

Crawley Economic Recovery Taskforce (CERT) Group and Town Deal Board

Wednesday, 16 December 2020

Confidential Working Draft

Meeting Notes

ITEM

ACTION

1. Welcome

Chris Maidment (CM) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received from:

- Ana Christie (Sussex Chamber of Commerce)
- Adam Godfrey (SHW)
- Tony Middleton (Coast to Capital)
- Bob Lanzer (WSCC)
- Neil Cooper (Town Centre BID)
- Dave Savage (CCYS)
- Louise Blackwell (Creative Crawley)

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Peter Smith as a Board member of the Manor Royal and Town Centre BIDs
- Peter Rainier as a Board member of the Town Centre BID

The minutes of the previous CERT & Town Deal Board ([16 September 2020](#)) were accepted.

2. Crawley's Economic Crisis – latest information / update

CM asked Henry Smith MP (HS) for an update on when we might expect to receive a response from Government with regard to the Crawley Town Investment Plan submission. HS reported that an announcement was originally expected a few weeks ago however this was withdrawn as a result of further work being required. The next announcement is expected 'imminently', although HS acknowledged that this may not be before the Christmas break.

Prospects for an Aviation Recovery Plan – HS reported that the Global Travel Taskforce has met and is moving forward with a number of recommendations including testing for passengers wishing to travel from 'non-corridor' destinations, a reduction in quarantine from 14 to 10 days and business rate relief grants of up to £8m for English airports. Recent news of the vaccine programme is also considered a game changer for the aviation industry. Latest projections suggest that the number of flights over the Christmas period is set to rise however there is a lot more work to do.

Employment Support Emergency Interventions (DWP) – Catherine Scott (CSc) reported the following:

- New job centre at Gatwick to open in early 2021 (specific provision identified)
- DWP working with Unite to develop community skills hub provision.
- Crawley Youth Hub opened in November – operating from the Town Hall in partnership with Crawley BC

- New job centre to open (Forest Gate) accommodating new job coaches, working with Crawley BC to target support for local residents and employers, linked specifically to the Town Fund investment plans.
- Self-employment support – DWP progressing funding bid for bespoke support, working in partnership with the LEP/Chamber.

Adam Joolia asked how long businesses have to apply to the Kickstart programme. CSc confirmed that the scheme runs until December 2021 so there is still plenty of time to access the initiative.

Headline information (CBC) – Clem Smith (CSm) presented the latest key figures for Crawley including:

- Local Universal Credit claimant count in November is 8.3% (compared to 2.7% in February), making Crawley the worst affected within the Coast to Capital LEP area and ranking 37th out of 380 local authorities in the UK.
- 20,000 Crawley residents on furlough.
- Gatwick Airport Ltd has shed 1,400 jobs since the pandemic began.
- Debenhams in County Mall set to close in March 2021.
- Youth unemployment is now at 13% (over 1,000 young people) compared to 9% GB average and 7.7% South East average.

Looking ahead, significant investment in infrastructure is planned for 2021 including:

- £10m through the Crawley Growth Programme – WSCC to lead delivery of the town centre Eastern Gateway scheme and Manor Royal Highway Improvement scheme.
- £23m investment in 'full fibre' infrastructure rollout already underway to provide residents and businesses with access to gigabit speed broadband.
- Station Gateway £70m regeneration scheme – reserved matters coming to CBC planning committee in the New Year. Arora Group is keen to be on site in 2021.
- Crawley's new Town Hall development to be built out, including 78,000 sq ft Grade A commercial space and a new district heat network.
- Crawley College new £5m STEM Centre to open Spring 2021.
- £12m bid by Chichester College Group for a new Institute of Technology on the Crawley campus
- £8.6m investment from 'Getting Building Fund' for Crawley Innovation Centre in Manor Royal – business case progressing.

Gatwick Airport - Alison Addy (AA) thanked HS for his support through the Future of Aviation Group, and provided an update on the situation at Gatwick.

Since the last CERT meeting, Gatwick Airport Ltd has concluded its organisational restructure, resulting in the loss of 1,400 employees (600 redundancies in October). The priority has always been to protect jobs and GAL has managed to retain around 1,900 employees; the furlough scheme has been critical to this.

