rest of Cheshire East (16%) (2011 Census data).



The Community Plan Process

A community-led plan is an in-depth survey of a local area carried out by the community itself which is often initiated by a town or parish council. It aims to assess both the needs and aspirations of a community including how it sees itself developing over the next 5–10 years and concludes with an action plan to ensure that things actually happen. It provides a vehicle for communities to articulate their needs and aspirations in an evidence based, structured and coherent form. One of the most important features of a community-led plan is its accountability to the wider community. It is this that ultimately makes it realistic and achievable as it is the community that delivers the action plan.

Community led planning (CLP) works by a step by step process that enables local people and organisations to participate in, and collectively contribute to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their local area. Already undertaken by over 4,000 communities across England, and with over 70 completed plans across Cheshire and Warrington, it represents an unparalleled opportunity for people to take responsibility for making things happen locally, rather than waiting for others to do it.

This approach to community engagement and empowerment has been developed and refined since the late 1970's, largely as a response to the gradual withdrawing of public sector services and the increasing need for communities to look after their own affairs. Over the years, community led plans have taken on different names including village appraisals, parish plans, market town action plans and more recently via the Localism Act 2012 neighbourhood plans have given communities the opportunity to produce a land use plan with legal weight in decision making.

All community led plans have developed their own particular characteristics, tending to be used in different geographical contexts. One of the defining characteristics of all community led plans is they are not imposed from above, but instead initiated and led by local people who steer their community through a step by step process.

A Vision for Crewe - Crewe's Community Plan process

Following the creation of Crewe Town Council in 2013, a 7-year strategic plan was drawn up to provide a focus for the new council. The plan includes 5 strategic ambitions:

- To make Crewe a better place to live, work and visit;
- To preserve and enhance the nature of the town through the development process;
- To deliver effective services;
- To work with others to deliver improvement in areas where we have no direct control; and
- To have an improvement plan in place for the Town Council.

In the document, the council recognise that they need to do more to build an evidence base and seek to improve community engagement and communications.

A Vision for Crewe was commissioned in Spring 2014 primarily to build up this evidence base and engage with the local community but it also had a number of other objectives:

- To give the people who live and work in Crewe a voice – being inclusive and representing local views;
- To raise the profile and build the reputation of the new town council by connecting it more closely with its constituents and ensure the distinction between the Town Council and Cheshire East Council amongst the people and organisations of Crewe;
- To instigate and coordinate positive activity on the ground during and after the process, including a series of quick win projects;
- To build partnerships and alliances between the Town Council and other organisations;
- To use this evidence to draw up an action plan to tackle any issues identified;
- To use this evidence to help draw in new funding for projects; and
- To use the evidence to influence strategic decision making that affects Crewe.

Cheshire Community Action were commissioned in March 2014 to facilitate the plan and guide the new councillors through each stage of the process. The first exercise involved a workshop event with the majority of the Town Council members in attendance. This aimed to ensure that the new councillors fully understood and agreed on the purpose of the plan and began to identify who the Town Council should engage with as part of the process as well as the key topic areas.

Following this, a steering group of 6 councillors was established and a 12-month work programme was drawn up. The first two key tasks were to gather and collate information about Crewe and agree on a range of consultation methods. A communication sub-group was established to plan and oversee this engagement and raise the profile of the plan through every communication channel available (i.e. local newspapers and radio, social media).

Councillors attended several key events over the summer months including the Kings Shilling Walk in August and the Health and Wellbeing Fair in September. Residents also had an opportunity to discuss the plan at the Town Council Surgery in September. As part of this process, a short questionnaire was drawn up on postcards asking people what they liked about Crewe, what they didn't like and what they would like to change about the town. An e-survey asking similar questions was also launched on Survey Monkey. These were promoted by the Town Council on their website, social media accounts and e-mails. Over 750 beer mats were also distributed around Crewe with QR codes and web-links to the e-survey, or a freepost address to return a shortened version of the survey.

In September and October 2014, Cheshire Community Action arranged a series of focus group meetings based on the initial list of topic areas agreed at the workshops. These events aimed to consult local organisations on what they felt were the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (known as a SWOT analysis) in the town. They also sought to encourage these partners to help to drive the plan forward and engage more fully with the Town Council to implement any key actions. Around 60 local organisations were invited to participate in these meetings.

5 focus groups were held in total based on the following topic areas:

- Young people
- Housing
- Health
- Arts, culture and leisure
- Transport and the environment.

Whilst useful information was received from all these events, two focus groups were particularly successful in driving the plan forward. The arts and culture focus group was very well attended and the enthusiasm of the organisations involved led to the establishment of a working group to implement some quick win projects and create some proposed actions for the plan. The young people focus group also led to the appointment of the Young Advisors service to carry out an engagement project with the young people of Crewe between December 2014 and January 2015 to feed in to the final document.

Some organisations were unable to attend the focus group events so a series of one-to-one meetings were arranged and a short organisation survey was circulated. The results of these meetings and surveys were used to develop the plan alongside the feedback from the focus groups. Overall, a total of 291 people completed the online e-survey and 90 people filled out a postcard survey. The results of these can be seen in Appendix 1. Another 79 respondents, mostly aged between 13 and 18, completed the young people's survey on Facebook. The findings of the Young Advisors, including these survey results, are set out in Appendix 2.

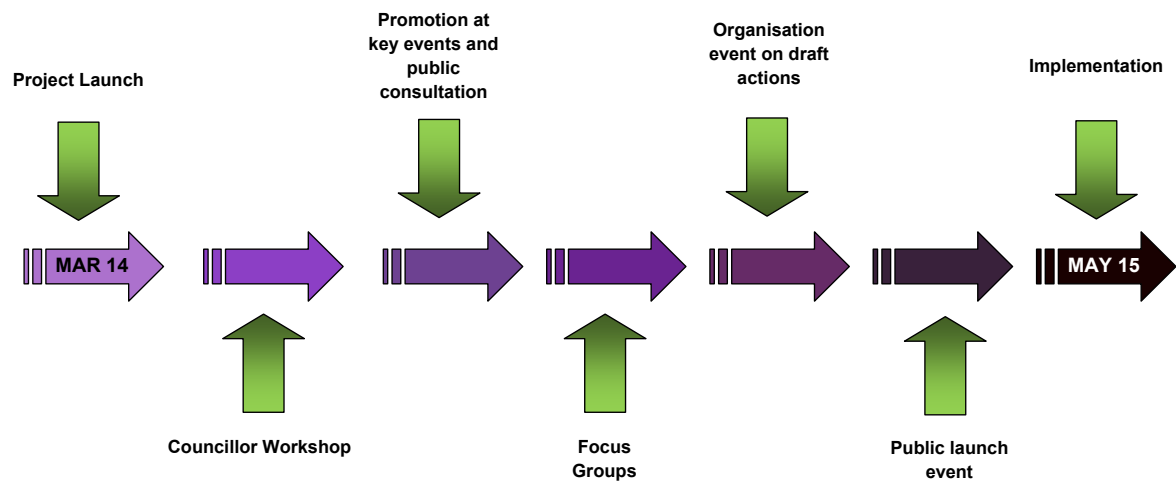
During the final stages of the plan, it was felt important to get local organisations back together to comment on the draft action plan and further strengthen some of the relationships that had started to emerge during the process. A high profile event was held at Crewe Hall in February 2015 and was attended by over 50 representatives from many organisations in the town. A public drop in event/ community day was organised during March to celebrate the completion on the plan using a marquee on Queensway.

The following sections of the document outline the findings of the consultation and set out an action plan for each topic area based on the feedback received. During the course of the plan, it was felt that transport and the environment was already largely covered in other strategic documents, particularly Cheshire East Council's Draft Crewe Town Strategy, compiled as evidence for the Local Plan. This document contains many proposed solutions to the concerns that were raised in the consultation and the Town Council fully supports Cheshire East Council in taking these forward.

One of the most fundamental concerns that was raised by the public in the questionnaire and at the focus groups was the need to improve the town centre. The Town Council have been working with a number of partners to address these concerns, such as the high level of empty retail units, the lack of a night-time economy and the run-down appearance of some areas. Because of the scale of the problem, the plan contains a separate section to address the town centre itself, outlining some of the partnerships currently in existence and building on some of the plans that have already been created.



PROJECT TIMELINE



Arts and Culture

Crewe Town Council's Strategic Plan seeks to:

- Build civic pride; and
- Enhance the enjoyment of the street scene through civic art and street entertainment.

This section explores the current picture in terms of the arts and culture offer in Crewe and outlines ways in which improved cultural facilities/activities can help to improve the town centre and enhance pride in the town.

Whilst Crewe has been criticised for its lack of an evening economy, it does have some good restaurants, a cinema and a thriving theatre. The Lyceum Theatre is the only Edwardian theatre in Cheshire East. It hosts a regular programme of plays and shows as well as putting on various exhibitions. It also has a restaurant on the premises. Its popularity appears to be growing considerably as ticket sales have risen by 30% in the last 18 months. The Lyceum was highlighted amongst some of the aspects that people liked about living in Crewe in the e-survey.

Crewe's Festival aims to create an event that attracts people to Crewe and which celebrates one of the town's key strengths - its international vibrancy and diversity. The first event was held on 13 July 2014 as an International Festival and was aimed as a celebration of 'food, flags and fun'. Promoted by the Town Council, it is hoped that the festival will become a regular and large-scale annual celebration. It was felt during the consultation process, that the festival offers a great potential to showcase the cultural diversity of the town and could eventually be as popular as the Nantwich Food Festival. One consultee said it could be promoted as an English Eisteddfod. Another event is currently being planned for July 2015.

Another strong element in terms of Crewe's culture is its industrial heritage. The town's history/heritage was amongst the most popular things that people responding to the survey liked about Crewe. Apart from the Crewe Heritage Centre (a railway museum), there are very few arts/culture/tourist attraction options available in this respect and there is certainly scope to build further upon the town's unique industrial heritage. There was some concern during the consultation that many old buildings had been demolished, leading to a loss of some of the town's valuable heritage.

