

Crawley Town Investment Plan Submission



Foreword

We are pleased to submit Crawley's draft Town Investment Plan and we would like to highlight to you the absolute imperative of Crawley's Plan for Towns Fund programme delivery being considered as part of Cohort 1.

This imperative is first and foremost in view of the acute economic crisis we are experiencing in Crawley as a consequence of Covid-19, which represents a real and present danger to the livelihoods of our residents and Crawley's future economic prosperity. Therefore, for very good reason, we understand we are the first town in the south east to submit a draft Town Investment Plan.

As you will know, forecasters predict that, if immediate and substantial action is not taken, as many as 57 per cent of Crawley's workforce could lose their jobs and Crawley's economy could see a 42 per cent fall in economic output, which would wipe out £2.5bn per annum – a significant cost to "UK PLC".

Thousands of Crawley residents have already lost their jobs in the last few months due to the sheer extent of the contraction of aviation industry activity (Gatwick Airport). The future of the industry and the prospects for thousands more Crawley residents' jobs is extremely uncertain going into the autumn.

Up until this crisis began, Crawley had enjoyed a period of sustained economic success with one of the fastest growing economies in the south east, low unemployment and a vibrant business base. However this masked a number of structural economic challenges meaning that despite our economic success Crawley is one of the worst places for social mobility in the country with many local residents experiencing low skills, qualifications and relatively low income levels.

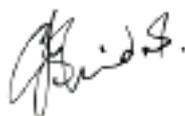
Even before the Covid-19 crisis began, we welcomed the government's recognition of the importance of the substantial action needed to address these challenges by confirming that Crawley would be one of the 101 towns in England to benefit from the Towns Fund.

We look forward to working closely with government to negotiate a Town Deal over the months ahead in order to maximise opportunities to unlock as quickly as possible vital infrastructure investment resources to boost Crawley's economy.

In view of Crawley's excellent previous economic track record, this will also benefit the national economy and help safeguard jobs, creating new opportunities for reskilled local workers, and supporting the wellbeing of our residents.



Natalie Brahma-Pearl
Chief Executive
Crawley Borough Council



Chris Maidment
Chair
Crawley Town Deal Board and Economic
Recovery Taskforce

Crawley Town Investment Plan Submission

Introduction

1.1 Since its post war “new town” inauguration in 1947, Crawley has achieved its own economic “centre of gravity”. Its recent fast economic growth means economic output (£6bn in 2018) is much bigger in proportion to the town’s working age population: 72,000). Before the Covid-19 crisis struck, Crawley had enjoyed a period of sustained economic success. This was partly due to the presence of Gatwick Airport, yielding large employment volumes in the area and the Manor Royal Business District – one of the largest in the south east covering a total of 240 hectares and home to more than 600 productive businesses and 32,000 jobs. Crawley is also the largest centre of economic output in West Sussex by some margin, contributing 26 per cent of the county’s annual economic output and represents a significant proportion of the county’s total commercial floor space and employment. Employment levels have been high in Crawley with total employment in the town being over 100,000 jobs, the second highest job density outside central London. Crawley town centre is a sub-regional shopping centre, accommodating 3,000 jobs, including 1,000 from professional services.

However, despite the area’s economic success, and even before the Covid-19 crisis, Crawley’s community has suffered from some of the poorest social mobility in the country, ranking Crawley 304 out of 324 local authorities. This is because a significant number of residents work in low paid employment vocations in aviation, hospitality, leisure, retail and other services. Skills and qualification levels amongst Crawley residents are notably lower than the south east and national averages (see section 1.3.3).

Crawley’s local workforce is not getting enough “share of the cake” when it comes to the economic output generated in Crawley. Average wage levels are markedly below in-commuters. This leads to other structural weaknesses in Crawley’s economy. Private sector employers suffer skills shortages to high skilled jobs because they cannot recruit locally. Innovation output levels are low. There is no university presence to help upskill and build aspiration in the local workforce. There is a dangerous over-reliance on aviation for employment – representing 18 per cent of jobs in Crawley, which is not including related ancillary hospitality and retail employment. The town’s better quality jobs tend to go to commuters from outside the area. Prior to Covid-19 43,000 commuted into Crawley per day, with the highest net in-commute statistics (+24,000) of any local authority area in south east England outside London bringing with it associated pollution and congestion. Before the Covid-19 crisis, the government recognised a clear need for a Crawley Town Investment Plan and Towns Fund interventions to address these major weaknesses in Crawley, to help “level up” Crawley’s community and to start to restructure and modernise Crawley’s economy.

Moreover, this Town Investment Plan (TIP) will provide critical and urgent help to Crawley’s economy due to the acute economic crisis brought about by the Covid-19 contraction of the aviation industry and mounting unemployment and redundancies. The claimant count has trebled in three months. Crawley now has unemployment levels above the south east and national averages, which is unprecedented. Crawley has one in three workers furloughed and that scheme will soon finish. This TIP intervention is absolutely vital to help restructure and recover Crawley’s economy for the long term so to support Crawley’s communities into sustainable and good quality jobs and homes.

1.2 Crawley's strengths

Pre-Covid, Crawley had economic strengths and assets including:

1.2.1 Business and economy

- The Crawley economy grew by 23 per cent 2013-2018¹ to reach almost £6bn PA– the fastest growth in West Sussex and one of the fastest in south east
- At Coast to Capital LEP level Crawley has the second highest economic output after Brighton and Hove. In the last five years growth has outperformed neighbouring Croydon (17 per cent) and rivalled Brighton and Hove (24 per cent)²
- Crawley's business base grew by 25 per cent³ between 2013 and 2018, well above the south east average (17 per cent)
- The Manor Royal Business District within Crawley has nine million square feet of commercial space, home to a significant advanced engineering cluster, yielding nearly £2bn of economic output, 600+ businesses and 32,000 jobs. Manor Royal is a major home to aviation industry, including Boeing, Virgin Atlantic, C.A.E, L3 Harris, Aerotron, Newrest
- Crawley town centre has consistently attracted professional service businesses but this is hindered due to the current absence of available Grade A stock. Grant Thornton moved to Crawley in 2018, taking one of the last Grade A units available.

1.2.2 Employment and productivity

- Crawley has the second highest job density outside central London with 101,000 jobs⁴
- Crawley enjoyed a 13.5⁵ per cent jobs growth 2013-2018, one of the fastest jobs growth rates in the south east
- At £45,000 per capita PA⁶ Crawley has the highest economic productivity per worker of any part of The Coast to Capital LEP area. The England average is £26,000.

1.2.3 Geographic location and connectivity

- Crawley could be described as “hyper-connected”, within easy reach of the M23 and M25 motorways and a few miles south of Gatwick Airport. Before the Covid-19 crisis Gatwick was the busiest single runway airport in the world, sitting exclusively within the borough, providing employment to 24,000 jobs and generating 85,000 jobs off site⁷
- Crawley has four railway stations, including major London-Brighton mainline stations at Gatwick Airport and Three Bridges. Crawley is home to the Network Rail South East Regional Operations Centre and also a major Siemens train maintenance facility. Crawley is moving towards a modern hydrogen/hybrid fuelled bus fleet through Metrobus with extensive Fastway bus network.