November saw a significant impact from the ban on international travel, resulting in just 100,000 passengers travelling on c1,000 flights – this was 97% down on the previous year with many airlines suspending or reducing operations.

Looking ahead, there are signs of increasing demand over the Christmas

period with around 200 flights expected per day to both short and long haul destinations (Dubai, Geneva and Tenerife being the most popular).

The airport remains focused on building consumer confidence, supported by:

- Increase in the number of security lanes fitted with UV technology
- New government test and release scheme
- EasyJet operating 75+ flights per day with other airlines resuming operations

In summary, the situation remains extremely difficult however GAL are optimistic that operations will return in 2021.

AA reported that a testing facility at Gatwick had experienced some initial teething problems associated with its website however these have now been resolved and the system is operating well.

Wendy Fitton (WF) reported that the Hilton and Sofitel hotels at Gatwick Airport are also offering testing facilities.

Manor Royal BID – Steve Sawyer (SS) presented [an update on the Manor Royal BID](#), highlighting the following:

- Manor Royal BID will be going to renewal ballot in February 2023
- Feedback from a recent Manor Royal showcase event confirms satisfaction levels amongst business remain high (96%)
- Representing/promoting the area is important but also is investing in the area's appearance and facilities. Parking and transport remain a key priority for improvement – these provide important links to the Towns Fund and Crawley Growth Programme.
- Confidence is holding up but there is an underlying realism about the future (45% businesses expecting to grow in some form)
- Snapshot of property availability (based on rates data) shows the vacancy rate is rising, particularly in the office market.
- Micro-parks project is progressing – supporting the vision for Manor Royal where no business or employee will be more than a 5 minute walk to decent open space.

CSm asked what the comparison baseline figure for office availability was Manor Royal before the pandemic. SS to provide this information.

SS

Nick Burrell (NB) offered support from WSCC for the pipeline projects, through the Crawley Growth Deal. SS acknowledged the support from both CBC and WSCC and reaffirmed the importance of having a shared vision for Manor Royal.

COVID-19 Business Grants / Discretionary Business Grants update

Lynn Hainge (LH) reported that, in November 2020, Crawley BC received additional government funding for business support grants, comprising:

- £1,485,216 in Local Restrictions Support Grant
- £2,248,180 Additional Restrictions Discretionary Grant

As before, the funding is based on the local population and not the size of the economy, and is therefore some of the lowest grant funding in the UK.

The Council has so far awarded £341,542 to 383 businesses and is working through the remaining applications.

Further information about the business grants, including eligibility criteria

and how to apply can be found at [Business support grants | Crawley GOV](#)

3. The Town Investment Plan – update on latest state of play (CBC)

CSm presented a [reminder of the Town Investment Plan](#) proposals and associated priority projects.

We are still awaiting a formal government response and this is expected 'imminently'. Based on informal advice received, it is likely that the Board will be asked to agree draft Heads of Terms and an assessment of proposed projects within a very short timescale (3 weeks).

This will require an emergency meeting of the Town Deal Board to be convened at short notice (January 2021), followed by the Crawley BC formal decision process (February 2021).

The Board agreed the proposed approach to responding to the government, once the announcement is made.

In preparation for the government response, CSM requested the Town Deal Board consider a revised allocation of accelerator funding, to fast track two projects in the first quarter of 2021/22; specifically the Manor Royal Micro-Parks scheme (£565k) and the Town Centre District Heat Network (£435k).

Marie Ovenden expressed support in principle but is keen to understand the potential impact of the District Heat Network on other schemes coming forward in the town centre. MO to discuss with CSM.

MO/CSm

The Board agreed to endorse this change in allocation.

4. Proposed Approach to development of Business cases (CBC)

CSm referred to the [paper](#) that had been circulated prior to the meeting, setting out a proposed approach to the five year delivery plan (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026) comprising 11 priority projects within four project strands.