In terms of the arts, the Town Council has a strong partnership with Creative Crewe, a local community group set up to develop creative skills and promote health and wellbeing through a series of creative events and activities. They aim to make Crewe a hub of creativity by hosting projects such as 'I can do that' which encourages people to give arts/culture a try. They are keen to support groups and have an extensive programme of events lined up for 2015. It was felt important during the consultation to develop a way of promoting local arts and cultural events, perhaps through a 'What's On' guide or dedicated website.

Despite many people commenting on the strong sense of community in Crewe during the consultation, a considerable number also said that there was an apparent lack of pride in the town and a lack of social and cultural cohesion. It was suggested in the focus group session that developing arts events and activities such as young people's mural projects could be a way of promoting the town and the town centre in a different way and could help to restore civic pride. However, some felt that there was a perception that arts and culture was threatening and expensive. The challenge therefore is to offer affordable and accessible projects to all residents of Crewe.

One element that was raised as an opportunity during the consultation was the potential to develop a conference facility in the town. It was commented that there was a lack of adequate facilities for large scale conferences, exhibitions and pop concerts. Given that Crewe has such excellent motorway and rail links and is centrally-located to the rest of the UK, it has great potential to develop such a facility. This could help to grow the local economy by attracting visitors, tourists and businesses to the town and help to enhance the town's entertainment offer in the evenings. Some of the smaller arts groups we spoke to also commented that there was a lack of venues for live music/rehearsals.

Following on from focus group meeting in September 2014, it was recommended that an arts and culture working group be set up to prepare a detailed action plan as part of A Vision for Crewe. A working group was subsequently set up, including members from Crewe Town Council, Creative Crewe, Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Cheshire East Council, Manchester Metropolitan University and other organisations. They were tasked with taking forward some of the project ideas outlined above and implementing a small number of 'quick win' projects.

The group has agreed three key themes - sharing information, organising and promoting events such as the Crewe Festival and enhancing civic pride through arts and culture. As part of the aim to share information, Creative Crewe has already started to produce a monthly programme of events called 'On Track' which is distributed widely around the town. Projects planned for the future include:

- Street parties;
- An allotment/produce show in Queens Park; and
- A networking event for arts and culture groups with a high profile keynote speaker.

There is potential for this group to evolve into a more structured and formalised arts and culture consortium for the town with a large scale promotional and marketing campaign.



Arts and Culture Action Plan Table

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Lack of awareness of the wealth of Arts and Cultural Activity in Crewe	Increase awareness through improved communications	Produce hard copy and online events listing ("On Track")	Creative Crewe	Dec 2014
		Establish promotion and distribution arrangements for "On Track"	Arts and Culture Working Group	March 2015
Lack of (civic) pride in Crewe	Promote pride in heritage	Programme of events and activities e.g. Ada Nield Chew, Town Trail	Arts and Culture Working Group	
		Promote heritage information and events more widely e.g. Historical Society Newsletter	Arts and Culture Working Group	
	Improve appearance of Crewe and develop respect for our town	Prioritise public realm in town centre regeneration plans	CTC/CEC	
	Increase involvement of local people in arts and culture activities to help them identify with something that makes them feel proud	Develop programme of activities and events, pop ups, taster days, community based art installations, teacher training etc.	Arts and Culture Working Group	

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Town in need of economic regeneration	Develop employability skills through Arts and Culture	Lyceum pathways to employment programme/Youth theatre	Lyceum/CEC	
	Create direct employment in arts and culture	MMU Graduate Theatre Company to retain graduates in employment in Crewe	MMU	
Lack of social and cultural cohesion	Increase participation across all ages and cultures	Programme of events – e.g. Family fit and fun day August Queens Park, street parties, Crewe Festival, MMU summer schools	Creative Crewe/CTC/MMU	
	Develop the full potential of Crewe Fest	Work with all potential partners to maximise opportunities for the festival Promote the next festival as early and as widely as possible + work with all cultural groups to ensure full diversity is represented	CTC Arts and Culture Working Group	
Queens Park renovations need completion	Develop the full potential of Queens Park	CTC to link with CEC and approach third party organisations to complete renovations of the Park	CTC CEC Park reps	By Mid 2017

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Lack of suitable venues for meetings, events, live music and conferences	Provide new accommodation or convert/enhance existing venues to meet need	Liaise with local groups to better understand needs Work with CEC to consider the development of a large-scale conference venue in Crewe in the longer term	Arts and Culture Working Group CTC CEC	2020
Lack of a night time economy in the town centre	Hold more arts and culture activities in the evening to encourage people into the town centre after 5.30pm	Develop a programme of special events in the town centre in the evening Work with the Town Centre Forum to encourage the business community to stay open late during special events in the town and consider regular late night openings during summer months	Arts and Culture Working Group Town Centre Forum	Ongoing
No single consortium for arts and culture	Develop an arts/culture partnership group to take the lead in developing these proposed actions in this plan	The Arts and Culture Working Group to continue their regular meetings and consider setting up a more formalised partnership in the town with a high profile marketing campaign. Potential strapline: "Crewe can do that"	Arts and Culture Working Group	Ongoing



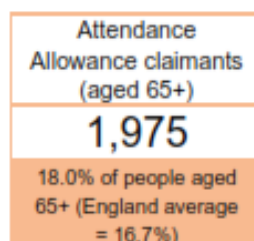
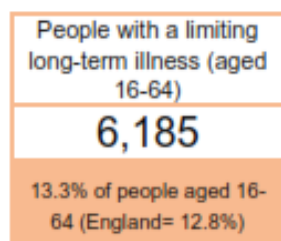
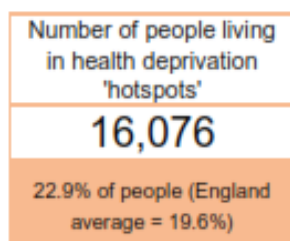
Health and Wellbeing

The Crewe Town Council's Strategic Plan seeks to work with health services to influence the provision of adequate and effective health care. This section explores the current picture in terms of the issues around health and wellbeing in Crewe and outlines priorities for the Town Council and the community to help improve health outcomes for the people of Crewe.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Crewe Local Area Partnership (LAP) highlights the major areas of concern for health and wellbeing in Crewe:

	CREWE LAP	CHESHIRE EAST
Smoking prevalence, adults over 16	23.2% 15,480	17.4%
Children aged 4-5 overweight or obese (2012-13)	20.6% 184	21%
Children aged 10-11 overweight or obese (2012-13)	36.80% 313	31.1%
Households in fuel poverty	19.70% 7023	
Alcohol related hospital admissions (2011-12)	2192.6 Rate per 100,000	1832
Children under 16 living in poverty (2011)	3225	7995
As % of children in families in receipt of child benefit	19.5%	12.5%
16-18 NEET (Nov, Dec, Jan 2011-12)	9.8%	5.4%

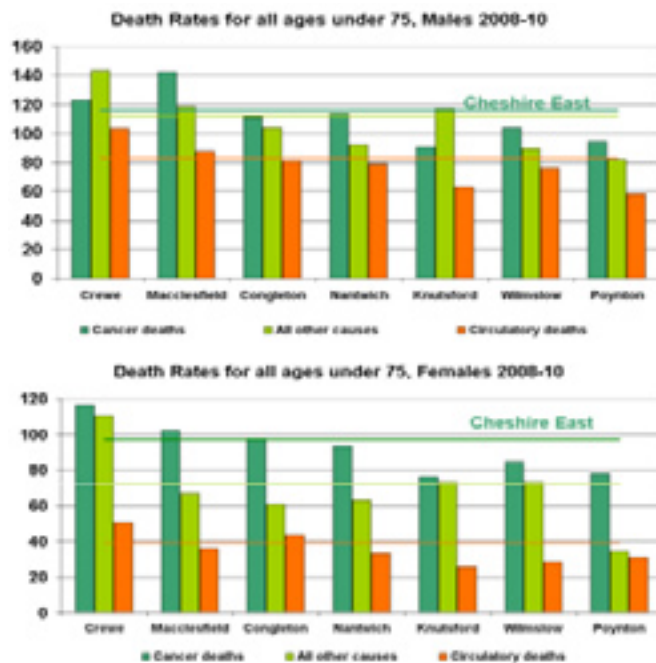
Source: Cheshire East JSNA 2012



Source: Indices of Deprivation 2010 Health domain, Limiting long-term illness (Census 2011)



Life expectancy is higher in all areas of Cheshire East other than Crewe as is shown in the charts below:



According to the JSNA for Cheshire East 2012:

“Women in the Crewe LAP have 53% higher mortality from “all other causes”, 31% higher circulatory mortality and 20% higher cancer mortality than the Cheshire East average... Men in the Crewe LAP have 28% higher mortality from “all other causes” and 24% higher circulatory mortality than the Cheshire East average.”

Source: Cheshire East JSNA 2012

The 2012 JSNA also consulted on issues around health and social care provision:

“At a workshop in Crewe in August 2012 the following comments were made by members of Patient Participation Groups in Primary Care in South Cheshire:

- More effort should be made on the part of Hospitals and GPs to provide good continuity of care*
- Better communications between out-patients departments and patients and GPs.*
- There are just too many cancellations of appointments and if there is more than one visit to be made why can't they be on the same day.*

Make the Expert Patient Programme better and more available to people with long term conditions. I think there needs to be better joined up thinking between the people providing Health and Social Care. Does the right hand know what the left hand is doing.”

Source: Cheshire East JSNA 2012

Based on existing evidence collated through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Crewe Town Council has been able to identify the issues around health and wellbeing that are a priority. As part of the “Vision for Crewe” process we then invited a range of organisations (See Appendix 3) to take part in focus groups to identify issues where the Town Council can help improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

The structure of these sessions was to look at the health and wellbeing issues in a SWOT structure by identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Several positive aspects were identified as part of the focus group including specific local organisations and services providers that deliver invaluable health and social care. Older and vulnerable adults were discussed as a complex and growing area of need.