1.2.4 Regional retail dominance and leisure pull

- Crawley town centre is a regional shopping destination, with major retail brand names, complementing an established High Street evening economy offer. Also within the town centre Crawley College and its campus have a major presence, alongside a significant professional services business base.
- Crawley has a powerful leisure offer – the K2 Crawley Leisure Centre comprises an Olympics size swimming pool, an Olympic climbing facility, a regional athletics track and major gym / indoor sports, hosting a range of national tournaments including the England Snooker Championships. Crawley is home to Crawley Town FC – the only professional football club in the Gatwick Diamond sub-region.

1.2.5 Green infrastructure

- Crawley has several Green Flag winning parks including Tilgate Park, which boasts lakes and Tilgate Nature Centre. Crawley’s “green infrastructure” is extensive with significant tree cover and areas of soft landscaping as well as a network of parks and open spaces, including the town centre’s Memorial Gardens. The “new town” urban design approach has created wide, tree-lined boulevards with significant green space and green verge amenity throughout the town and its neighbourhoods.

1.3 Crawley’s structural socio-economic weaknesses

1.3.1 Major commercial space development opportunities remain dormant

- Manor Royal has over six hectares of land granted planning permission for new commercial space not being built out. Businesses already there have fed back on a lack of amenities that would better enable productivity and innovation. Work must be done to upgrade the Manor Royal business environment, improve digital connectivity to the site and into businesses, boost innovation output and unlock dormant commercial space.

1.3.2 Innovation output in Crawley and the wider Gatwick Diamond is far lower than levels of innovation outputs than competitor areas in the south east

Coast to Capital LEP economic profiling reveals that Crawley and the Gatwick Diamond have low levels of innovation output compared to “competitor” areas in the south east. This stifles product and service technological development, business competitiveness and high value job creation, stunting economic growth. Investment is essential to attract new businesses and sectors to Manor Royal to boost innovation, drive up economic outputs and high value jobs as a major counter-recessionary measure.

1.3.3 The stark skills gap holding back Crawley’s workforce

Local OFSTED reports have cited a lack of ambition for local children in Crawley. Just 56.7 per cent⁸ have a Level 3 qualification (south east average 62 per cent) and 38.8 per cent a Level 4 qualification (south east average 43.4 per cent). This skills gap means Crawley’s workforce is unable to access the higher value, better quality employment options in Crawley and therefore their share of the accruing prosperity from Crawley’s economic success has been diminished. There is an urgent “levelling up” imperative. This skills gap must be addressed through new skills infrastructure for access to training to provide pathways to help the local resident workforce access higher qualifications and higher value jobs.

1.3.4 According to the recent “State of the Nation” report (2018), Crawley has one of the worst records for “social mobility” amongst its residents in the country, despite its economic successes

This is why major investment in skills infrastructure is needed as part of the TIP to help unlock vocational and higher education skills training to empower the local workforce and create pathways to higher value employment options.

1.3.5 The absence of university level training provision in Crawley

One of the major reasons the volume of innovation output in Crawley is stifled and why fewer in the local workforce access Level 4 and above qualifications is the absence of a university level offer, which provides access to training at H.E. level. Whilst just 38.8 per cent of Crawley’s workforce have a Level 4 qualification, nearby Brighton and Hove’s workforce (with two universities) enjoys 56 per cent with Level 4 qualifications (Nomis data). 48 per cent of Reading’s workforce have Level 4 qualifications. These innovation and skills deficiencies present as key structural economic challenges locally, which, as well as holding back social mobility, are an impediment to business investment and job creation locally. The Town Investment Plan will fund schemes which facilitate the development of a university level offer, opening up new opportunities for local residents to gain access to Level 4 qualifications and above.

1.3.6 The employment base is dominated by Gatwick Airport and the aviation industry and therefore Crawley’s workforce is greatly exposed to the acute economic impact of the contraction in aviation due to Covid-19

17,000⁹ jobs in Crawley are in the aviation industry, 18 per cent of the employment base, not to mention ancillary hospitality, retail and leisure employment. It is vital that Crawley’s economy, aided by the TIP, can restructure and diversify away from over-dependence on aviation into other sectors like green construction, digital and professional services.

1.3.7 Poor air quality – Crawley experiences high levels of NOx and particulate pollutants due to heavily congested roads and a high net in-commute.

There is a designated Air Quality Management Area in Crawley in view of dangerous levels of surface transport pollutants as above – this is located close to one of the key junctions off the M23 into Crawley that serves the Manor Royal Business District. Urgent intervention is needed to invest in major arterial cycle route and bus station infrastructure to deliver the modal shift needed to reduce pollution levels.

1.4 Crawley’s fantastic opportunities that need realising

1.4.1 Green technologies and advanced engineering business growth

Manor Royal Business District already has a formidable reputation in advanced engineering with a range of major “blue chip” companies strongly present and contributing greatly to Manor Royal’s economic output PA of £1.9 billion. These include: Thales, Elekta, Varian Medical Systems, Welland Medical, Vent-Axia, CGG, Doosan and Permasense. Urgent intervention is needed not just to retain these businesses that drive economic output but also to transform Manor Royal into a modern digital Business Park and a natural home for green technology.

1.4.2 Digitally enabled growth

Crawley Borough Council has engaged in a new local partnership arrangement and contracted with City Fibre to see £30 million of capital investment in the roll out of gigabit speed full fibre cable infrastructure throughout the borough, including key employment zones like Manor Royal and Crawley town centre. £27 million of this is private investment by City Fibre. This represents a fantastic opportunity for the TIP and Crawley Town Deal programme to unlock access by the business community to digital services enabled by this full fibre network in order to boost business competitiveness and deliver business, economic and jobs growth.

Similarly, there is a major opportunity for quick action to take advantage of the new digital infrastructure to develop a platform of new digital applications and services in Crawley town centre. This will in particular serve residents in new town centre homes, including a “Citizen Wi-Fi” service to enable access to such applications and services all over the town centre. Investment to help unlock an array of town centre services digitally to connect new town centre residents to surrounding cultural, leisure, evening economy and retail amenity is essential to the socio-economic conditions needed to enable good quality homes to be built out and occupied in the town centre.

1.4.3 Making the most of Crawley’s cultural fabric

Crawley benefits from a significant ethnic minority community representing cultural heritage (28 per cent BAME population)¹⁰, particularly south Asian and afro-caribbean communities. There are real opportunities to expand cultural programmes in Crawley town centre. There are real opportunities to enhance arts and cultural provision using the Crawley Museum and The Hawth Theatre as a key starting point. The development of a vibrant new neighbourhood in Crawley town centre offers an excellent opportunity to fuel footfall for such expanded cultural provision in the town centre and vice versa that expanded provision can help to attract people to come and live in high quality homes in the town centre. We are actively engaging with Arts Council England in this regard.

