

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

Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Meeting Notes

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>1. Welcome, apologies and minutes of the previous meeting</b> Chris Maidment (CM) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received from Henry Smith MP, Councillor Michael Jones, Paul Mcconalogue, Tony Middleton, Neil Cooper, Steve Burston, Sue Carey, Paul Scrivens, Peter Rainier, and Louise Blackwell.</p> <p>CM also welcomed Carolin Martlew to the meeting and introduced her as the new Head of Corporate Finance at Crawley Borough Council, replacing Karen Hayes. As the new Section 151 officer for the accountable body, Carolin will be responsible for overseeing the financial governance of the Towns Fund.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting (<a href="#">14<sup>th</sup> December 2022</a>) were accepted.</p>	
<p><b>2. Economic Headlines</b></p> <p><b>Gatwick Airport</b> – Richard Lennard (RL) presented an <a href="#">economic update</a> from the airport including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additional security staff and new food and beverage outlets are helping to boost business performance – reported passenger volumes of over 30m in 2022.</li><li>• Now offering 168 short haul/domestic destinations and 47 long haul routes including Norse, Badr, Emirates and Air India. Delta returning from April 2023.</li><li>• Key focus on the local economy and potential for an Airport Economic Zone (AEZ). Second Economic Summit being planned for Autumn 2023.</li></ul> <p>Clem Smith (CS) asked for more information about the AEZ. RL confirmed that, following the inaugural economic summit in 2022, further conversations with stakeholders are to be had over the coming months and these will inform the concept development of an AEZ.</p> <p><b>Manor Royal BID</b> – Steve Sawyer (SS) presented an update from Manor Royal including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Very pleased to confirm that businesses in Manor Royal voted 'Yes' to renew the BID for a third term to 2028.</li><li>• 88% voted 'Yes' by number, 93% by rateable value, with a 33% turnout.</li><li>• Result provides a clear mandate to deliver the BID Business Plan, including a number of projects within the Towns Fund and Crawley Growth Programme.</li><li>• The recent <a href="#">Project for Public Spaces</a> looked at what makes a successful place citing access, linkages, comfort, image, activities and sociability as key and the BID will apply this framework to its projects pack.</li><li>• Microparks – 7 projects delivered and another 4 in development including Woolborough Lane Linear Park and The Terrace upgrade</li><li>• Today sees the launch of Re-Energise Manor Royal: a new local energy community working on behalf of businesses to attract investment into Manor Royal and deliver new clean energy projects.</li><li>• SS expressed frustration that the project is progressing 'at risk', pending the release of funding from the accountable body following governance procedures and completion of a legal agreement.</li></ul> <p>CM congratulated SS and the Manor Royal BD team on its third term renewal and welcomed the exciting projects being taken forward, recognizing that the opportunities present challenges to be worked through.</p>	