STRAND ONE	SKILLS AND ENTERPRISE
Project 1A	The Fusion Centre – Innovation Centre
Project 1B	An "Invest in Skills for Crawley" Programme
Project 1C	Green Business Infrastructure Grants
Project 1D	Design of a Commercial "Eastern Gateway"
STRAND TWO	TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY
Project 2A	A Transformed Town Centre Bus Station
Project 2B	Arterial Commuter Cycle Route Investment
STRAND THREE	DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY
Project 3A	Manor Royal "Gigabit" Business Park
Project 3B	Crawley Town Centre "Virtual Live-Work Village"
STRAND FOUR	URBAN REGENERATION
Project 4A	Design Town Centre Cultural Quarter / Pop up Cultural / Arts Programme
Project 4B	Manor Royal Business Environment Improvement Programme
Project 4C	"Green Homes" Retrofitting Programme

It is proposed that four sub-groups are established, each aligned to the one of the Crawley Town Investment Plan's strategic objectives. Each sub-group will identify and agree reps to lead and participate in dedicated 'Task and Finish' groups to draw up the individual business cases, as follows:

1. **Manor Royal Investment Sub-Group**
 3A – Manor Royal “Gigabit” Business Park;
 4B – Manor Royal Business Environment Improvements;
2. **Town Centre Investment Sub-Group**
 1D – Design of a Commercial “Eastern Gateway”
 2A – A Transformed Town Centre Bus Station
 3B – Crawley Town Centre Virtual “Live-Work” Village
 4A – Design Town Centre Cultural Quarter / “Pop Up” Arts / Cultural Programme
3. **Green transformation Sub-Group**
 1C – Green Business Infrastructure Grants
 2B – Commuter Cycle Route Investment: Town Centre – Manor Royal – Gatwick
 4C- “Green Homes” Retrofitting Programme
4. **Invest in Skills for Crawley Sub-Group**
 1B – An “Invest in Skills for Crawley” Programme – I) University level training; II) New F.E. Infrastructure; III) Construction Skills Hub; IV) Green construction skills

Crawley BC is in the process of recruiting a Towns Fund Programme Manager and Towns Fund Programme Officer, using Towns Fund pump-priming monies. These roles will provide technical assistance to the subgroups and task and finish groups to enable development of individual business cases.

The Board agreed the approach to business case development and the scope and composition of the sub-groups.

NPB suggested that feedback from each group should form standing agenda items at Town Deal Board meetings so everyone is kept up to date and the Board can provide strategic oversight.

Through the in-meeting chat, the following volunteers were identified:

- Patrick Warner – keen to support work of both Town Centre and Green Transformation groups
- Shelagh Legrave – happy to continue to chair the Skills group
- Marie Ovenden – WSCC happy to field reps on all groups
- Suzanne Holloway – happy to support Town Centre and Manor Royal groups
- Peter Rainier – happy to support Town Centre and Manor Royal groups (particularly 1D, 2A, 3B, 4A and 4B)
- Steve Sawyer – on Green Transformation we are well placed to feed in through ReEnergise Manor Royal group. Also have a Transport Group.
- Adam Joolia – happy to sit on Town Centre Infrastructure group, with specific interest in cultural quarter offer and pop-ups.
- Steve Sawyer – Creative Crawley are well placed for 4A
- Vicki Illingworth – happy to support Town Centre in relation to cultural space/pop up arts
- Jeff Alexander – particularly interested in Fusion Centre area
- Jeremy Taylor – happy to support Manor Royal or Town Centre group
- Jim Bolt – happy to support Town Centre of Green Transformation group

CM encouraged Board members to respond after the meeting (email CERT.townddeal@ Crawley.gov.uk) and responses will be reviewed at the next meeting in January.

ALL

5. Any Other Business

Economic Impact Assessment – CSM reported that consultants are working on a draft document and this will be presented to the CERT/Town Deal Board in early 2021. It will be important to align this to the Town Investment Plan.

Crawley Local Plan 2030 – a report is going to full Council this evening, seeking approval to go out to consultation (Regulation 19) from 6th January 2021 for six weeks. The plan will support the local economic recovery over the long term.

CM thanked CSM and the team for all their efforts in bringing this work together and endeavouring to secure significant funding for Crawley.

- 6. Date of the next meeting** – the next meeting of the CERT & Town Deal Board will likely take place in January, to consider the draft Heads of Terms for the Town Deal. A date will be confirmed as soon as we have received a response from government