Access to information increasingly through digital means is a growing problem for many people who find themselves in a vulnerable situation and particularly those who are not online. Social, physical and digital exclusion means that there is a need for support for people to access information to help them make the right choices for their own well-being.

Local organisations both large and small showed excellent examples of service which had positive outcomes for those that accessed their services. However, what was clear from discussions and JSNA evidence was that there was a disconnect between many local providers within Crewe itself. A need for a network to share information was seen as a way to address this problem.

There were two elements to the issue of communication and access to information: a) between service providers and agencies i.e. to be aware of each other for signposting purposes and; b) communication and information amongst patients so that they know where to look for help which is not always medical. For example, social prescribing came up with many health and social care workers in the consultation. Ultimately helping people stay more independent was a key priority and to do this, provision of support at home was seen as important as having good quality secondary health and social care in a hospital.

Social isolation has raised its profile on the public sector agenda for good reason. Many national research reports now conclude that loneliness is worse for your health than smoking and this also applies to Crewe. Many consultees agreed that provision of companionship and befriending services is crucial to give people a social structure and support that can actually help prevent more acute problems or crises later on. Some feedback from the consultation indicated that Leighton Hospital A&E Department is sometimes used as a GP drop-in as it can be quicker and easier to see a doctor. This is putting added pressure on A&E services that could be dealt with more effectively by other local health and social care organisations.

The scale of problems in Crewe are high. Health and social care professionals talked about a poor general state of health and many are living below decent living standards. Health issues are clearly linked to many other aspects of life and poor quality housing, particularly in the private rented housing sector which was reported as a major contributor to poor health.

Lung cancer is a big issue locally caused by smoking and industrial heritage. Many don't want to go to GP's as they think they will be lectured. Health stats showed that smoking prevalence is particularly high amongst Eastern European communities.

One of the biggest gaps is transport provision and simply giving people the means to access the appropriate support and services they need, particularly since flexible transport services including dial-a-ride have been lost. Voluntary car schemes can be an excellent way to meet community transport needs in an affordable and flexible way.

However, out of this plethora of issues come opportunities, and consultees cited successful initiatives including the health and social care provider networks nearby in Nantwich and Haslington. This type of network could potentially boost information sharing and therefore improve outcomes for Crewe.

Engagement with GPs was seen as a key priority to ensure they have access to good quality and up-to-date information to enable them to make the best decisions when referring patients. The South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group intends to focus on lung cancer with an awareness raising campaign that can be boosted with the help of local partners including the Town Council.

Health and Wellbeing Action Plan

Taking the evidence from the JSNA, and the focus group on health and from interviewing several local organisations, the Town Council has worked with local partners to draw up the following action plan to help improve health and wellbeing outcomes for the town.

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Need for more joined-up thinking, co-operation and information sharing between key agencies working in the adult health and social care sector	Create a Crewe Network as in Nantwich and Haslington – involve CEC, Red Cross, housing associations, CTC, range of health and social care service providers	Compile a list of key service providers in adult health and social care jointly with key commissioning staff at Cheshire East Council Contact the providers to invite them to a first network meeting to articulate the needs that have emerged from the consultation	CTC CEC Adult Health and Social Care Directorate South Cheshire CCG Wishing Well	Mid-2015
Social isolation amongst older and vulnerable adults	Set up and promote more widely companionship and befriending schemes for the housebound elderly and those in a vulnerable situation	Provide town council funding for befriending projects and good neighbour schemes Explore partnership working amongst existing providers and bring them together in the provider network	CTC CEC Adult Health and Social Care Directorate South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group	End-2015
High incidents of lung cancer	CCG keen to work with local community organisations to implement a lung cancer awareness campaign in particular deprived areas of Crewe. Including “high risk communities” e.g. some of the migrant population	Targeted local lung cancer awareness raising campaign to be delivered CTC to work with the CCG staff responsible for raising awareness of lung cancer	CTC South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group	Launch in 2016

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Lack of opportunities for intergenerational activity - Many older people are not computer literate and therefore miss out on online support networks and information	Potential for a project between history students at MMU or other higher education institutes including colleges and, work with older people who want to recount their stories. Also writing projects for older people	CTC to liaise with education institutes on potential projects Set aside funding for intergenerational projects	CTC Education institutes	End-2015
Lack of support for post natal depression	Potential for a Post Natal Depression peer-support/self-help service as there is nothing locally in Crewe at present	Jointly engage with and research organisations who could provide post-natal depression peer support	CTC + Wishing Well CEC Adult Health and Social Care Directorate South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group	Early 2016
Lack of engagement with the community on health	Idea of carrying out health checks in pubs and other community settings (similar projects been carried out in Knowsley and Halton). Encourage local community action More engagement with GPs	Explore and research the idea of different access points for health checks Focus Group with local GP reps to highlight local health and social care providers and services that can support patients at home e.g. Community Agents Use the focus group to explore social prescribing	CTC South CCG CEC Partnerships team Wishing Well CCA Community Agents CEC Adult Health and Social Care Directorate	2015

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Lack of small grants funding	Could CTC take a more strategic and proactive approach to grant awards – e.g. set some target areas such as health, loneliness, transport and specifically ask for applications relating to those? CVS could direct applicants to their funding. CTC to assist with high level change but also support those in need now	CTC to engage with Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East (CVSCE) on the potential for working together to formulate a small grants pot targeted to tackle health outcomes in Crewe especially services that support people at home and in the community	CTC CVSCE	2016
Lack of awareness of many local health service providers	Can CTC help to promote voluntary organisations as many of them don't have money for publicity/printing etc?	CTC to work with the CEC Adult Health and Social Care Directorate To maintain an up-to-date directory of health and social care services for Crewe. Offer a regular communication from the Town Council to help inform patients and service providers of what is available	CTC CEC Adult Health and Social Care Directorate	2015
High proportion of cases of dementia. Crewe LAP has second highest levels of dementia in Cheshire East after Congleton LAP	Raise awareness of dementia issues in Crewe	Develop Crewe as a 'dementia friendly community'	CTC Alzheimer's Society	Launch in early 2016

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Lower life expectancy in Crewe than rest of the Borough	Increase opportunities for leisure and recreation	CTC to investigate guerilla gardening, horticultural therapy and making best use of green space	CTC Friends of Queens Park (+ other parks)	Start 2016
Lack of awareness of leisure and recreation opportunities	Promote leisure and recreation opportunities	See Town Centre Action Plan section with reference to a digital notice board	CTC	April 2016



Housing

The Strategic Plan seeks to improve the overall quality of housing stock in Crewe and work with housing providers to maintain and develop a range of appropriate housing. This section explores the current picture in terms of the quality and quantity of housing in Crewe and outlines ways in which the current stock may be improved and future demand might be met.

Key facts for consideration:

- Fewer people own their homes than the average across Cheshire East;
- There are a greater than average number of private and rented properties when compared to the average for the borough;
- Household incomes are lower in Crewe than in the rest of Cheshire East
- 10% of households are in 'housing need' (unable to access suitable housing without financial support); and
- There is a higher representation of other White groups (not originally from Britain) than elsewhere in Cheshire East (as many as 14% in Crewe Central). This is most likely to be Eastern European migrants.

A number of housing associations operate within the town, providing affordable housing for people in need. Many of these organisations also offer key community services to their tenants such as assistance from support officers, home safety/ affordability checks and social activities. As well as social rented accommodation, they can also offer a number of alternative housing options including shared ownership, sheltered housing and right to buy schemes. Strong relationships already exist between a number of these housing agencies and their goals are often the same. These can be built upon and several of the largest organisations have expressed a desire to work closely with the Town Council to resolve issues

Several new developments have recently been built by these housing associations to increase their portfolio of property in Crewe and fulfil demand for housing in the town. It is reassuring that Government funding will continue, at least in the short-term, for such new developments to enable future needs to be addressed. The affordable housing requirement is estimated at 217 houses a year to 2017/8 (Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 Update produced by Arc4 for Cheshire East Council). However, the picture is more uncertain in terms of central funding streams in the longer-term and resilience planning would be sensible by organisations in the sector.

There are also a range of supporting organisations who can provide housing assistance to those in need. Cheshire East Council offers a number of services including specialist advice on housing options, homeless assessments and help with access to the housing register for social housing, known as 'Cheshire Homechoice'.

The housing register contains those people who are in housing need although this is not always an accurate indicator of real housing demand in the town. New homes and support services have to reflect actual needs and some felt during the consultation that this demand should be explored in more detail. Any detrimental impacts of recent welfare reform (e.g. bedroom tax) should also be identified.

One area which was felt needed more research was the specific needs of the immigrant population in the town. It was suggested that a small pilot project could be carried out with a number of these families, perhaps through one of the schools to investigate any specific needs. Crewe's Festival could also offer opportunities to better engage with these families. One idea in this context was to set up a multi-cultural forum, 'Crewe International', which would cut across many sectors not just housing. In the longer term, it would be useful to establish both the impact and needs of a further increase in migrants from these areas.

Charities such as Shelter, the Salvation Army, Citizen's Advice Bureau and the YMCA also provide vital services and initiatives in relation to housing needs. One example is Crewe YMCA's new 'Bridging' project, which provides a few days of emergency accommodation to 16 and 17 year olds whilst their longer term housing and support needs are assessed. Another valuable service is that offered by the Red Cross to those who have recently come out of hospital. The faith sector is also doing important supportive work in some neighbourhoods.

Over the last few decades, there has been a shift towards more private landlords renting property within the town (over 50% of the housing stock in some areas). Whilst there are some good quality privately-rented properties available, this sector does not always provide a security of tenure, rents can be high and some housing can be unlicensed and poorly maintained. This trend has also tended to dilute the influence of social landlords in some communities so initiatives to support and improve these neighbourhoods are not as widespread. Crewe South, along with some areas of Crewe Central and Crewe West, were felt to be those worst affected.

