

Town Deal Board

Wednesday, 7th June 2023

Meeting Notes

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1. Welcome, apologies and minutes of the previous meeting Chris Maidment (CM) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received from Alison Addy, Richard Lennard, Mel Munro, John O'Mahony, Suzanne Holloway, Andrew Green, Emma Smith, Sue Carey, Sally Brown, Peter Rainier, Paul McConalogue, Nick Burrell, Kathryn Ripley, Jonathan Rowe, Simon Cuckow, Neil Cooper and Ana Christie.</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting (8th March 2023) were accepted with the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Footfall figures – latest reports can be found on the Town Centre BID website• Emma Smith (ES) to share organigram for new government departments with the Board.	ES
<p>2. Economic Headlines</p> <p>Manor Royal BID – Steve Sawyer (SS) presented an update from Manor Royal including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st June saw the tenth anniversary of the Manor Royal BID. SS reflected that in 2013, satisfaction levels amongst MR businesses were 13% whilst in a recent survey, that figure has risen to 83%.• Lots of activity and investment in the area including sites at Park House, Nexus, Woolborough Lane, Linac House, Crompton Way and Astral Towers. Innovation Centre will help to address shortage of amenity facilities in Manor Royal.• Extend of recent changes in Manor Royal suggests potential to update the MR Masterplan (2010) and Economic Impact Study (2017)• Varian (Oncology House) is being offered for sale and, whilst Varian are staying within Crawley, the loss of its manufacturing element is regrettable.• Water neutrality continues to present major issues for developers – SS interested to know what happens to the efficiency savings being made and how we can use them in Crawley.• 'Open' BID Management Meetings – if anyone would like to attend a future meeting, please let SS know.• SS expressed frustration that it is not proving easy to spend the Towns Fund monies and, speaking in regard to the Local Energy Community (LEC) project, stated that references to the March 2026 delivery and spend deadline are unhelpful if there is a loss of momentum in the here and now. Important to build effective partnerships and pipelines now for the project to avoid losing credibility. SS is under pressure to deliver within the current Re-Energise Manor Royal project spend profiles but this is increasingly difficult to do since he does not yet have a contract providing formal confirmation of the funds.• Seeking new Manor Royal 'Move It' Project manager – job advert closes 27th June.• Projects successfully delivered at five microparks, Gateway 1 and the chevrons.• New project to be announced, supported by funding from Sussex Police, for new security cameras to be installed.• Eastern bus lane is progressing well, through the Crawley Growth Programme.• Manor Royal superhub – challenge with a UKPN cable has been overcome, with thanks to Dipo Lafinhan at WSCC for his support.• Local Energy Community (LEC) – currently on hold and at risk while we wait for governance and funding approval following approval of the new UK Subsidy Control assessment.	

Clem Smith (CS) welcomed the positive news in SS's presentation and reiterated the Council's commitment to working with the BID to deliver a sustainable future for Manor Royal.

With regard to water savings, CS reported that five commercial development schemes have successfully navigated the water neutrality process through planning. CS believes there is a gap in the market for a private organisation to act as a broker to link private developers that have surplus water to other developers in need of savings.

With regard to the Re-Energise Manor Royal LEC project, CS reported that the legal process is in the final stages with one issue remaining around the new processes required by the new UK subsidy control regulations that came into force in January 2023. These brand new rules introduce a set of new controls coming from the UK government which need to be processed to ensure that public funding investments do not lead to unfair competition. The new rules are still going through legal interpretation generally as there are no legal precedents for them. As the accountable body for the Towns Fund, Crawley BC must undertake these new processes set out by government using the new UK subsidy control regulations. This is essential in order to seek to minimize the risk of the LEC being challenged and then being considered to be causing unfair competition in the electricity market. Without the necessary legal safeguards in place, such a finding could mean Crawley BC having to pay back the money on the basis that the funding has led to an unfair, financial/competitive advantage for the LEC. Important moreover to note that electricity production has been identified as a 'sensitive sector' in regard to UK subsidy control. CS reiterated that Crawley BC wants to see the LEC succeed as it will deliver a significant de-carbonisation of commercial stock in Crawley and he expressed hope that we can resolve these issues very soon so the project can proceed to the next stage.

CS also referred to work being undertaken by MR BID, Crawley BC and WSCC to find a design solution, that meets Active Travel England requirements, for the cycle route width at the Woolborough Lane linear park.

CS noted that the Towns Fund funding agreement for the Micro Parks scheme (Manor Royal Business Environment Improvement Scheme) has already been signed, with CBC unlocking up to £1.5million for the Manor Royal BID to invest in the microparks business environment improvement programme across Manor Royal.

SS agreed that everyone wants to see the money spent sooner rather than later but the key issue remains around time delays - the sooner a solution can be found, the better for all parties. CM stated that he has asked Crawley BC to reach out to other Towns Fund local authority areas to ask if there are any examples of best practice which might be helpful to Crawley.