1.4.4 Opportunities to unlock the green transformation of Crawley’s economy

Crawley Borough Council signed last summer a climate change emergency declaration committing the borough to driving down carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. The post Covid-19 crisis with enhanced home working and a notable reduction in road traffic offers a superb opportunity to invest in new green transport infrastructure and in green home retrofitting as well as in green business growth to help Crawley’s economy restructure and recover away from aviation towards exciting new growth sectors such as green technologies. Furthermore, there is the opportunity to develop Crawley as a UK centre for more sustainable “green aviation” solutions, supporting existing businesses innovating already in this field (such as Thales) and attracting more R&D and other innovators to create a centre of excellence in “green aviation”.

The Crawley Borough Council District Heat Network is soon to commence construction (Phase 1). There may be opportunities to extend this to future phases in the town centre.

1.4.5 Unlocking a thriving virtual and physical higher education offer

The Crawley resident workforce has overall fallen behind the south east and national averages in terms of skills and qualification levels, particularly in those sectors – construction, advanced engineering, professional services etc., very present in Crawley – which offer higher value employment options locally. This has been a key barrier to Crawley residents accessing better quality jobs and the State of the Nation report 2018 recognises that Crawley is one of the worst off places nationally for social mobility. The forthcoming Towns Fund programme for Crawley offers a real opportunity to drive economic recovery in the long term by investing in new skills infrastructure at higher education level, to open up pathways into alternative good quality job options for local Crawley residents losing their jobs in sectors like aviation

1.5 Threats to a prosperous and sustainable economic future in Crawley

1.5.1 The risk of the 3,000 home town centre neighbourhood becoming a “commuter dormitory” and/or with poor quality living accommodation

The Crawley Local Plan confirms that a 3,000 home neighbourhood in Crawley¹¹ town centre can be built out of which over 800 are already built, with a further 500 on site and 600 with planning permission – but there is no guarantee that these homes will be of good quality and that they will unlock the footfall needed to sustain the town centre economy. There is the threat of the town centre becoming a “commuter dormitory” and of adverse market conditions leading to poor quality living accommodation. The Towns Fund Investment will play a key role in helping to create the socio-economic conditions in Crawley town centre to attract residents to both live and work in high quality homes in the new town centre neighbourhood. It is therefore essential to facilitate the construction of the highest quality homes in Crawley town centre and that they become fully occupied with many residents living and working in the town centre in order to generate major additional footfall to boost the town centre economy long term.

1.5.2 Stubbornly high carbon emissions, rising in the transport sector

A recent borough carbon audit undertaken for Crawley BC by consultants has revealed that CO2 emissions from transport is over one third of overall emissions and is still rising¹². To deliver on net zero carbon commitments by 2050, it is critical for the TIP to deliver further significant sustainable transport and digital infrastructure investments to drive down the propensity to commute / travel by carbon emitting conventional vehicles. A recent Manor Royal BID study reveals that 50 per cent¹³ of Manor Royal employees live within a 30-minute cycle ride of Manor Royal and 17 per cent within a 15-minute walk. Such infrastructure interventions via the TIP will help unlock the “green” economy articulated below in the overall TIP vision.

1.5.3 A risk of Crawley lagging behind economically due to business inability to access new full fibre infrastructure

As it stands, without further interventions to incentivise take up amongst all businesses, particularly in Manor Royal, of gigabit speed broadband infrastructure, there is a real risk that Crawley's economy will fall further behind other areas, causing the contraction of other sectors like advanced engineering and professional services, not directly linked to the aviation industry.

£30 million of investment is going into Crawley to enable the installation of full fibre cable infrastructure across the borough, opening up the opportunities for business and residents to access gigabit broadband speeds, £27 million of which is coming from private sector investment.

However, whilst this will roll out the full fibre infrastructure in the street, the current programme does not enable access to it by all businesses and residents. Further infrastructure investment is needed to connect the full fibre through into Manor Royal business premises and into new town centre residential and commercial accommodation so that Crawley does not fall behind other areas. The TIP investment will offer a programme of funding incentives for businesses on Manor Royal to resource the required cable infrastructure investment to unlock access to the gigabit broadband speeds.

This will make all the difference in delivering such access across a wide range of Manor Royal businesses, enabling Manor Royal to market itself as a "Gigabit" Business Park, which in turn will help it to attract further business investment and employers into Manor Royal and so unlock the dormant commercial space developments, which have planning permission.

1.5.4 The long term impact on job volumes of aviation sector automation

The aviation industry is experiencing an inexorable rise in automation as a proportion of its day-to-day business activity – for example in baggage handling and the management of flight departures and arrivals. This is due to digital and A.I. technological developments with new products and services having come to the market to support the aviation industry. This means that the sector is becoming increasingly less reliant on labour intensive activity, reducing job volumes on an incremental basis and leading to longer term reductions in overall employment volume. This is likely to be detrimental long term to Crawley's workforce and local economy. This is another key reason as to why the restructuring of Crawley's economy is an imperative and the ability to facilitate pathways via skills infrastructure and skills training into alternative careers and vocations. The Town Investment Plan will have a key role to play therefore in catalysing progress with this economic restructure.

1.5.5 The impact of the Covid-19 crisis – a real threat to Crawley's economy

The Covid-19 crisis has caused a huge "overnight" aviation industry contraction at Gatwick Airport – to the extent that the airport is serving fewer than 10,000 passengers per month (April 2020) compared to four million per month (April 2019)¹⁴. This is having a hugely adverse impact on the sector, leading directly to over 20,000 redundancies being announced by airlines, the airport and the sector supply chain.

Crawley's community is very much in the "eye of the storm" arising from the above contraction, facing a significant threat of mass redundancies. 18 per cent of all Crawley's workforce, 17,000 residents, work in aviation with many thousands having already lost or in the process of losing their jobs. 33 per cent of the workforce are furloughed – one of the highest proportion of workers furloughed in the country.

A major knock-on adverse impact on Crawley's economy is unfolding now – travel, hospitality, retail, leisure employers have announced major job losses.

A recent Centre for Cities report predicts that 57 per cent of Crawley's 94,000 employee jobs is at risk of redundancy / furloughing. The same report predicts 60 per cent of all Crawley's exporting jobs will be adversely impacted.

A Hatch Regeneris report identifies Crawley as being one of the areas most exposed to job losses and business failures due to the Covid-19 crisis.

According to the Centre for Progressive Policy, Crawley is expected to see a 42 per cent drop in overall economic output, which, would represent a loss of £2.5 billion+ per annum – by far the worst affected in the Coast to Capital LEP area and beyond.

1.5.6 The impact of the Brexit transition

As the UK economy adjusts to an export-import trading arrangement with the European Union based on WTO requirements, there will be a period of transition whilst exporters adjust their processes and practices to the new requirements. Crawley exporters are likely to need time to adapt to these extra complexities before they are in a position to support growth based on business secured.

1.6 Overall summary

As a town which has built up significant economic firepower since its post war "new town" inception, Crawley's success is undeniable, its reputation further enhanced in recent years by some of the fastest economic growth levels in the south east.

This headline success masks serious structural weaknesses which combined with the acute economic crisis, brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, pose existential threats to a sustained and prosperous future not just for Crawley's economy but also for the surrounding Gatwick Diamond and Coast to Capital sub-regions. These weaknesses are best summarised in Crawley's position towards the "bottom of the table" in the "State of the Nation" report on social mobility. This demonstrates that Crawley residents are currently denied the opportunity to access more of the fruits of the town's economic output.