Some particular issues raised in the consultation about the private-rented housing sector include the following:

- A recent rise in over-occupancy of some houses leading to overcrowding, particularly amongst immigrants and students;
- Houses being turned into flats with no planning permission;
- Streets such as Gainsborough Road have many bedsits with insufficient space for parking, bin and bike storage; and
- There are litter and fly-tipping issues in some areas, and unkempt and untidy streets in some neighbourhoods

It was felt during the consultation that there could be a stronger role for Cheshire East Council in helping to control and monitor private landlords to ensure a better quality of housing stock. The Council could provide help, advice and assistance as necessary and also implement stricter controls and regulation for poor landlords (e.g. compulsory purchase powers). Similarly, there could be a potential role for the Town Council in helping to ensure quality standards are met in the private-rented sector.

A number of people and organisations in the consultation raised concern about the lack of a night-time economy in the town centre. Some streets can be particularly dark and quiet in the evening leading to a fear of crime. It was felt that encouraging more housing in the centre of Crewe could help to encourage a more vibrant economy after dark.

Recognition must also be given to the role of the private house builder in meeting future needs, such as by providing more homes in the town centre. They can bring resources and funding streams which the social sector cannot access. As well as social housing, we need housing for economically active members of the community. In particular, there is a case for providing affordable/shared equity homes to those on modest incomes who fail to secure social housing and end up turning to the private rented sector. Crewe has plenty of potential brownfield sites which could be redeveloped for new homes.

Crewe Town Council will work with Cheshire East Council to help deliver the required number of new homes in Crewe during the Cheshire East Local Plan period up to 2030. As part of this the Town Council will engage with the ongoing development of planning policies in Parts 1 and 2 of the Local Plan. The Town Council will also look at the potential for developing a Neighbourhood Plan (a community led land-use plan setting out planning policies for local areas that has legal weight in planning decisions) to deliver regeneration and housing to meet future need.

It is clear from the consultation that there are some chronic issues in terms of housing in the town. Many of these issues will not be solved in the short term. It is encouraging that some relationships already exist between agencies and many share the same goals. There are some really imaginative projects happening (e.g. YMCA's hospital discharge service) and the benefits of these, such as savings to the public purse, need to be recognised. The strong message was to try a number of manageable 'testbed' projects and build on these if they are successful. However, there was also another view that partners should be more visionary and plan now for the longer term.

Taking all this into account, **it is recommended that a Crewe Housing Forum/Network is created** to share ideas, strengthen relationships and develop a number of project ideas set out in the table below. It is hoped that key partners will share some of the views above and be keen to be a part of this new group.

Suggested partners include:

- Crewe Town Council
- Housing Associations
- Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- Faith sector
- Cheshire East Council
- Private landlords
- Third sector organisations

In the meantime, several small scale project ideas could be implemented as quick wins such as the idea to work with Eastern European families at a local school and work with business representatives in the town centre to explore the potential for flat conversions.

Housing Action Plan Table

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Need for more joined-up thinking and co-operation between key agencies working in the housing sector	Create a Crewe Housing Forum/Network to share ideas, strengthen relationships, carry out research, set priorities and target funding.	Enhance relationships between key agencies. Pick off a number of manageable 'testbed' projects in the short-term, including some of those listed below. Explore Cheshire East Council's housing policies and strategies and look at how agencies such as the Town Council can feed into these. Look at a joint strategy for the town centre and Crewe South.	CTC Wulvern Housing CEC Other key partners	Mid-2015
Poor quality private-rented sector	More control needed against private landlords who don't maintain their properties adequately and fail to meet the needs of their tenants Assess the scale of the private rented sector	Engage with those living in privately-rented accommodation to better understand the scale and nature of the issue, including levels of over-occupancy. Consider a more regulatory role for Cheshire East Council in controlling quality in the sector Awareness sharing amongst agencies about legislation – where to go for help if buildings are dangerous, how to trace absent landlords etc.	Housing Forum HCA	End-2015

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Need to develop a better understanding of specific housing needs in Crewe and then work together to address identified demand	Collate all available data on housing in the town and carry out new research to identify any 'hidden' need. Collate research on homelessness issues.	Look at physical housing structure to see if it meets the needs of the diverse community. Have regard to legislation and analyse where tenure ruling could be amended. Work with local colleges to investigate any student housing issues. Work with CEC to explore existing data on housing needs and work with CEC planners to look at site allocations and future housing numbers. Homelessness study Up-to-date empty property data from CEC / HCA	Housing Forum	End-2015
Unkempt and untidy streets in some neighbourhoods	Consider the potential to target investment and nurture particular neighbourhoods in the town. Would the local community be willing to be a part of the support network?	Explore how other similar areas have dealt with housing problems e.g. introduce green spaces, implement projects to be proud of Consider specific funding streams and localised projects for Crewe South. E.G Community Wardens, Skip days	Housing Forum	Mid-2015

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Lack of a night-time economy	Look at the potential for new housing in the town centre to develop a night-time economy.	Meet with business owners to see if they would be willing to convert upper floors to flats (E.g. Queensway) Explore locations for infill housing schemes in the town centre and look at funding opportunities for these.	Housing Forum	End-2016
Lack of a clear understanding about future housing needs	Build up evidence about future needs + land availability Investigate the role of the private house builder in meeting need	Consider the development of a Neighbourhood Plan Assess the potential for more affordable/shared equity homes	CTC	End 2015
A better understanding of the specific housing needs of the immigrant population	Work with the immigrant community to understand their specific housing needs For example, what are their specific needs, what is good housing to them, do they aspire to buy their own property? Understand different needs between long and short term residents	Build a relationship with the immigrant community and develop support projects. Start with a pilot project (e.g. explore working with Eastern European families at local schools). Work with the promoters of the Crewe Festival to promote the cultural diversity of the town. Engage people through arts and music.	Housing Forum	End-2015



Town Centre

Introduction

The town centre and the bus station were the most frequent responses to “What do you like least about living in Crewe” and “What changes do you most want to see in Crewe over the next 5 years” in the residents’ survey conducted in 2014. Issues raised included the number of empty shops, the range of shopping, tired and run down appearance of the bus station, parking charges, and traffic congestion getting into and out of the centre.

Clearly this is something that has to be addressed in developing our Vision for Crewe, but these are not simple things to change, and are well beyond the reach of the Town Council or community groups. Landowners, retailers and Cheshire East Council all have key roles to play. Through All Change for Crewe, Cheshire East Council has set out some aspirations for the regeneration of Crewe, and it will require significant effort and investment to make the physical changes envisaged.

What we can do locally, is to try to bring life and activity to the centre through events and activities that draw people into the town centre.

Background

Several plans and strategies have been prepared for Crewe’s town centre over the years, but for various reasons have not been implemented. Changes in the property market after 2008 and changing patterns of retailing have probably been the biggest factors. Modus Properties had planning permission for the redevelopment of the block of property enclosed by Queensway, Victoria Street and Delamere Street (including the bus station). Existing retailers were decanted from the shops in preparation for the development, but because of the credit crunch, the development did not proceed, leaving a block with a high vacancy rate. Subsequent owners have only been prepared to let units on short leases to retain the option of redevelopment. This area contributes significantly to the perception of empty shops and lack of investment.

The Cheshire Retail Study (2011) suggests that there is enough spending power in the area to support more comparison goods shops (comparison goods are non-food goods such as clothes, shoes, or furniture). However, the lack of private investment may suggest that this is not translating into retailers willing to take out leases.

Recent reviews of retailing and high streets nationally have pointed to the need for town centres to become community hubs rather than just shopping centres, incorporating health, housing, education, arts, entertainment, offices, manufacturing and leisure. The evening economy is a vital component. Crewe already has many of these elements in place, or in the pipeline (Lifestyle Centre and University Technical College).

The way forward

As stated above, the scale, complexity and cost of the changes required means that other partners must be engaged, and to a large extent, lead on the town centre. It would help significantly if all those involved shared the same view of how the town centre should develop, so that unconnected, piecemeal development is avoided. To that end, the Town Council has been consulting on 15 principles for the future direction of the town centre. These are:

- That the town centre needs a combination of health, housing, education, arts, entertainment, business/office space, and leisure in addition to retail to secure a vibrant future.
- Development of an evening and night time economy catering for a variety of users, including families.
- This needs to be embodied in a long term vision supported by a clear business plan.
- There should be clear management arrangements in the form of a BID or similar vehicle.
- Management must take on a very broad meaning, including developing a wired town, engaging the community, marketing and the rest.
- The planning framework needs to be developed in detail to support this approach. This may be Part 2 of the Local Plan, or through a Neighbourhood Plan, or some other vehicle. It should embody high standards of design, with good quality buildings and public realm.
- The planning framework should aim to consolidate retail uses, and identify other uses for surplus retail space around the periphery, for example Hightown. It should also aim to re-introduce residential uses through redevelopment or conversion of existing buildings.
- Routes into the town centre need to be improved, so as to ease traffic flows and make it more enjoyable to walk or cycle into town. There should be good links between the Town Centre and Grand Junction Retail Park for pedestrians and by shuttle buses. It should be easy for visitors to find the town centre with good signage for pedestrians, particularly from the station.
- Good facilities for public transport are required, with good links to the railway station.
- Access and parking to the railway station need further improvement to provide a transport interchange, pedestrian and cycle facilities and ease congestion on Nantwich Road.
- A regeneration framework for the area around Crewe Station and Gresty Road needs to be prepared and implemented, with a costed business/delivery plan
- The proposals for the station and Mill Street areas should take account of the need to maintain and reinforce the vibrancy of Nantwich Road. There should be a clear development management framework for uses along Nantwich Road, and a policy for parking provision and management.
- High quality mixed use development should be encouraged on the Mill Street site, incorporating a pedestrian and cycle route linking the town centre to the station
- All buildings must be of high quality design – no more tin sheds
- The town centre and its approaches need greening with trees and landscaping. Green spaces including play areas should be integrated into new and existing residential development.