Town Centre BID – Wendy Bell (WB) presented an update from the Town Centre BID including:

- The town centre continues to perform well with higher footfall than in neighbouring towns and retail centres.
- Dwell times have also increased, demonstrating that people are spending more time in the town centre.
- A mid-term survey has been issued to all businesses within the BID area – WB urged town centre businesses to complete and return the survey asap.
- TC BID is working with Crawley BC and Sussex Police to install new CCTV cameras in Memorial Gardens.
- Forthcoming events include Make Music Day (21st June), Professional Services 3rd Wednesday Club (launching 22nd June), Crawlfornia from 1st July to 30th September and Creepy Crawley returning in October. All details can be found at www.crawleytowncentrebid.co.uk/events

Crawley Economic Headlines – Lynn Hainge (LH) presented a [summary](#) of the latest economic indicators for Crawley including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crawley’s Gross Value Added (GVA) fell from £6.050m in 2019 to ££4.78m in 2021, largely as a result of the impact on Gatwick and the aviation sector – important to note this was when unemployment peaked at nearly 9%. It is now down to just under 4% so we expect to see a similar rebound in economic output when the next figures for 2022 are released. • Universal credit claimant count has more than halved since March 2021 to 3.9% in April 2023 however this still remains the highest in West Sussex but in line with the average national figures. • Employment rate is 80% - in the top 8% of local authority areas in the UK • Self-employment rates in Crawley rose from 2.7% in 2021 to 5.4 in 2022 • 90,000 jobs in Crawley = 5th highest job density outside central London. <p><i>Henry Smith left the meeting</i></p>	
<p>3. Towns Fund Project Updates</p> <p>Invest in Skills Project - Vikki Illingworth (VI) thanked CS and NT for working with Emma Smith at DLUHC to secure funding approval for the project, which is now moving forward at pace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction skills hub and green village – Dean Wynter (vice-principal) recently met officers from Crawley BC to demonstrate some of the systems going into the green village. Construction to start soon. • Institute of Technology (IoT) – planning application submitted and awaiting determination. Delayed start to construction however the project is in train and moving forward. Marketing for space in the IoT is underway. • Further education and new curriculum – now the project has been signed off by DLUHC, orders have been placed for equipment relating to virtual and augmented reality provision with a view to launching new curriculum in 2024. • Marketing and Communications Plan being developed in partnership with Crawley BC to make the wider community aware of what is to come. • Huge amount of work being undertaken behind the scenes which is exciting. VI will present a further update at the next meeting. <p>Commercial Eastern Gateway – Dipo Lafinhan (DL) presented a proposal to align the Commercial Eastern Gateway project with plans to redevelop the County Buildings site as part of the One Public Estate (OPE) Partnership programme. WSCC are looking to deliver Grade A commercial space and residential accommodation on the County Buildings site, complementing schemes being progressed at Crawley College, Telford Place and the new town hall. DL sought approval from the Board to allocate £100,000 (Commercial Eastern Gateway project) to be combined with WSCC/OPE funds to enable delivery of a feasibility study and commercial viability and development appraisal for the County Buildings site as part of the wider Commercial Eastern Gateway concept for this part of the town centre. A steering group will be established to oversee the project.</p> <p>NT to share the briefing paper with the Town Deal Board and seek approval via email.</p> <p>Green Business Infrastructure Pillar 1 – Green Business Grants – Nigel Tidy (NT) confirmed that the first round of grant applications attracted a number of expressions of interest and the panel have agreed to take 2 applications forward, in the hope of making an award shortly.</p> <p>NT reminded the Board that we had gone out to tender for business support consultants to assist future applicants, carry out eligibility checks and help promote the scheme. This attracted an excellent response from very strong candidates and a preferred supplier has been identified. Once the contract has been signed, further information will be published.</p>	<p>VI</p> <p>NT/ALL</p>
<p>4. Towns Fund six monthly monitoring report (October 2022 – March 2023)</p> <p>NT presented a programme update including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of project approvals, funding allocation and expenditure, forecast and future milestones, outputs, outcomes and risks 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The latest six-monthly monitoring report had been circulated to all Board Members prior the meeting for review/comment, covering the period October 22 – March 23 <p>The Board endorsed submission of the latest monitoring report to DLUHC by 9th June, based on the information shared today.</p> <p>CM echoed thanks to everyone who has got the various Towns Fund projects to this point and paid particular thanks to NT as programme manager. CM acknowledged there are some frustrations with issues not progressing as quickly as we would like however we are doing all we can to get things delivered on the ground.</p> <p>SS thanked NT for his presentation and would be interested in understanding what the plan is, should the gigabt project not proceed. NT confirmed that the business case is currently with DLUHC and they have asked for a breakdown of benefit cost ratio calculations, which we are working on.</p> <p>Louise Blackwell (LB) requested an opportunity at a future Board meeting to present the fantastic work being undertaken through the town centre cultural quarter project. LB also requested adding more details to the Communications plan from the same project. NT to follow up with LB.</p>	<p>NT</p> <p>NT/LB</p>
<p>6. Any Other Business</p> <p>Local Plan Consultation – CS reminded the Board that the Crawley Local Plan 2024-2040 is now out to Regulation 19 consultation. The Plan is due to be submitted to the planning inspectorate before the end of July, followed by examination. CS encouraged members of the Board to respond to the consultation by 20th June by visiting Local Plan Review consultation Crawley GOV.</p> <p>Date of the next meeting – 19th July 2023.</p>	<p>ALL</p>