This leads to other structural weaknesses in Crawley's economy: businesses experience skills shortages and cannot recruit and create more jobs in sectors like professional services and advanced engineering due to the relatively low skills levels locally; Crawley has had one of the highest net in-commutes of any area in the country outside metropolitan areas and businesses have been unable to create new jobs due to a shortfall in overall transport capacity; innovation output is relatively low and workforce skills levels much lower than the south east average due to the absence of a university and an insufficient training programme offer linked to the skills needs of local employers.

There is a dangerous over-reliance on aviation and ancillary sectors, which whilst historically driving job volumes in Crawley, leaves the town exposed to the major risk of mass unemployment, without a coherent "Plan B" to drive restructure of Crawley's economy into alternative employment growth sectors such as green technologies, digital and professional services.

Crawley's Town Investment Plan was to be originally focused on the need to help Crawley overcome these structural challenges and open up opportunities to Crawley residents to support the government's drive to "level up". The onset of the Covid-19 crisis and the directly and indirectly related threats to Crawley's economic future described above mean that there is equally an emergency need to fast track the Town Deal and its associated infrastructure investment as part of Cohort 1.

2 Engagement

2.1 Introduction

Crawley Borough Council has built up significant and substantial engagement mechanisms with community and business representatives. This is not just in relation to the Town Deal Board to help draw up the Town Investment Plan but also stretching back years where the council has been meticulous in supporting the development of community and business representative forums and of engaging the local community and local stakeholders in consultation on proposals to regenerate Crawley. This section provides an overview of the engagement mechanisms deployed by the council to establish the Town Deal Board and shape the priorities presented in this Town Investment Plan.

2.2 Engagement to date

2.2.1 Town Deal Board

Crawley Borough Council has led the creation of an extensive Town Deal Board comprising 56 individuals representing 38 local organisations, including nine leading community and voluntary sector organisations with extensive representative networks across the entire sector. It is chaired by a representative of the local business community who was previously the chair of Crawley's longstanding business stakeholder forum –the Crawley Local Economy Action Group, which has been in existence for 13 years.

The full list of participating Town Deal Board stakeholder business and community organisations and public bodies is presented in Appendix A to the Town Investment Plan.

The Town Deal Board was launched in January, then put on hold due to the Covid-19 public health crisis. The first meeting took place on 10 June and discussed the process for drawing up the Town Investment Plan document, the immediate impact of the Covid-19 crisis on Crawley's economy and the projected impacts, assessing various economic forecasts. The Town Deal Board also agreed at its first meeting the Terms of Reference for the Board. The meeting also agreed priority emergency response actions to assist Crawley businesses and local residents struggling due to the crisis.

The minutes, papers and agenda from the first meeting are publically available on the council's website via the following [link](#).

At its second meeting on 22 July 2020, the draft Town Investment Plan proposals were presented to the Town Deal Board, highlighting that the Investment Plan should be submitted under Cohort 1 by the end of July in view of the “burning economic platform” currently being experienced by Crawley’s economy. The presentation included the proposed programme of projects listed above and these proposals received the broad support of the Town Deal Board and a commitment from the Town Deal Board to provide feedback on the draft Town Investment Plan text prior to submission and support the further development of the draft Investment Plan ahead of its submission to the government at the end of July. This is demonstrated in the draft minutes, which can be found in Appendix E.

2.2.2 Executive Group

The council has also set up an Economic Recovery Taskforce and Town Deal Executive Group comprising the senior leaders of Crawley Borough Council, West Sussex County Council, Local Enterprise Partnership, Gatwick Airport, the local MP, Manor Royal BID, Gatwick Diamond Business and the Town Centre BID. This has met on three occasions with further meetings in September. The purpose of this Executive is to drive the borough’s emergency response to the Covid-19 crisis and the development of Crawley’s longer term Economic Recovery Plan, in the first instance focused on Crawley’s Town Investment Plan for the period 2021-2025 but also overseeing the development of a new Economic Development Strategy for Crawley 2021-2036.

2.2.3 Economic Recovery Taskforce

Crawley’s Town Deal Board also performs a parallel function and role as an Economic Recovery Taskforce, collectively working to steer the borough’s emergency response to mitigate the economic and employment impact of the Covid-19 crisis.

Following on from the first meeting of the Town Deal Board which agreed priorities for the emergency response to the crisis, the council has also designed further emergency response interventions with Department for Work and Pensions – two major new employment support interventions focused on:

- I) The development of a Young People Employment Hub, to provide intensive employment support, information advice and guidance and access to employability and skills development services to help Crawley young people being made redundant access alternative jobs.
- II) The design of a Gatwick Employment Support Programme, focused on providing early employment support interventions to assist those Crawley residents being made redundant in the aviation and associated industry and at the Gatwick Airport “campus” in the supply chain, helping them find alternative jobs or to redirect into alternative career pathways, before or as quickly as possible after they have been made redundant.

These two emergency interventions are due to go live in September.

As part of its emergency response to the crisis, the council has also distributed to over 800 businesses, government funded Covid-19 business grants to assist them to preserve their business activity in Crawley and to retain employees threatened with redundancy.

2.2.4 Private sector engagement

Crawley Borough Council has a longstanding Local Economy Action Group comprising 25 local business /business representative organisations. This Group provides oversight of the delivery of the Crawley Growth Programme and was consulted on ahead of the creation of the Town Deal Board.

The Local Economy Action Group has since joined with community representatives and representatives of other public stakeholders to form the Town Deal Board, retaining the 25 representatives mentioned above.

The community representatives participating in the Town Deal Board were engaged to take part with the support of the council's Community Development Team with whom they work in close partnership with voluntary and community organisations. Organisations involved in the Board include Crawley Community Youth Services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Crawley Town Community Foundation, St John's Church, Audio Active (serving disadvantaged young people) and Creative Crawley.

Private sector representation includes: Gatwick Airport; Manor Royal Business Improvement District, Town Centre Business Improvement District; the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership; Sussex Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Business, Crawley Chamber of Commerce, Barclays Bank, Natwest Bank, Metrobus, commercial agents: Graves Jenkins, Vail Williams and SHW; The Arora Group, DMH Stallard, Nestle.

The Local Economy Action Group has met four times a year for the last six years and the Town Deal Board emerging out of that has met once with a second meeting next week and another meeting in September.

The council has undertaken a survey of 160 local businesses in order to assess the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on day-to-day business activity to feed into both the emergency response proposals and to provide further needs evidence to underpin the Town Investment Plan.

The private sector will be hugely and actively involved in the implementation of the Town Investment Plan and the broader programme of regeneration delivery in Crawley and will commit significant resources to enable delivery.

The Manor Royal Business Improvement District generates over £500k in private revenues per year and will be investing resources as match funding into the Manor Royal Business Environment improvement scheme.

The Manor Royal Business Improvement District, with advice and support from Crawley Borough Council and West Sussex County Council, produced a Business Plan with which they consulted the entire Manor Royal business community.