The intention of consulting on these principles is to stimulate a debate about the way forward. There are some things that we can tackle in the short term, and they are included in that attached action plan.

Town Centre Action Plan Table

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Need for clarity about what all parties are trying to achieve for the town centre	Develop a set of agreed principles or aims	Consult stakeholders on draft set of principles	CTC	28 Feb 2015
Need to sustain and increase footfall and spend in shops to support their continued presence	Develop a programme of activities to attract people into the town centre and extend their stay	Continue to develop a programme of activities in the town centre	CTC/Creative Crewe/ Arts & Culture WG	Ongoing
Lack of activity in town centre on Sundays	Craft/speciality market	Identify suitable market operator and pilot markets 2 or 3 times in 12 months	CTC	July 2015
Need to bring businesses together to plan and fund additional activities	Business Improvement District	Commission feasibility study	Cheshire East/CTC/Chamber of Commerce	1 April 2015
Access for prams, wheelchairs, mobility scooters and the less able	Improvements to individual shops etc. and to the public realm to improve accessibility	Conduct accessibility audit Develop an accessibility map that sets out DDA complaint premises	Lynda Noden CTC	March 2016
Negative perceptions about crime and personal safety	Better information about actual crime rates and crime prevention	Promote and disseminate information already available	Police/PCC/Town Council	June 2015
Need to promote events in the town, and provide information to community	Electronic notice board in the town centre scrolling notices about events, leisure and recreation opportunities, crime data, etc.	Investigate cost and feasibility	CTC	April 2016



Young People

Crewe Town Council's Strategic Plan 2014-2020 highlights young people as one of its key areas for action. In particular, the plan seeks to engage with young people, address their education and training needs, provide them with adequate recreational facilities and tackle youth unemployment. This section explores the current picture in terms of the needs of young people in Crewe and outlines ways in which these may be addressed.

In order to better understand the issues, research was primarily carried out in 2 ways. The Town Council initially sought advice from local organisations who engaged with young people. A focus group was held which was attended by representatives from the Children's Society/Cheshire East Youth Council, South Cheshire College, Cheshire East Council and the YMCA. Lots of useful information was obtained at this session but perhaps, the strongest message to emerge was that young people themselves should be invited to participate in the research and action planning process.

As a result, the Town Council agreed to commission the South and East Cheshire Young Advisors Partnership to carry out some research and devise a draft action plan. Young Advisors are trained agents typically aged between 15 and 21, who show community leaders and decision makers how to engage young people in community life, local decision making and improving services. A small number of advisors from the partnership carried out a survey on Facebook entitled 'Your Opinion on Crewe' and presented a report on their recommendations (see Appendix 2). The majority of responses came from local young people aged between 13 and 18.

The issues and recommendations in this section are therefore based on the results of this engagement alongside some statistical information obtained using the latest Census data.

Key facts for consideration

- The percentage in population of children and young people aged 0-15 and 16-19 in Crewe is slightly higher than the average for England;
- Levels of under 18 conceptions in the town are considerably greater when compared with levels for the rest of the borough, and academic qualifications are generally lower;
- There is a far greater number of NEETS (i.e. those young people not in education, employment or training) in Crewe than in the rest of the Cheshire East Borough;
- There are shortages of facilities for teenagers and children in the town.

What does Crewe have to offer young people?

It is clear that there are some challenging issues to be addressed in the town. However, research also identified that there are some positive elements for young people in Crewe and examples of excellence which can be built upon. For example, there is a great diversity of educational establishments ranging from several good and outstanding-rated primary schools, 4 secondary schools and a number of higher educational institutes, including South Cheshire College and a campus of Manchester Metropolitan University. Cheshire East Council offers vital support through their Youth Support Service which provides youth clubs and engagement projects for people aged 13-25 as well as one-to-one support for NEET young people. There are also several Sure Start children's centres that provide early learning and full day care for pre-school children.

Crewe also offers young people a wide variety of services and activities. In the Facebook survey carried out by the Young Advisor's, respondents highlighted several good points about the town including the local shops, cinema, sports facilities, theatre, bowling alley, parks and places to eat. A number of respondents felt that Crewe's location was good and that it was well connected through its train and bus networks. Crewe Town Council's Youth Council, an initiative aimed at getting young people involved in local politics and democracy, was also highlighted as a particular strength.

In addition, there is a range of other organisations who offer services to young people including the YMCA which provides many support, training and leisure facilities for young people in the town. There is also a Youth Forum, operated through CEC's Youth Support Service, which enables young people to discuss issues of importance to them and influence decision making.

What needs to be improved?

Despite these positive aspects, the consultation also revealed a number of weaknesses in terms of facilities and opportunities in the town. In the Young Advisor's survey, respondents were asked to comment on the bad points of Crewe. In terms of local facilities, several young people thought there was a lack of shops, with some suggesting potential new stores for the town including Primark and Lush. Some also felt that there wasn't much variety in terms of shopping and commented on the empty shop units in the town centre. Some respondents also felt that the town had too much litter, vandalism and generally felt rather dirty.

One aspect of the survey which highlighted a particular concern was that relating to safety. Two of the key things that respondents most wanted to improve were the introduction of more street lighting in the town and a refurbishment of the bus station. Almost half of those responding to the Facebook survey also said that they did not feel safe when in Crewe after dark and around 40% also felt only slightly safe or not safe at all in general in the town. In response to this concern, the Young Advisors looked at more detail at some of the main walking routes around the town centre. They identified the routes connecting the town centre to the local cinema and the bus station as being particularly uninviting and intimidating, especially after dark.

Perhaps one of the strongest messages to come out of the research was the overall lack of pride by young people to be living in Crewe. When asked on Facebook, 56% of respondents said they were not at all proud to be living in the town. In addition, not one person said that they were extremely proud to live in Crewe. It became apparent during the consultation that some young people feel demoralised and suffer from low self-esteem. Sadly, there also seems to be a perception amongst some that you have to leave the town in order to progress in life.

Some people believed that a small minority of disrespectful and misbehaving young people were giving the town a bad reputation leading to a general sense of intolerance for their generation by the adult community and local businesses.

Another question which was posed to young people in the survey was how often they participated in activities. Almost half of the respondents said 'not at all often'. Moreover, according to Crewe's Local Area Partnership (LAP) profile (Cheshire East Council, 2013), when asked what most needed improving in the LAP area, one of the top three answers was activities for teenagers. Therefore, there would appear to be a strong case for providing further facilities and services for young people in the town.

Some suggestions that were raised in the Facebook survey included festivals, a shelter at the skate park, Astroturf for playing sports in the parks, lighting on sports areas such as football pitches, an affordable gym and a funfair. It was suggested at the focus group that marketing for young people's activities could perhaps be improved as people aren't always aware of what is on offer.

Youth Unemployment

Historically, youth unemployment in Crewe has been much higher than in the rest of Cheshire East, and there have been high numbers of 16-18 year olds not in employment education and training (NEETs). In May 2014 (the last available data) there were 920 16-24 year olds in Crewe claiming some kind of benefit from DWP. In February 2014, there were 155 NEETs in Crewe, which was 8% of the 16-18 year old population. This is an improvement on previous years, but is still a concern, and NEET rates vary from 5.9% in Crewe West to 16% in Crewe Central ward.

Employers have reported that some Crewe youngsters do not understand how to present themselves at interview, or what is expected of them in a workplace. Some young people seem to lack the confidence in their own suitability for certain types of work or even their ability to find work at all. The statistics suggest that this is a particular problem in the less affluent wards.

In 2013, independently of this Vision for Crewe process, a Youth Employment Partnership was established. Its main aim is to bring together the employers and the educators in Crewe to:

- Allow schools and colleges to understand what employers' requirements are;
- Provide young people with some experience of the recruitment process so that they are better prepared for the real thing;
- Make sure that young people appreciate all the options that are available to them; and
- Support employers to provide careers talks, work experience, traineeships, internships, apprenticeships and the like.

The partnership comprises representatives from the four Crewe high schools, South Cheshire College, Reaseheath College, Manchester Metropolitan University, independent training providers, the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry, employers, Cheshire East Council and Crewe Town Council.

The partnership is already providing Employment Readiness training to year 10 and 11 pupils at the high schools in Crewe. This consists of four two-hour sessions at employers' premises learning about career options, and undergoing mock assessments and interviews. Programmes are also being developed whereby large employers with experience of providing work experience and apprenticeships will support smaller firms and charities to do the same. It is planned to bring these and other planned activities together under the banner of "The Crewe Pledge":

All sectors in Crewe will work together with the aim of providing every young person living, studying or working in Crewe with the opportunity to develop employability skills whilst in education and then a choice of a job, training or further education opportunity when they leave

The Crewe Youth Employment Partnership is very active and is delivering some real added value to the existing provision for young people in Crewe. The partnership values its independence and political neutrality. It will therefore continue to operate independently, but it is important to recognise its existence and the real contribution that is being made to the community.

Summary

In summary, taking into account the views of young people themselves along with several organisations that represent young people in the town, there are a number of clear messages that have emerged. Perhaps the clearest message is that young people should be invited to participate in any work going forward. Advice from some of the organisations working with young people is that poor engagement or not including young people in new initiatives could lead to wasted resources. It is therefore recommended that the Town Council **should continue to work with the Young Advisors, and any other relevant groups representing young people, in taking forward projects proposed in the Action Plan.**

In the first instance the Young Advisors should be asked to consult with their peers on the draft plan, to ensure that the actions proposed are those that most accurately reflect the needs of young people in Crewe. Following this, the Town Council and a working group of young people/representatives (including representatives from the Young Advisors, Youth Forum, Youth Council/Parliament, YMCA, Youth Employment Partnership and any other relevant organisations known as the Young People's Working Group - YPWG) should work together on producing a project plan for the next 5 years to implement any agreed actions.