<p><b>Town Centre BID</b> – Wendy Bell (WB) congratulated the Manor Royal BID on its renewal and presented an update from the Town Centre BID including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latest footfall tracking showed that between July 2022 and January 2023, Crawley town centre attracted 8.72m visitors (compared to 7m in Horsham).</li> <li>• Data also shows that people are travelling from Croydon and postcode areas RH14/BN5.</li> <li>• 50-70% visitors fall into the A, B, C1 demographic classifications i.e. higher, intermediate and supervisory managerial, administrative or professional.</li> <li>• This shows the town is attracting more people with higher incomes which translates into increasing spend in Crawley.</li> <li>• Recent BID events included a pancake race and International Women’s Day event – details of future events will be announced in due course.</li> </ul> <p>Adam Godfrey (AG) asked if the footfall figures can be shared with commercial agents and County Mall as the information may assist in bringing new retail/A3 interest to the town. WB agreed to share the data.</p>	<p>WB</p>
<p><b>3. Update from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing &amp; Communities (DLUHC)</b> - Emma Smith (ES) reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prime Minister has published his five priorities which include a focus on halving inflation and growing the economy.</li> <li>• Department for Business, Energy &amp; Industry (BEIS) has been divided into 3 new departments creating Departments for Science, Innovation &amp; Technology, Energy Security &amp; Net Zero and Business &amp; Trade. ES to share organigram.</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Partnerships – funding for 2023/24 confirmed but waiting to understand future for LEPs.</li> <li>• Crawley is considered a ‘good model’ for Towns Fund/Shared Prosperity Fund in terms of establishing positive working relationships and being joined up.</li> <li>• Autumn statement referred to Economic Zones/Clusters – ES will update the Town Deal Board on this when more is known.</li> <li>• ES in conversation with Surrey County Council about devolution deals - part of DLUHC’s role is helping partners unlock barriers to growth through policy development, incentives and initiatives and ES would encourage Town Deal Board members to think about wider, cross boundary connections and what more ES can do to help.</li> </ul> <p>CM commented that there may be good examples for the transition of the Town Deal Board from project development to implementation and delivery from other towns.</p> <p>SS sought reassurance from ES that the Towns Fund is ‘safe’ – ES confirmed it is absolutely safe and the Towns Fund programme is held in high regard by ministers so we should keep doing what we’re doing.</p> <p>Alan Moore (AM) asked if the social housing decarbonisation fund for phase 2 is ‘safe’. AM to send ES an email who will look into this.</p>	<p>ES</p> <p>AM</p>
<p><b>4. Crawley College update / Invest in Skills Project</b> - Vikki Illingworth (VI) offered her congratulations to SS and the Manor Royal BID on their renewal. Key updates from the college include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refreshed apprenticeship offer in response to feedback, LSIP deep dive activities and labour market analysis</li> <li>• Strategic Development Fund has enabled launch of CODES (Centre of Digital Excellence) in Crawley – focus on software development</li> <li>• Working on revised curriculum strategy and Crawley College Strategic Plan, aligned to campus masterplan</li> <li>• Digital &amp; Business skills development underway – awaiting sign off</li> <li>• Institute of Technology – main contractor appointed, value engineering underway, planning application expected in April</li> <li>• Sales Manager appointed, website under development, curriculum planning in progress, main challenge will be recruiting specialist teachers</li> </ul>	

- VI referred to SS's previous point and reiterated the need for certainty around the funding.

CM thanked VI for an excellent presentation and welcomed the range of activities being delivered by the college.

ES reported that she has no concerns about the Invest in Skills project and will chase colleagues for confirmation of the business case.

## 5. Towns Fund project updates

**Green Business Infrastructure Pillar 1 – Green Business Grants** – Nigel Tidy (NT) referred to the soft launch of the [Green-Tech Business Grants](#) last month and reported that a number of expressions of interest have been received. The deadline for round 1 applications is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

A tender has been published to appoint Business Grant Consultants, with a deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> April in the hope of appointing by the end of May to support future rounds of grant applications.

**Green Business Infrastructure Pillar 2 - Local Energy Community (LEC)** – SS reported that the LEC is launching today and has already received huge interest from Manor Royal businesses. The LEC will support companies to install green energy on rooftops and achieve energy efficiencies which will be re-invested back into the community, which means the Towns Fund investment goes even further. Biggest issue and risk to the project is the excessive time taken to receive the money to deliver the project, as a result of procurement and legal processes. SS thanked NT for all his efforts in trying to make the process easier.

AG asked if there had been any research into landlords' views on having rooftop assets and how this might affect lease terms. SS explained that by working with companies such as Elekta, we will have a template lease in place to understand how the model works.

Natalie Brahma-Pearl acknowledged that the Towns Fund, as with many government grant funds, is full of red tape and many layers of governance. As the accountable body, Crawley BC is doing all it can do streamline the governance requirements and we share stakeholder's frustrations, but we have to go through these procedures in order to draw down the funding.