Metrobus is investing millions of pounds in local bus fleet and infrastructure and will contribute to the town centre bus station accordingly. Thales is one of the lead partners in the Crawley Innovation Centre scheme and is committing resources to support the development and delivery of this scheme.

2.3 Findings from engagement

2.3.1 Urgent need for skills and employment support

A programme of employment and skills interventions is urgently needed in Crawley due to the structural weaknesses in the economy presented in **sections 1.3.3** and **1.3.4** above in regard to the skills and qualifications deficits experienced by the local Crawley workforce.

Crawley falls almost to the bottom in terms of social mobility rankings, with the State of the Nation report (2018) ranking Crawley 304 out of 324 local authorities for social mobility. The Crawley Employment and Skills Plan, originally launched in 2016 and then refreshed in summer 2019, states that this equates to £49 million worth of production lost through skills shortages.

It means that Crawley workers are unable to compete to secure some of the higher value better quality employment which exists within Crawley, despite the borough having the second highest jobs density in the country outside central London.

In response the Crawley Employment and Skills Plan, after two rounds of public consultation with the local community and local stakeholders (the first in 2016), was approved last year by the council. The Plan has the support of an array of local employment support and skills development providers and includes key priorities relevant to the Town Investment Plan skills infrastructure project priorities presented in this document, as follows:

- Create and promote new pathways for local residents into higher education and higher skills levels
- Upskill local residents so they can access better quality opportunities available within Crawley
- Improve the employability of young people by facilitating access to and awareness of key vocational skills, apprenticeships and work experience, bridging the gap between education and business.

2.3.2 The need for a new transport interchange in Crawley town centre

The development of a revitalised and transformed town centre bus station on Friary Way and high quality transport interchange is integral to the council's Town Centre Regeneration Programme, which was originally adopted as policy by Crawley Borough Council in December 2015 and then refreshed in late 2017/early 2018. This was also subject to two periods of public consultation to secure endorsement from the local community, town centre stakeholders, the Town Centre Partnership Board and the Local Economy Action Group in autumn 2015 and December 2017-January 2018. The Town Centre Regeneration Programme is successfully adopted as Council policy based on the outcomes of this consultation. The link to the latest edition can be found [here](#).

2.3.3 The need for greater digital infrastructure

The Manor Royal Business Improvement District (BID) Business Plan for 2018-23 staged a survey of 30 per cent of the 600 businesses in Manor Royal which reveals that faster broadband speeds is considered to be of highest importance to future business growth aspirations in Manor Royal, see link [here](#).

The TIP is duly responding to that top priority for Manor Royal's businesses determined by the above survey. City Fibre are investing £27 million of private funding into the roll out of gigabit full fibre broadband cable infrastructure across the borough and this investment will help enable the Manor Royal Gigabit Business Park and Town Centre Virtual Village initiatives ([see section 4.3.2](#)).

The Covid-19 crisis has reinforced the need for borough-wide access to gigabit speed infrastructure into the significant increase in home working that has taken place, much of which will continue in the future.

2.3.4 Need for improved public realm in Manor Royal

In addition the Manor Royal BID Business Plan 2018-2023, in consultation with businesses, advocates as one of its key objectives **(Objective 4)** to deliver “enhanced levels of public realm” to meet expectations for a “premier business location”.

This particular objective for improvement in Manor Royal was endorsed by Manor Royal businesses when the BID returned a successful “yes” vote for a new five-year term (2018-2023) by a margin of over 60 per cent in favour.

Crawley Borough Council has produced a Manor Royal Public Realm Strategy, in consultation with Manor Royal BID and the Manor Royal business community, which sets out a broader vision and range of interventions leading to upgrade.

2.3.5 The demand for enhanced cycling infrastructure

The development of a network of off-road and segregated cycle routes across Crawley is a key feature of Crawley’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which was approved by Crawley Borough Council’s Cabinet for consultation from July to September 2020. It was also drafted together with representatives from the local Cycle Forum and other local stakeholders. Here is a [link](#) to the Cabinet report.

The LCWIP cycle routes and the Crawley bus station schemes – part of the Town Investment Plan are in turn key priority interventions identified in the Crawley Transport Strategy – New Directions for Crawley (which can be found [here](#)) went out to public consultation for four weeks from 20 January to 17 February 2020 and was approved by Crawley Borough Council’s Cabinet.

2.3.6 The demand for action to reduce carbon emissions

In July 2019, Crawley Borough Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in public at a Full Council meeting in public and committed to taking action to reduce carbon emissions in the borough to net zero by 2050. The council then appointed a cross-party Scrutiny Committee endorsing the drive to reduce carbon emissions in transport, residential dwellings and commercial buildings.

The council’s District Heat Network scheme as part of the Town Hall development is one of the existing measures which will reduce carbon emissions in the town centre.

The Town Investment Plan includes several proposed project schemes linked to these Scrutiny Panel discussions, designed to drive down carbon emissions, following on from those public scrutiny meetings at which members of the public are invited to comment and contribute. These schemes comprise:

- A programme of “green” home retrofitting; II)
- i A programme of business infrastructure grants
- ii for green technology businesses;
- A programme of skills infrastructure to
- iii enable “green” construction skills training for Crawley’s workforce.

The council’s Climate Change Declaration (can be found [here](#)).

2.3.7 The need for a more substantial cultural programme offer in Crawley

The need for a more substantial cultural programme offer in Crawley is captured in the draft recommendations from the “Creative Crawley” report from autumn 2019, funded by Arts Council England which was drawn up by the council. The report is on the basis of findings from a six month consultation exercise undertaken in 2019 with the local community, stakeholders and the “Creative Crawley” working group comprising local community representatives and stakeholders.

The aim of the above consultation was to identify the top priorities for cultural development in Crawley. Over 1,000 local residents responded to the consultation expressing their views on what the priorities should be, followed up by a second phase of eight focus groups of 62 local community representatives. The recommendations for schemes arising from this report and this extensive consultation include the following, which link closely to schemes presented in this Town Investment Plan:

- The need to develop a “central Arts Hub” in Crawley
- An 18-month programme of cultural activity to grow Crawley’s cultural offer
- The need to develop a “digital platform” to showcase Crawley’s new cultural programme (see the “Virtual Village” scheme within this Town Investment Plan).

The Creative Crawley report describes how “Crawley is geographically well placed to attract the highest quality arts activity with Gatwick Airport as a gateway to the world and good public transport links to London and Brighton”. The report also states that: “Alongside investment in the development of individual local artists, there must be investment in buildings, networks, funding and infrastructure to enable local artists to make a viable living in Crawley and not have to move away”.

2.4 Future engagement with stakeholders through the Town Deal Board

The Crawley Town Deal Board is scheduled to meet every six weeks for the foreseeable future in order to oversee the ongoing process of preparing, discussing with government, finalising and then launching the Crawley Town Investment Plan and the Town Deal in co-operation with government. In this way the 56 participants and 38 local organisations represented will be able to continue to contribute and share ownership of the Investment Plan. Town Deal Board representatives will work in tandem with the council and when required join the council in engaging with government representatives to support the progression of the Town Investment Plan and Town Deal.