Other messages which are important to acknowledge at this stage are as follows:

- Make any engagement 'fun';
- Find ways to enhance young people's aspirations and their pride in Crewe so they don't want to leave the town;
- Build upon evidence already gained using resources such as the recent 'Good Childhood Enquiry' and work with existing partners such as the Youth Council and the Youth Employment Partnership;
- Don't leap to solutions too quickly;
- Money is not always the answer;
- Improve communication about what is going on.



Young People Action Plan

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Poor variety of shops/facilities for young people in Crewe town centre	<p>Better engagement with young people about their views on the future development of the town centre</p> <p>Reduce levels of empty units and develop more shops geared towards young people</p>	<p>YPWG to carry out further research on shopping and facilities in the town centre and produce a report for CTC</p> <p>CTC and YPWG to represent the views of young people at the Town Centre Forum</p> <p>Investigate the possibility of young people's 'pop up shops' in empty units and look at opportunities for dedicated facilities for young people such as a café run by the YMCA</p>	<p>CTC</p> <p>YPWG</p> <p>Town Centre Forum</p> <p>YMCA</p>	Mid-2015
Concern over litter and general dirtiness of the town centre and local parks	Young people to join wider clean-up campaigns and help to educate their peers about the negative impacts of litter and graffiti	<p>YPWG to set up a young people's campaign to reduce litter (as well as vandalism/anti-social behaviour)</p> <p>Involve young people in any wider volunteer programmes to clean up the town centre and local parks.</p>	<p>YPWG</p> <p>Cheshire Police Youth Ambassador</p> <p>Local schools</p> <p>Crewe Clean Team</p>	End-2015

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Young people's concerns over safety in Crewe	Develop ways to overcome safety fears and reduce overall crime rates in the town	<p>YPWG to commission a study on safety fears and perceptions of crime amongst young people in Crewe</p> <p>YPWG to work with town centre managers and CEC to improve key walking routes across the town, particularly those to the local cinema and bus station (e.g. improve street lighting)</p> <p>Involve young people in any plans to improve the bus station</p> <p>CTC to investigate crime rates with Cheshire Police and work together to look at crime prevention measures</p>	<p>CTC</p> <p>YPWG</p> <p>Town Centre Forum</p> <p>Local schools</p> <p>Cheshire Police Youth Ambassador</p> <p>CEC</p>	End-2015
More in-depth research needed with young people in Crewe	Tap into the schools, colleges and range of organisations working with young people in Crewe to research needs, aspirations and involve young people in the debate about youth provision in the town	<p>Large scale survey to be carried out with schools, colleges including primary and secondary research i.e. collate existing data and collect new, more up-to-date information.</p> <p>Take issues into the town and use market stalls and empty as a means to engage with young people</p>	<p>YPWG</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Colleges</p>	Complete by early 2016

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
High levels of youth unemployment. The need to support young people to make the right career choice and to prepare them for employment, whilst at the same time helping local employers to thrive by ensuring that they are able to recruit locally.	Deliver support to young people, educators, and employers through the Crewe Youth Employment Partnership (CYEP)	Support the CYEP	All partners	Ongoing
Poor perceptions of young people by the adult community and local businesses	Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour (e.g. graffiti and vandalism) and develop new partnership initiatives between young people and adults/businesses	Set up a volunteer scheme for young people to work with local businesses. YPWG to set up a young people's campaign to reduce anti-social behaviour	YPWG Town Centre Forum CTC	Mid-2016
A lack of pride in Crewe by young people and low expectations from some about opportunities in the town	Dispel some of the negative perceptions of Crewe and enhance education and training opportunities for all young people	CTC to work with parents and schools to raise aspirations of young people and help them to realise the benefits of living in Crewe. YPWG to work with Creative Crewe to examine how the art world might help to enhance negative perceptions of the town	CTC YPWG Creative Crewe Local schools	End-2016

Issue	Proposed Solution	Actions	By whom	By when
Lack of activities for young people (especially teenagers)	Better promote and communicate the activities that are currently on offer in the town Develop a range of new activities, taking into the consideration the suggestions that were proposed in the Facebook survey	Set up a dedicated Facebook page for young people in Crewe to publicise all that is going on (perhaps building on the existing Youth Forum page). YPWG to work with CTC to look at improving the marketing of activities and providing 'one voice' in Crewe for young people e.g. 'South Cheshire First website' and 'stuff to do in Cheshire website'. YPWG to work with CEC, Everybody, the Arts and Culture Working Group, Queens Park and other leisure/activity providers to encourage further activities and events for young people, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable gym Astro sports Festivals Funfairs Circuses 	CTC YPWG CTC Everybody	
There is a need for a regular input from young into the Town Council and ensure sustainability of activities for young people	Explore the development of a Youth Town Council that can feed into the YPWG	CTC to investigate this via the YPWG including how this will work, how it will be resourced and what its remit will be	CTC YPWG	Start 2015 then ongoing

The Way Forward

The key to success for “A Vision for Crewe” will be ensuring that it is realistic, achievable and sustainable. The Crewe Town Council will be the guardians and drivers of this vision but it will only be implemented successfully with the help of partners. The 12 months spent developing the Vision for Crewe from Spring 2014 to Spring 2015 has helped raise the Town Council’s profile, widen its networks and gain credibility as a new organisation. Perhaps more importantly than this is that the Town Council has started on a journey where it is establishing what the priorities are for the Town from the ground up. The Community Plan has provided a useful vehicle for the Town Council to deliver on its strapline of being “a voice for Crewe” and to facilitate and enable action to tackle the things that matter to the people of the Town.

Acknowledgements

Crewe Town Council would like to thank:

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Hilary Hamilton, Wishing Well

John Heselwood, Cheshire Community Action

Rob Mackenzie, Crewe Town Council

Sarah Baron, Cheshire Community Action

Steve McQuade, Crewe Town Council



Pound Shops Long Term Queens Park

Town Centre Pubs Transport Independent Shops

Charity Shops Cleanliness

Rubbish Fly Tipping Quality Nice Old Buildings

Community Carnival Litter Pot Holes

Traffic Congestion Safe Street

Town Council Bus Station Outside

Road Business Park Empty Shops

Support Retail Park Green Belt

Appendix 1

A Vision for Crewe Survey Results

Green Spaces South Cheshire College

Community Spirit Cheap Housing Municipal

Old Buildings Access Manchester Railway

Heritage Centre Crewe Football Club Town

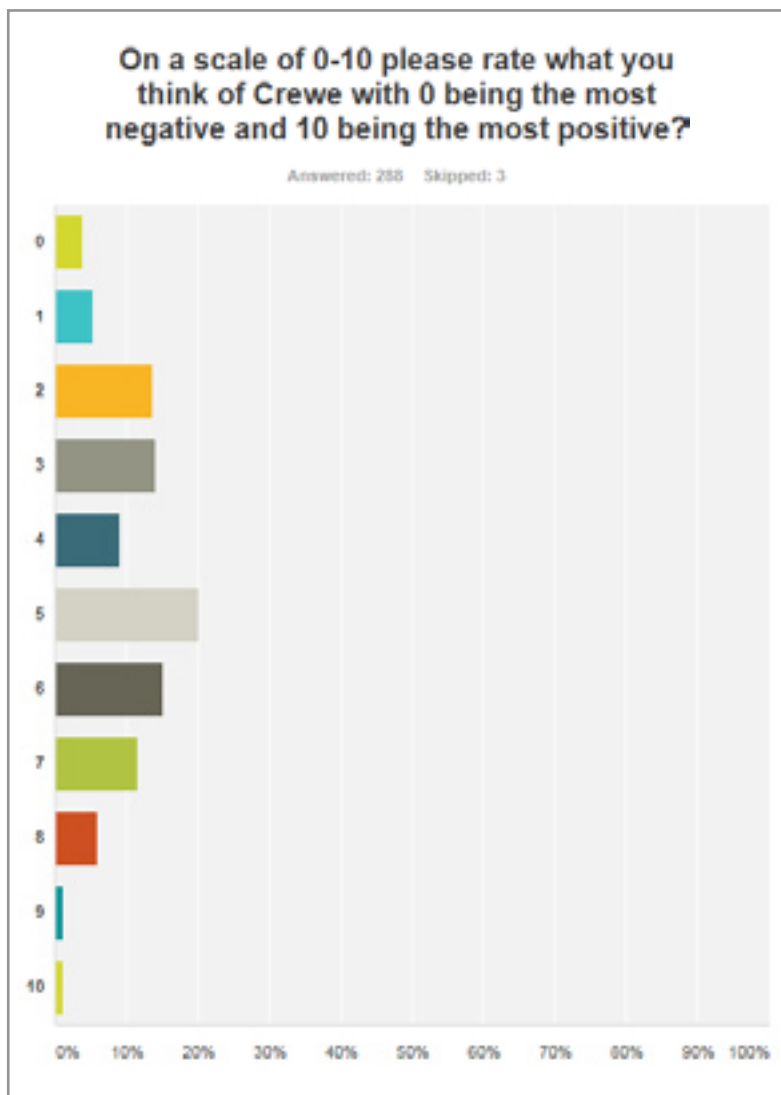
Think Queens Park Good Rail

Retail Park Local Location Supermarkets

Countryside Residents Shops Transport Network

Friendly People Family Live Train Station Theatre

1. E-Survey Results



The survey was carried out electronically using Survey Monkey software. 291 total responses were received over the period from 3 August 2014 to 31 January 2015.

9 questions were asked in total. 56% of respondents were female and 44% were male. In terms of the age profile the majority of people (61%) were aged between 41 and 65. Only a small percentage (6%) were aged over 65 or under 18 (2%).

90% of respondents said they lived in Crewe.

The first question asked people to rate their feelings about the town. The table below shows a broad range of answers with most people rating the town somewhere in the middle of the scale.