**Town Centre Cultural Quarter** – Liz Hart (LH) highlighted the following:

- £450,000 project comprising £250k capital funding to deliver four site feasibility studies and 2 x site delivery plans and £200k revenue funding to deliver a pop-up cultural programme.
- The Cultural Quarter Steering Group has undertaken a lot of activity since 2022 including the appointment of a creative producer (Paul Ackerley) to deliver the pop-up programme. Paul is working on a programme of activity and marketing strategy and will report back to the Steering Group in April with his ideas.
- Range of creative activities taking place this month including an art exhibition and immersive theatre piece taking place at the Ancient Priors Building in the High Street. More information can be found by visiting [Crawley Cultural Quarter pop-up programme begins](#).

Daran Bennett expressed strong support for the Cultural Quarter Programme and emphasized the great opportunity that Crawley has through this and the numerous creative activities being delivered by Creative Crawley, Creative Playground and many others and at the heart of it has to be a decent, quality Arts Cultural Quarter that is intrinsically part of a much wider, strategic cultural offer for and from the town.

**Crawley Green Homes Retrofitting** – Alan Moore (AM) provided an update on the [Council's Green Homes Retrofitting](#) programme including:

- 102 surveys undertaken, 22 blocks and 132 flats now complete; costs being monitored and programme is currently under budget.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main risks around losing contractors and increasing costs so aim is to complete as many properties as possible, as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Slides highlight the impact of installation on thermal retention – an independent survey has been commissioned to evaluate the programme and benefits.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications Plan</b> – NT referred to the Communication Plan that was presented to the Board in April 2022. The plan has been updated and communications published as projects move forward. NT to circulate latest Communications Plan to the Board. Recent examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Seven Towns Fund projects approved</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Planning permission for Innovation Centre approved</a></li> </ul> <p>The biggest message is getting word out to the wider public about all the exciting projects being delivered, what grants are available and how the Towns Fund programme is making a difference locally. NT urged all members of the Town Deal Board to help spread the word especially where there is integration with other projects and initiatives.</p> <p>ES responded to the queries about burdens and bureaucracy, acknowledging that DLUHC needs to ensure that places are paid as quickly as possible. ES invited Board members to send any feedback directly to her including details of specific issues and how they might be resolved. DLUHC is looking at streamlining all grant programmes.</p>	<p>NT</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p><b>6. Towns Fund – update on business cases to be submitted</b></p> <p><b>Manor Royal Gigabit</b> – NT reminded the Board that at the last meeting, it had endorsed the business case for submission to DLUHC. Since then, the business case has been through the Corporate Projects Assurance Group (CPAG) and Manor Royal BID Management Group, both having given their approval to proceed. Subject to final checks and sign off by the Council’s chief executive and S151 officer, the business case will be submitted to DLUHC before the end of the month.</p> <p><b>Cycle Route</b> – NT reminded the Board that CS had presented an overview at the last meeting and this had been endorsed for submission to DLUHC. The business case will be considered by the Green Transformation Sub-Group and CPAG later this month and, subject to their approval, will be submitted to DLUHC by the end of the month.</p>	
<p><b>6. Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>Three Bridges Station Improvement Scheme</b> – Councillor Atif Nawaz (AN) was pleased to report that plans to transform the Three Bridges Station were approved by the Council’s Planning Committee last night. AN thanked colleagues at WSCC for their support in bringing the scheme forward.</p> <p><b>Sussex Chamber of Commerce</b> – Ana Christie (AC) thanked SS and CS for agreeing to attend next week’s Construction Forum to talk about Crawley’s regeneration programmes and how they are helping to support the local economy. AC referred to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), confirming that the final report will be submitted in May. This will inform future funding for education providers in order to meet local skills and business needs. Key successes have already been realized with the development of Centres of Digital Excellence (e-newsletters to follow) and the West Sussex Digital Futures programme.</p> <p><b>Internal Audit</b> – NT reported that a recent internal audit of the Towns Fund had concluded general assurance that the Programme is being managed well and the necessary governance arrangements are in place and being followed. One issue was raised about the need for good risk registers; NT will follow this up with project boards and steering groups. NT expressed thanks to all involved in the audit.</p> <p><b>Date of the next meeting – June 2023 – date tbc.</b></p>	<p>LH</p>