Through the Town Deal Board terms of reference, which the Board agreed at the first meeting, the Board’s stakeholder representatives are also committed to actively working with the council to engage a broader range of local businesses and community representatives as part of the process of preparing, promoting, highlighting and then implementing the Town Investment Plan, ensuring wider ownership, input and feedback in relation to the TIP.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan is to be written up during August for circulation and approval by the Town Deal Board and this will be submitted following that.

As regards the process of preparing business cases for individual projects following on from the finalisation of the Town Deal, Board representatives will work together actively to draw up the business cases in more detail and to engage with stakeholders more broadly to support the finalisation of the priorities, objectives scope, timeline, delivery schedule and costs associated with the projects. Many will be active in the delivery of the project schemes.

3 The Vision for Crawley – What will success look like in 30 years’ time?

3.1 The Vision

Crawley will be a modern, vibrant and healthy exemplar digital town with a transformed “green” economy underpinned by high quality local services, state-of-the-art amenities, a pioneering advanced engineering Business Park and Innovation Centre at Manor Royal alongside extensive sustainable homes, transport and green tech business.

Crawley will stand proud of its achievements and use its assets and strengths to realise its maximum potential for “SMART”, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Its strong and diverse communities and its consolidated and uniquely identifiable neighbourhoods with their significant “social capital” of community organisations, its well established and engaged communities and its excellent connections within and beyond the region will make Crawley a place that people enjoy and want to live, work and visit.

Crawley’s workforce will be highly competitive and empowered, imbued with the high level skills needs of the area’s thriving advanced engineering, digital and professional services business base and its burgeoning “green technology and construction” jobs base, creating a “virtuous circle” of high value employment investment and sustainable workforce growth.

Crawley’s skills training and employability development provision will be extremely well co-ordinated and structured, spearheaded by Crawley College, creating clear pathways for Crawley residents into high quality jobs in the borough. At the pinnacle of this structure will be an established university offer for Crawley and the Gatwick Diamond, specialising in the economic strengths of the area. It will contribute significantly to exemplary economic productivity levels through R&D, digital excellence and the provision of local workers with graduate level skills and expertise. It will drive high quality and substantial innovation output.

Crawley will benefit hugely from Manor Royal – a stunning digital Business Park with a highly productive green technology and advanced engineering business base, closely co-operating with Gatwick Airport, yielding genuine economic interdependence where the nature of airport growth is intertwined with the growth of the Business Park and wider sub-region.

Gatwick Airport will be transformed into an exemplar of green aviation, sustainable business growth and excellent digital inter-modal transport connectivity for people and freight.

Crawley will have a bold and vibrant community heart in the town centre, benefiting from a rich tapestry of digital infrastructure that inter-connects the town centre's high quality residential apartments, underpinned by an enriched cultural offer and a vibrant cultural quarter. This will yield exciting and refreshing state-of-the-art business space for micro-enterprises and a major professional services commercial quarter. Coupled with its highly regarded leisure and amenity assets, the town centre will operate very successfully as a "virtual business village", a natural location for Crawley's 21st century born workforce, for whom "hybrid" working as the "new norm" includes "home" working from the surrounding town centre amenity and communal work space as much as in the high quality apartments.

The town centre will have a flourishing evening economy and will attract significant footfall from other parts of the borough and further afield thanks to state-of-the-art sustainable transport, an array of cultural assets and flagship new events venues with a rich and vibrant cultural events programme, which celebrates and champions Crawley's rich ethnic diversity.

The town centre will accommodate a vibrant and active student population who will live in state-of-the-art accommodation and study and live alongside other residents in an optimum sustainability environment underpinned by the use of green and digital infrastructure. This will make the area's university offer highly attractive and competitive, boosting Crawley's burgeoning reputation for academic as well as economic excellence.

3.2 The Vision's objectives

The TIP responds to the ambitious 30 year "Vision for Crawley" and Crawley's track record of past success articulated above as well as the immediate acute adverse economic impact of Covid-19 by advocating the following cross-cutting strategic objectives around which the TIP's proposed delivery schemes are framed:

3.2.1 To achieve a dynamic, sustainable and digital economy in Crawley town centre, enabled by a 3,000 home neighbourhood, the growth of a rich cultural offer, a professional services hub and exemplary digital, green and sustainability infrastructure.

3.2.2 To enable a high value digital Business Park in Manor Royal, with a formidable reputation in advanced engineering innovation, advanced digital connectivity and green technologies, underpinned by a range of supporting amenities, state-of-the-art green infrastructure and enviable sustainable transport provision, achieving environmental excellence to drive the growth of Crawley and the Gatwick Diamond economy.

To enable Manor Royal to fulfil its potential as the south east's leading mixed-activity employment hub, providing modern business accommodation, a high-tech advanced manufacturing innovation centre, a range of supporting amenities, advanced digital connectivity, enviable sustainable transport provision and achieving environmental excellence to drive the growth of Crawley and the Gatwick Diamond economy.

3.2.3 To facilitate the green transformation of Crawley's economy as part of the national drive to realise zero net carbon emissions by 2050, maximising investment locally in green business, green homes, green technologies, green transport and infrastructure.

3.2.4 To unlock a thriving virtual and physical higher education offer and community in Crawley, alongside exciting skills training and infrastructure, which creates pathways for local residents into high value jobs, yielding R&D and digital excellence and a major boost to innovation output.

4 Town Investment Plan – priority schemes
The delivery of the Town Investment Plan is founded on the following priority schemes, identified through:

- i Crawley’s Town Centre Regeneration Programme policy, drawn up and recently refreshed in consultation with the community and stakeholders.
- ii Crawley’s Employment and Skills Plan and Programme, drawn up and recently refreshed in consultation with the community and with stakeholders.
- iii The Manor Royal Business Improvement District’s five-year Business Plan consulted on with Manor Royal businesses and mandated by the majority “Yes” vote by the Manor Royal business community to endorse a second five-year term (2018-2023) for the Manor Royal BID.
- iv The Town Centre Business Improvement objectives as presented in their five-year Business Plan 2020-2025.

The above local policy and delivery frameworks were drawn up through comprehensive engagement with the community, stakeholders and businesses as described in section 2 above on engagement.

These schemes are presented here under the three thematic priorities for the Towns Fund set by the government. Further information on these projects is provided in Appendix B and each comprises outcomes defined in accordance with the “Theory of Change” model.

4.1 Skills and enterprise:

4.1.1 Project 1A – “The Fusion Centre” – Crawley’s first Innovation Centre, based in Manor Royal specialising in advanced engineering and digital technologies – an amenity campus and SME workspace for Manor Royal.

The project will unlock prized, high-value jobs to boost the local economy and serve Crawley’s advanced engineering business cluster to help safeguard its huge contribution to the town’s economic output and productivity. This is critical in the context of the major crisis in the aviation industry caused by Covid-19 and the huge adverse knock-on effect on Crawley’s local economy.

The Centre’s innovation output will be characterised by the fusion of high technology expertise practised by digital micro-enterprises prevalent in the broader Coast to Capital sub-region and the cutting edge technological and product development aspirations of Manor Royal’s advanced engineering cluster of major businesses.