What People Like

People were then asked to list the top 3 things that they liked most about Crewe. The table below summarises the responses into a number of broad categories. It can be seen that the top answers were the location and accessibility of the town, the people and Queens Park.

What I like	Responses
Transport links/location	84
People	76
Queens Park	66
Railway station/links	47
Adjacent countryside/green spaces	45
History/heritage	45
Facilities/entertainment	42
Shops/market	38
Retail Park	32
Negative 'likes'	23
Football/Crewe Alexandra	21
Memorial Square/Municipal Buildings	19
Education	18
Lyceum Theatre	14
Flowers/planting	14
Bentley Motors	13
Employment/job opportunities	13
Potential/desire to regenerate	12
Home/where I live	10
The town centre	9
Hospital/healthcare	8
Good walking/cycling routes	7
Affordable housing	5
Safety/low crime rate	5
Parking	5
I work here/convenient	5
Crewe Town Council	4
Everything close together	4
Good bus services	3
Culture	3
New leisure facility	3

Other answers = 23

Some quotes from this question include:

"Great location and close to transport links and other towns and countryside"

"It has a good variety of shops - the retail park is particularly good as is the Phoenix Leisure Park"

"We make the finest cars in the world :-)"

"I like the fact Crewe has a community for everyone no matter what age, sex or race people are"

"Queens Park is starting to shine once more! :0)"

"Benefits of balance of rural and town (including park and green space)"

"I am excited about the future (All Change for Crewe) plans. With HS2, a new technical college, new lifestyle centre, Bentley expansion, new roads, etc - this is all great news for Crewe - I am now hoping this results in big investment in the town centre itself"

"The work being done by Crewe Town Council to try and restore pride, optimism and hope for the future of the town"

What People Don't Like/Want to Change

People were also asked to list the worst 3 things about Crewe or things that they would like to see improve. The table below summarises the responses into a number of broad categories. It can be seen that the four elements that people were concerned most about were the traffic/roads, the town centre, the poor quality of retailing and the cleanliness/appearance of the town.

What I don't like/want to change	Responses
Roads/traffic	141
Town centre	104
Poor quality of retailing	92
Cleanliness/appearance of town	87
Empty shops	50
Parking/parking charges	42
Bus station	37
Community/people/lack of pride	37
Development/housing/planning	22
Old buildings gone/lack of respect for character of town	19
Rail station/public transport services	18
Queens Park	18
Cultural differences	17
Night-time economy	16
The market	16
Local government	13
Safety/crime	12
Jobs/economy	12
Poor pavements/pedestrian links	9
Facilities for young people/education	6
Nantwich Road	5
West Street	5
Poor quality of housing	5
Lack of suitable leisure facilities	5
Poor facilities for cyclists	4
Loss of carnival	3

Other answers = 57

Some quotes from this question include:

"We need an effective traffic control system that doesn't gridlock key routes yet doesn't deter people from coming to the town"

"There are too many areas that are just grot spots and they've been like that for years"

"The town centre should be the jewel in the towns crown, it is the most dismal depressing hole, it needs to be redesigned with a view to highlighting the town's heritage. It does not need fancy new builds that will look out of date in 20yrs time"

"If you want people in the town centre STOP charging (to park) or people will simply go to the retail park or Nantwich Road"

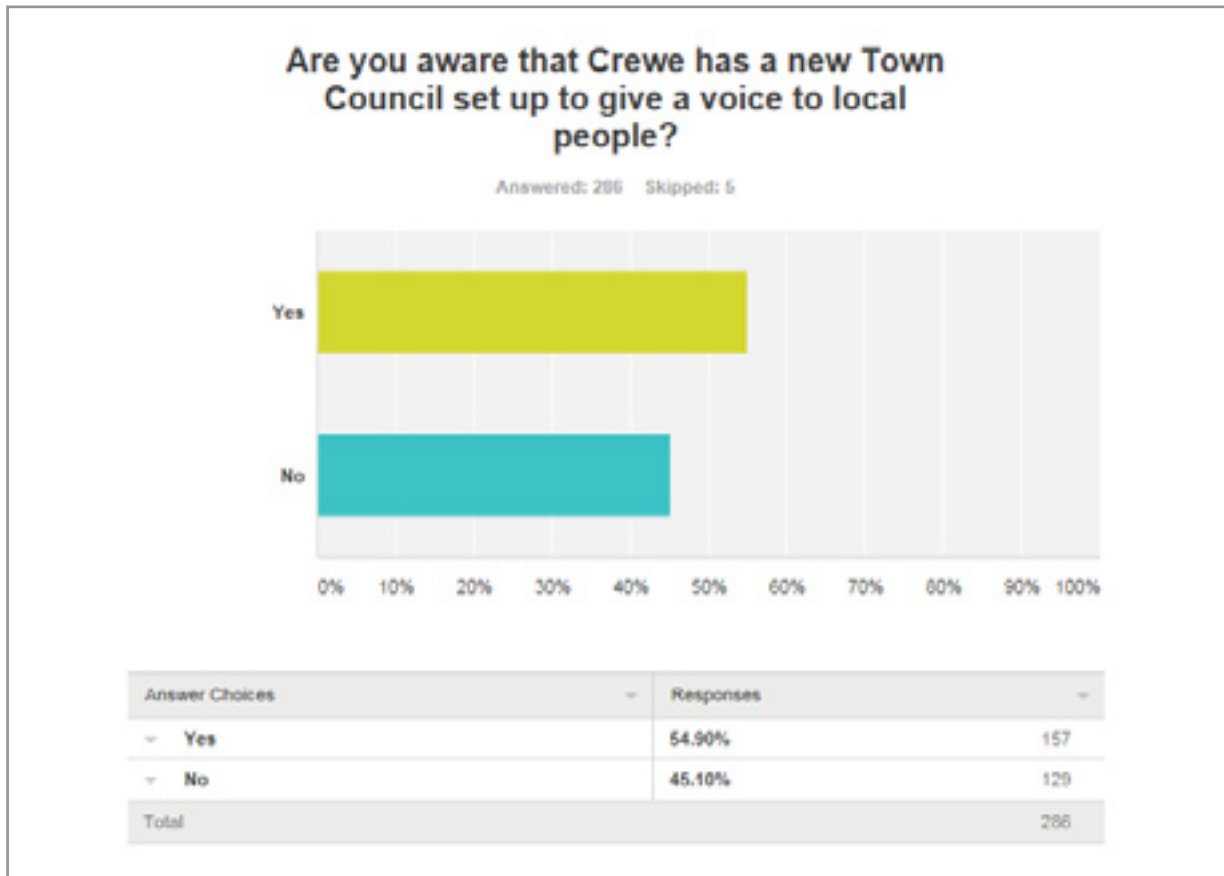
"We need to find a way to promote a greater diversity of retail experience and lift the perception that we're a town of pound shops and charity shops"

"All the nice old buildings keep being torn down to make way for yet more soulless abortions of architecture"

"I would like to see a higher number of residents and businesses taking pride in the area"

Awareness of the Town Council and Interest in 'A Vision for Crewe'

Respondents were asked if they were aware of the new town council. 45% of people who responded were unaware of the Council.



Finally, around two-thirds of people were happy to be contacted again about the project.



2. Postcard and Beermat Survey Results

As well as an e-survey, Crewe Town Council carried out a postcard survey which was distributed at a number of local events including The King's Shilling March at Queens' Park, the Health and Wellbeing Fayre at the Oakley Centre, and Councillors Surgeries. Postcards were left in the library and a health centre and distributed at external meetings. The questionnaire was also attached to the Mayor's annual report which was delivered to over half the households in Crewe.

Over 750 beer mats were also distributed around Crewe with QR codes and weblinks to the e-survey, or a freepost address to return a shortened version of the survey. Only 2 beermats were returned via freepost, but it is more likely that responses would be made using smartphones to the e-survey.

Some quotes from these surveys include the following:

"I was born and have lived in Crewe ever since. I love my town but I have so many reservations about it. I have seen with dismay my town deteriorate over the years, we need to do so much to recreate our once fab town. I despair of our young people and their total lack of respect for anyone or anything, we suffer abuse, litter all sorts of antisocial behaviour, call me a grumpy old git if you like, but I am not alone. I look forward with bated breath to a little improvement."

"It's always been a vibrant town, led the world in 1913, and people are down to earth"

"Re-invigorate the town centre, everything moving to Grand Junction Retail Park so no-one bothers going into town anymore!"

"Make Crewe somewhere we are proud to live in"

"Bring back Crewe Carnival!"



<i>Best Thing about Crewe</i>	Response s
Location/accessibility	34
The People	24
Negative 'likes'	14
Access to Countryside	12
Queens Park	10
Shopping	9
Theatre	8
History	6
I was born here/where I live	4
Lots to do	3
Safe/lack of crime	3

<i>Like least about Crewe</i>	Responses
Town centre	23
Road congestion/traffic	19
Cleanliness/appearance	17
Empty shops	15
Poor quality of shopping	15
People/lack of pride	13
Bus station/services	9
Too many houses	7
Immigration	7
Nothing going on/nothing to do	6
Car parking/charges	4
Nothing/like living here	4

<i>Most wanted changes in next 5 years</i>	Responses
Bus station redevelopment	9
Town centre regeneration	26
Investment in shopping	30
Parking	11
More positivity in the town	7
Museum	6
Improve roads	12
Improve public transport	13
Tidy up streets	11
More houses/development in town centre	4
Less house building/development	8
More activities for young people	7
Better entertainment/events	6
Business/employment	8

Appendix 2

Young Advisor's Report

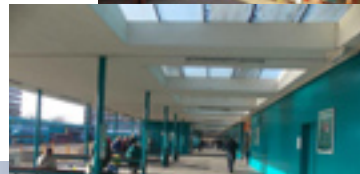
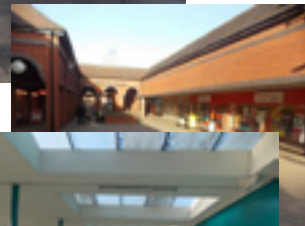
Crewe

How to improve the town for young people.



