

Crawley's Economic Plan (2011-2016)



Crawley's Economic Plan (2011-16)

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a. Our vision

“To encourage sustainable local economic growth and employment with a focus on enhancing the potential of our principal business centres – Gatwick Airport, Manor Royal and the town centre. We will seek out opportunities for drawing new elements into our economy to broaden the contribution to and potential for Crawley's future prosperity. These actions will be supported by efforts to raise aspirations and skills of local people and nurture an enterprise culture.”

This vision – taken from the council's Corporate Plan “Creating a successful Crawley” – provides the overarching framework for the council's economic development role. It recognises the potential of the town's core strengths and assets and the potential to develop our human capital in support of a resilient community and enviable economy.

The economic plan provides the detail of what the council will do to deliver its stated vision.

b. Our role and purpose

Crawley Borough Council has adopted a pro-business, pro-activity and pro-jobs approach that recognises that human and social factors of people and communities matter.

It is concerned with doing the best for the town and its residents by enabling the town to prosper and for local people to benefit from and contribute to that prosperity. Ensuring residents have access to a successful economy that provides quality employment and career options forms the basis for the council's role in economic development.

There are, however, limits to the council's involvement in economic development. Its purpose is not to subsidise or interfere in normal business operations but to help to create the right environment and conditions for business to thrive and create jobs, wealth and prosperity. It does this through the proper and effective use of its powers, services and influence consistent with wider financial, natural and other considerations. It undertakes this role in order to enhance the reputation and appeal of the town for business and the life chances of local people.

c. Our pledge

The pledge consists of a series of short, high-level statements that articulate the over-arching guiding principles for how the council operates in pursuit of its economic plan. It describes what people and businesses can expect when dealing with the council on economic and business matters.

- 1. WE WILL** Build on the core strengths of Crawley's economy including existing business and sector strengths, commercial centres and Gatwick Airport. *This means... encouraging the contribution from those people, places and businesses that are already here to generate future jobs, growth and prosperity.*
- 2. WE WILL** Support new development and investment (commercial and residential) that contributes to the advancement of our local economy provided it does not represent an *unacceptable* threat to the quality of life of our residents, environment or existing employment areas. *This means... prioritising the stated plans and future aspirations of existing commercial centres while maintaining a positive approach to new development that respects the essential character and valued assets of the town.*
- 3. WE WILL** Work to promote the attractiveness and appeal of the town and its employment areas. *This means... working cooperatively with business partners, commercial agents and other stakeholders to address areas of poor appearance, deliver improvements and promote the town.*
- 4. WE WILL** Manage our commercial assets in a way that is consistent with commercial market forces and apply our powers in a way that encourages good business practice and not interfere with business development except where wider economic, social or environmental considerations warrant it. *This means... making decisions that minimise the burden on the local taxpayer, which includes being financially prudent in the management of commercial assets and fulfilling our regulatory function in a proportionate way to encourage efficient, fair and responsible business practice.*
- 5. WE WILL** Support the efforts of businesses to trade in an environmentally-friendly way and encourage the development of socially and environmentally responsible businesses. *This means... encouraging programmes and services that benefit business, build capacity in the community and reduce the town's carbon footprint – where easitCRAWLEY, the Green Business Programme and Business Community Partnership are examples.*
- 6. WE WILL** Promote the development of local networks and the use of local suppliers. *This means... the nature of Crawley's diverse business base offers opportunities to develop inter-trading and internal supply chains. Where it is practical and lawful to do so the council will support this through its procurement practice, facilitated networking, events and programmes (like Meet the Buyers) and by encouraging developers to work with the council to promote benefits and opportunities to local people and businesses.*
- 7. WE WILL** Work to create opportunities for local people to make choices about what *they* consider to be in their best interest balancing the immediate needs of our diverse community and businesses while enabling the town to adapt to accommodate an increasingly more skilful and knowledge-driven economy. *This means... creating an environment where business can access a talented labour pool and for local people to feel they can acquire the skills, start the business or apply for the jobs on offer in Crawley and supporting plans for higher education, enterprise support and encouraging a variety of skilled and higher value knowledge-driven employment opportunities to be based in the town.*
- 8. WE WILL** Engage positively and regularly with the business community and economic partnerships to develop supportive policy and resolve problems where we can, including those related to labour, housing supply and transport. *This means... being open to suggestions for how to work better in support of business and maintaining positive relationships at the local and sub-regional level for the benefit of Crawley's economy where the council working by itself cannot achieve the desired outcome.*

d. Our priorities and actions

These are the areas where the council will look to have a role and be active.