Once established this multi-disciplinary “FUSION” Centre will develop and enable spin off innovation and commercial partnerships between digital SMEs and advanced engineering enterprises to drive product development and high value business cluster growth, helping to catalyse the type of transformative economic restructuring so crucial to Crawley’s sustainable economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis.

The Centre will focus and specialise on designing, building, prototyping, testing and then bringing to market hybrid digital / electronic products and services, which will:

- i Boost the competitiveness of Crawley’s advanced engineering business presence, with a particular bespoke focus on specific local strengths: avionics, transportation technologies (including bus and rail) and bio-medical engineering and instrumentation.

- ii Retain and grow significantly local R&D and innovation capacity through the “on site” cluster growth of digital and advanced engineering micro-enterprises / small business serving the above sectors.
- iii Unlock job creation and higher value employment growth to enhance overall economic productivity and help reboot local economic growth.
- iv Stimulate highly valued pre-competitive R&D co-operation with university teams, attracting post-graduate / post-doctoral expertise to the Fusion Centre, boosting the volume of innovation output and establishing an initial university presence foothold for Crawley and the Gatwick Diamond.

4.1.2 **Project 1B** – An “Invest in Skills – Crawley” programme

This programme comprises the following four skills infrastructure interventions, explained in more detail in Appendix B:

- i **Launch new university level training provision** – Crawley’s workforce lags behind significantly in regard to the proportion with Level 4 qualifications and above compared to the south east and national averages, symptomatic of the absence of university level training provision in the area and the surrounding Gatwick Diamond sub-region. This project would see the establishment of a new higher education offer through capital spend investment in new facilities in Crawley with the potential for this to be brought forward in tandem with the Institute of Technology programme from the UK government.

- ii **Development of new F.E. Infrastructure:** Crawley College is investing £5m of LEP funding in the development of a new STEM Skills Training Centre due to be opened next summer, which will unlock new skills training pathways for local residents into technological and engineering vocations, including access to employment opportunities arising from the local advanced engineering business cluster in Manor Royal. The “Invest in Skills – Crawley” programme provides the opportunity to support the further modernisation of the College campus to help the College expand its training provision to help local residents find pathways into good quality jobs available in Crawley and to help local employers meet their skills needs. There is a particular need to unlock provision of professional services businesses and related qualifications, to help serve the needs of the town centres professional services cluster. This intervention will also play a key role in helping to sustain that professional services employment cluster in the town centre, which provides over 1,000 jobs and which experiences significant skills gaps, more of which could be filled by Crawley residents.

- iii **A Construction Skills “hub” venue**, offering local residents a dedicated location for site day release training to enable them to secure skills and qualifications to accompany their “on site” construction employment experience, maximising the ability for local people to access jobs arising from Crawley’s regeneration. This hub will directly engage with construction prime contractors and their SME sub-contractor supply base, resourcing the development of detailed arrangements for construction apprenticeships, work placements, traineeships and the recruitment of local residents into construction vocations available on site.

A number of construction sites are envisaged to be coming forward over the next three years and this scheme will ensure the maximum number of construction employment and apprenticeship opportunities for local residents are opened up. Forthcoming construction sites include the Station Gateway scheme in the heart of Crawley town centre, which will provide 304 new apartments and a brand new railway station.

- iv Greening Crawley's Economy I: A programme of "Green Construction"**
Crawley workforce skills training – design and delivery of Crawley skills infrastructure to equip Crawley workforce with the skills needed for sustainable homes construction. The development and provision of a programme of green construction skills, available to Crawley residents, particularly those being made redundant, is absolutely critical to the ability for the borough to develop a "green construction" business base within the borough and diversity into a green economy. This project will invest in the building infrastructure and skills training facilities that will enable the development of these green construction training programmes.

4.1.3 Project 1C – Greening Crawley's Economy

- ii A programme of "green" business infrastructure grants to attract "green" technology and construction businesses to take up premises in Manor Royal and help Crawley business adopt "sustainable energy" provision – creation of "Re-energise" Management Company in Manor Royal. The purpose of these business infrastructure grants would enable green technology small businesses to invest in new business premises or in new facilities and equipment in order to expand their commercial footprint and their jobs base within Crawley. The scheme would also provide "start-up" business grants and micro-enterprise grants to help support the growth and expansion of Crawley's green technology cluster.

- #### **4.1.4 Project 1D** – Design and enable a new "commercial eastern gateway" in Crawley town centre as a hub for professional services business. Crawley Borough Council is leading by example by investing in the construction of five floors of 78,000 square feet of Grade A commercial office space, as part of the Town Hall building, linked to the town centre District Heat Network.

The development of such modern high quality office stock is absolutely essential to consolidate the presence of professional services employers in Crawley town centre and to mitigate the threat of such employers leaving, which would have a real adverse impact on the town centre economy. As part of Crawley’s long term economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, there is an excellent opportunity not just to consolidate but to expand significantly the professional services hub in Crawley town centre. In order to achieve this, it is essential that further new Grade A commercial space is designed, unlocked and built out. The Local Plan identifies three opportunity sites at the “eastern gateway” of Crawley town centre for significant “mixed use” regeneration with the opportunities to yield new commercial space. One of those sites is the Town Hall, which is already being built out. This project will therefore involve feasibility and design work, which will deliver proposals for the build out of further phases of new commercial space, following on from the new Town Hall, creating a new commercial “eastern gateway”.

4.2 Transport connectivity:

4.2.1 Project 2A – A transformed town centre bus station and sustainable transport interchange in Crawley town centre. The design, development and delivery of a high quality 21st century bus station in the heart of the town centre as a centrepiece of Crawley’s shift to green transport and to the high quality town centre amenity offer.

This investment will involve co-financing Towns Fund investment with funds from the Crawley Growth Programme, the Arora Group and from Metrobus.

A programme of public realm upgrades and cycle / pedestrian connectivity improvements is already envisaged as part of the Crawley Growth Programme, including upgrades to bus station infrastructure. This Towns Fund investment offers the opportunity to deliver a higher quality design and delivery specification for the bus station, in order to provide the sustainable transport infrastructure necessary to unlock delivery of 3,000 high quality homes and a professional services hub in Crawley town centre, both key to the long term economic future of the town.

4.2.2 Project 2B – A programme of investment in priority arterial “active commuter” off-road and segregated cycle routes, providing safe, reliable, high quality cycle connectivity between Crawley neighbourhoods and key local employment destinations: Crawley town centre, Manor Royal and Gatwick Airport. These priority routes would be determined from the list of preferred routes identified by the borough’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan:

- a Gatwick to town centre via Manor Royal and Northgate
- b Forge Wood / Manor Royal to Three Bridges Station (Brighton mainline)
- c Pound Hill to town centre via Three Bridges Station
- d Maidenbower to Manor Royal via Three Bridges Station
- e Maidenbower to Three Bridges Station via Furnace Green
- f Crawley town centre to Tilgate Park
- g Crawley town centre to K2 Crawley
- h Pease Pottage to town centre via Tilgate.

4.3 Digital connectivity

4.3.1 Project 3A – Manor Royal “Gigabit” Business Park

£30m of investment from public and private funds (via City Fibre) is going into the roll out of gigabit full fibre infrastructure in the ground across Crawley borough, including in Manor Royal.