Good points of Crewe

- Shops
- Cinema
- Retail park
- Youth council
- Decent sports facilities
- Location
- Transport (trains and buses)
- Queen's park (and other parks in Crewe)
- Theatre
- Bowling Alley
- Work
- Variety of people
- Places to eat



Bad points of Crewe

- Bad atmosphere
- Vandalism
- Litter
- Lack of things to do
- Though shops are a good point, there is a lack of them.
- Emptiness
- Certain areas can be unsafe
- Uncleanliness
- Not much variety of shops
- Lighting
- Education in some schools
- Some disrespectful or misbehaving people can make the town look bad.



The Survey

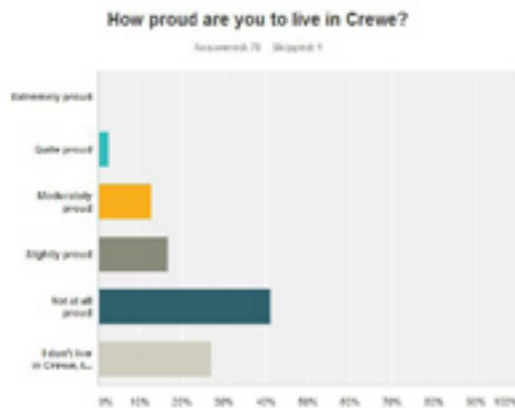
We designed and sent out on Facebook a survey titled 'Your opinion on Crewe'. Whilst some participants were over 18, the majority of the results came from the 13-18 age range.

The results helped us to have an insight into a range of young people's opinions and ideas outside of our own, it was very useful and we considered it to be quite successful.

From the survey we acquired many ideas that had not occurred to us before, and some problems that we had not considered ourselves, and we also got some idea of where to go next with a possible further survey.



Results: How proud are young people to be living in Crewe?



As you can see, a vast majority of young people said they were not at all proud to live in Crewe.

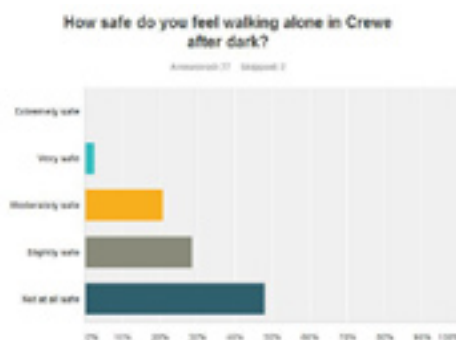
We realise that some people answered that they do not live in Crewe, they only visit, when those results were removed, **56.1%** of young people said they were not at all proud to be living in Crewe.

2 participants said they were quite proud to live in Crewe.

Not one person said they are extremely proud to live in Crewe. This needs to change.

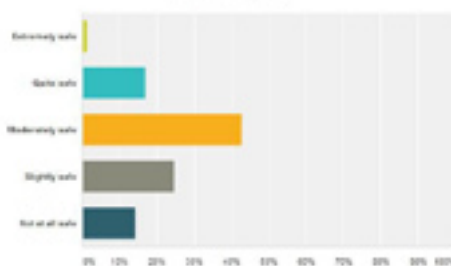


Results: Safety



Overall, how safe do you feel in Crewe?

Answered: 77 Skipped: 2



As you can see, safety is a rather huge problem in Crewe, especially after dark, with **48.05%** of participants feeling not at all safe when in Crewe after dark.

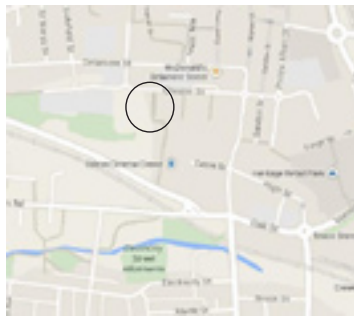


Why do young people feel so unsafe?



So why do young people in Crewe feel so unsafe, especially after dark?

On the left are some pictures of areas in Crewe that are not particularly pleasant to look at or walk through. In the next few slides however we will be focusing on routes/places that young people specifically take/utilise quite often.



Route:
Town
Centre
to
Cinema

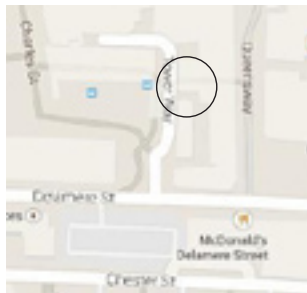


This is a route commonly traversed by young people, as it gets them directly from the Town Centre to the Cinema in the fastest way possible. Unfortunately, it isn't the safest. Look at the picture and imagine it is later in the evening, a time when quite a lot of young people go to see films.

Would you like to walk this route in the dark?

Would you want your children to?



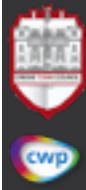


Route: Town Centre to Bus Stop

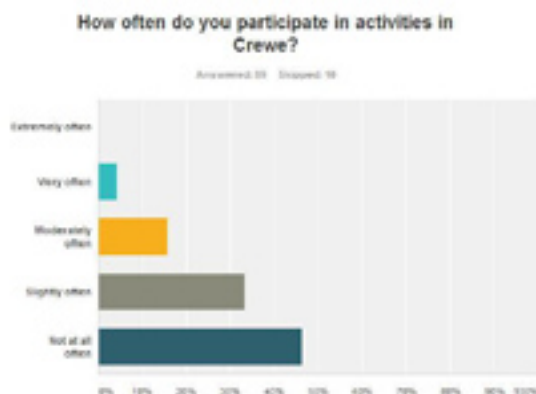


This is a similar situation to the previous one, it is the quickest route from the Town Centre to the Bus Stop, so young people take it a lot, and this tends to be when it's getting dark. Young people like to be independent and so after seeing friends, work, or shopping in Crewe, they tend to get a bus home, especially if they live outside of Crewe. Just as before, imagine that tunnel in the dark.

Would you want to walk down there?

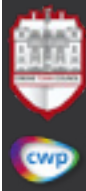


Results: Young people's opinions on activities in crewe.



These are the results from our question asking how often young people participate in activities in Crewe, as you can see, the answer was mostly 'not at all often'.

Our next question in the survey was 'If you do not participate in activities in Crewe, why not?'. The answer to this question ranged from lack of community spirit, to simply 'scared'.



What changes would most improve Crewe?

- Bigger variety of shops and activities.
- Shelter at the skate park
- Cleaning up the parks, maybe add an astro for sports
- More street lighting
- More shops (eg. primark, lush)
- Lights on sports areas such as football pitches
- Re-furbish Bus Station, modernise and clean
- Affordable gym
- Improve youth group
- Festivals, funfairs, circuses
- Bring community together
- Litter picking
- activities for all ages.



Where?



Appendix 3

Organisations Consulted

ACT	Crewe House Shares
Active Crewe	Crewe Library
Age UK	Crewe Lyceum Theatre
Alzheimers Society	Crewe Male Voice Choir
ANSA	Crewe Memories
Autism Networks	Crewe Neighbourhood Policing Unit
Axis Arts Centre	Crewe News and TV
Bentley Motors	Crewe Rail Partnership
Bombardier Transportation	Crewe Town Allotment Federation
CAMHS Young Advisors	Crewe Town Centre Retailers Forum
Carers Association and Trust	Crewe U3A
Cheshire Academy of Integrated Sports and Arts	Crewe Village Agents (Cheshire Community Action)
Cheshire Connect	Crewe YMCA
Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau	CVS Cheshire East
Cheshire East Council Education/Youth	DG Buses
Cheshire East Council Housing	Diabetes UK
Cheshire East Council Partnerships	Everybody Sport and Recreation
Cheshire East Council Transport	Friends of Queens Park
Cheshire East Youth Council	Girl Guiding UK
Cheshire East Youth Theatre	Greenspaces
Cheshire Fire Service	Health Watch Cheshire East
Cheshire Home Choice	Holiday Inn Express
Cheshire Neighbours Credit Union	Home Choice
Cheshire Police	Home Instead Care
Children's Centres	IRIS Vision Resource Centre
Children's Society	Karate Club
Christian Concern	Kings Grove School
Community Recycle Cycles cic	Lady Verdin Trust
Creative Crewe	Looking After the Homeless (LATH) Group
Crewe Alexandra Football Club	Manchester Metropolitan University Cheshire Campus
Crewe and District Writers Circle	Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Crewe and Nantwich Senior Forum	Network Rail
Crewe Brass Band	OCEAN Cheshire
Crewe Chronicle	Open Minds Forum
Crewe Clean Team	Pathways
Crewe Family History Society	Ramada Encore Hotel
Crewe Hall Hotel	Redshift Radio
Crewe Heritage Centre	Ruskin School

Scouts
Senior Voices
Sir Thomas More School
Sir William Stanier School
Soul in Art
South and East Cheshire Young Advisors Partnership
South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce
South Cheshire CLASP
South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group
South Cheshire College
South Cheshire NHS
St. Paul's Pantry
Streetscape CEC

Sustain
Sustrans
Team Chongi Academy
Tesco Crewe
The Children's Society
The Glasheen Academy
Via Dance
Virgin Trains (Talent Academy)
Wishing Well
Wulvern Housing
Your Housing
Youth Federation
Yvonne School of Dance



Appendix 4

Glossary of Terms

A&E	Accident and Emergency
BID	Business Improvement District
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CEC	Cheshire East Council
CLP	Community led plan
CTC	Crewe Town Council
CVSCE	Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East
CYEP	Crewe Youth Employment Partnership
GP	General Practitioner
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LAP	Crewe Local Area Partnership
MMU	Manchester Metropolitan University
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YPWG	Young People's Working Group



A Vision for Crewe

Crewe's Community plan

If you want to know more about this plan or would like to become involved in its delivery,
please contact Crewe Town Council.

Telephone: 01270 756975
Email: townclerk@crewetowncouncil.gov.uk



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