The purpose of the Towns Fund scheme will be to develop a programme of incentives for Manor Royal businesses to connect to the new full fibre and 5G infrastructure being installed. This will allow business tenants to have access to gigabit bandwidth speeds. This critical “last few hundred yards” intervention will make a massive difference in enabling the practical take up of this enhanced digital capability and therefore for the Manor Royal Business District to develop its branding as a “Manor Royal “Gigabit” Business Park to unlock commercial space development, investment and jobs growth.

4.3.2 Project 3B – Crawley town centre “Virtual Live-Work Village”

This will involve the roll out of a platform of digital applications to create the country’s first “Live-Work Village” as a key driver for Crawley town centre’s sustainable economic future. This could include 5G coverage for all retail and evening economy providers, with a particular emphasis on the independents. Applications could include Citizen Wi-Fi, a “virtual high street” to showcase digitally the high street’s evening economy offer and the digital data integration of: co-working spaces, coffee shops, apartments, retailers, high street evening economy pubs and restaurants, gyms, amenities, cultural venues, railway and bus stations. Data integration through a digital platform will enable residents of the new town centre neighbourhood from their

homes to access 24/7 real-time practical data information about services offered to them by the surrounding town centre amenity, for example:

- i Rail and bus arrival and departure times;
- ii High street evening economy offers and bookings / takeaways;
- iii Retail and gym services – real-time information on how busy they are, offers etc;
- iv Cultural venues – “What’s on”. It will also provide an opportunity for leisure, culture and retail businesses to showcase themselves to the residents of the new town centre neighbourhood.

4.4 Urban regeneration:

4.4.1 Project 4A – Designing and unlocking a new Cultural Quarter for Crawley town centre; Designing: The design of a new Cultural Quarter in the town centre, mapping out the prospective location of new cultural and events venues and producing associated site designs and an overall delivery plan, which also sets out how the town centre’s existing leisure, culture and evening economy provision will be enhanced and expanded.

4.4.2 Unlocking: The development and delivery of a “pop up” programme of cultural, arts and creative industry interventions to help pump prime the development of the cultural quarter, driven by stakeholders from the town centre cultural and leisure economy.

Project 4B – Transforming the business environment in Manor Royal via public realm upgrades – deliver a programme of business environment upgrades and modernisation:

- 1 Micro-Park upgrades and creating a network of walking trails; linking all the micro-parks to provide a significant boost to amenity in the Business District – part of the goal of creating a “Business Park”.

2 Public realm/business environment upgrades targeted in the immediate vicinity to bus waiting area “super hub” investments from the Crawley Growth Programme. To enhance the visual “look and feel” of the Business District – creating a 21st century high quality business park.

4.4.3 Project 4C – A programme of “green” home retrofitting to pump prime progress towards delivery of the sustainable homes needed to deliver net zero carbon by 2050. This will involve the design, establishment and delivery of a local grants programme, which will play a key role in the council’s drive to deliver zero net carbon emissions by 2050 and which will also stimulate business, economic activity and job creation in green construction.

The type of green retrofitting envisaged could include the following:

- Insulation, primarily roof/ceiling/attic and secondary walls and floor
- Retrofitting heating equipments in older houses, results in household savings of 30-80 per cent due to cuts in energy-use and a reduction of CO₂-outlets by 30-100 per cent [6]
- Choosing appliances with low energy consumption, including LED light bulbs
- Reducing water use by installing aerators and low flow shower heads
- Switching to green power for both energy and heating including solar energy via PVC installation and renewables in addition to heating-pellets, heat pumps and bio-gas.

4.5 Summary

The schemes presented in this Town Investment Plan and the associated investment will enable the Town Deal Board, led by the council, to make happen key interventions which address head on both the long term structural weaknesses experienced by Crawley and the existential threats to Crawley’s future sustainable economic prosperity. These threats are posed most immediately by the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated economic crisis but also by the longer term threats of global climate change.

At the same time these schemes reflect the superb opportunities presented by the current economic challenges to expand Crawley’s successful advanced engineering cluster in Manor Royal by and to “pump prime” Crawley’s economic restructure away from aviation into emerging high growth sectors which are critical not just to Crawley’s economic future but also the broader region:

- i Green technologies and construction;
- ii Digital services.
- The Town Investment Plan will also provide schemes which add significant value to the physical transformation of Crawley, reinforcing the quality of that regeneration by unlocking town centre footfall, economic activity and prosperity as an alternative to aviation and by empowering the local workforce to take advantage of those opportunities.

5.1 Plan and process for developing the business case, including accountable body

The Town Investment Plan is being drawn up in tandem with input from the 38 local organisation representatives of the Town Deal Board and they are actively contributing in order to develop co-ownership of the Investment Plan.

The Town Deal Board will continue to meet every six weeks to oversee progress and input and in the interim its representatives will actively contribute to the development of the Town Investment Plan.

The Town Deal Board will work closely with the council to engage in dialogue with government representatives, once the Town Investment Plan draft has been completed and submitted to government.

The composition of the Town Deal Board will be regularly reviewed and refreshed as appropriate to strengthen engagement and partnership working with business and community stakeholders.

As regards the process of preparing business cases for individual projects following on from the finalisation of the Town Deal, Board representatives will work together actively to draw up the business cases in more detail and to engage with stakeholders more broadly to support the finalisation of the priorities, objectives scope, timeline, delivery schedule and costs associated with the projects. Many will be active in the delivery of the project schemes. Specialist consultancy support will be brought in using capacity funding to help business case and project initiation.

Crawley Borough Council, as accountable body, is leading the development of the Town Investment Plan draft on a day-to-day basis through the Head of Economy and Planning and overseen by the Chief Executive of the authority, who will ultimately sign off the submission before it goes into government.

Once the Town Investment Plan document is discussed, revised and then agreed with government, the final version will be approved by Crawley Borough Council's Cabinet.

Crawley Borough Council Members will be regularly updated and briefed on progress with the development of the Town Investment Plan during the interim period ahead of consideration by the Borough Council's Cabinet in the autumn.

The council and the Town Deal Board will adopt the same approach to the process of drawing up the individual business cases for projects, identifying and nominating representatives for project working groups for each of the project schemes, who will take responsibility for the formulation of the full business cases in line with development timelines and deadlines and keeping the Town Deal Board regularly updated on progress.

Glossary

- ¹ ONS data – Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: local authorities by NUTS1 region
- ² As above.
- ³ ONS Business Demography data 2019
- ⁴ ONS Job density data
- ⁵ ONS Job density employment volume data for Crawley 2018
- ⁶ Centre for Cities report on Cities
- ⁷ Gatwick Airport Masterplan 2019
- ⁸ ONS – Local authority profile for Crawley – skills data 2019
- ⁹ Centre for Cities report
- ¹⁰ 2011 Census data
- ¹¹ Crawley Local Plan Regulation 19 draft document 2020-2035
- ¹² Anthesis Crawley carbon audit report – Autumn 2019
- ¹³ Manor Royal Transport Study 2017 (Manor Royal BID)
- ¹⁴ Data from Gatwick Airport Ltd