1. Maximise the performance of the town's existing core commercial areas

(a) Revitalise the town centre (Pledges 1, 2 and 3 relate)

- i. Demonstrate active leadership to stimulate investment, including direct intervention to accelerate delivery where appropriate and necessary
- ii. Produce a clear statement on a revised Town Centre North scheme and communicate progress
- iii. Prioritise and help to deliver other town centre opportunity sites
- iv. Provide support for events and activities (community, leisure and commercial), including encouraging active uses in empty units and being responsive to the changing role of modern town centres.

(b) Enhance Manor Royal Business District (Pledges 1, 2 and 3 relate)

- i. Establish a representative Business Group, with the support of a Manor Royal Coordinator
- ii. Establish a development management approach based on key site prioritisation in line with the masterplan, including design and development principle statements to guide development
- iii. Produce an Improvement Plan costed, prioritised and financed by and through the Business Group
- iv. Appraise the feasibility of introducing enabling options (e.g. simplified planning arrangements, incentives and promotion options).

(c) Support the development of a sustainable Gatwick (Pledges 1 and 2 relate)

- i. Engage with Gatwick Airport to deliver joint economic and community development projects
- ii. Support plans to increase passenger throughput in current configuration, ensuring environmental safeguards are in place and economic opportunities are maximised, including being an advocate for route development and diversification where we can
- iii. Work with others to encourage wider infrastructure improvements and investment generated by and because of the airport
- iv. Respond to changes to aviation policy, national planning policy, aerodrome and land safeguarding or related strategic plans as they affect the operation of the airport.

2. Encourage new business and local supply chain opportunities (Pledges 1, 2 and 6 relate)

- i. Define the council's role in inward investment and promotion, including the approach to working with others and the feasibility of using local incentives to encourage investment and development
- ii. Work to generate increased local benefits from development, including the option of establishing a Developer Charter and encouraging local supplier engagement, workshops and networks on the back of new development and investment
- iii. Contribute to the development and delivery of the "Meet the Buyers" event and programme
- iv. Advertise £50,000+ supplier opportunities on a "supplier portal" and consider the potential for advertising lower value contracts and encouraging private companies to do the same.

3. Contribute to the development of skilled and enterprising people and businesses (Pledges 2, 6 and 7)

- i. Work with educational and training providers and local partners, including Central Sussex College, to help raise aspirations and promote the full range of career options to local people
- ii. Help to establish higher education provision in the area and promote links to local business
- iii. Test options for locally devised and delivered business and enterprise support, mentoring and skills transfer between new and established businesses and entrepreneurs – to include activities promoted through the Business Community Partnership, Education Business Partnership and other agencies designed in support of improving the capacity and skills of the local community and businesses
- iv. Consider the opportunities for providing additional space (land or premises) to support innovation, science and knowledge-based activities linked to higher education either in or near Crawley.

4. Support housing supply and sustainable transport improvements (Pledges 5, 7 and 8)

- i. Identify land and assess other housing supply options to help meet local need and economic aspirations in planning documents, Locally Generated Housing Needs Assessments (LGNs), Local Investment Plans and other relevant strategic plans
- ii. Work with neighbouring authorities in pursuit of 4i
- iii. Work through the Gatwick Diamond and the Coast-to-Capital LEP to highlight transport capacity issues in strategic plans and lobby for transport improvements
- iv. Support the delivery of innovative approaches to reducing single-occupancy car journeys and congestion reduction initiatives including work through easitCRAWLEY, the introduction of electric vehicles and evaluation of park and ride.

5. Develop an economy noted for its environmental excellence (Pledge 5)

- i. Ensure Carbon Reduction Strategy and targets are in place and early delivery options identified
- ii. Explore the commercial benefits and appetite among businesses for various energy solutions including solar, district heating network, joint purchasing of services from a green energy supplier and promote feasible projects to business
- iii. Assess the revenue generating and cost saving potential from Feed in Tariffs (FITs), including the potential for establishing a Community Interest Company (CIC) as a model for managing profits and reinvesting in ongoing and future improvements
- iv. Support business through the Green Business Programme and assess the potential for further council involvement in establishing a low carbon economy
- v. Determine the employment potential of developing a low carbon economy.

e. Our performance

Our performance will be managed through a series of objectives linked to actions underpinning each of our priorities as set out in the companion document “Measuring Prosperity”.

With due regard for issues of confidentiality, it is the intention of the council to regularly report on progress to: (a) provide clarity internally and externally to partners, stakeholders, businesses and residents; (b) demonstrate commitment to supporting the development of the local economy and (c) make the council more accountable.

In order to achieve this, individual directors of the council will have responsibility for key areas of the plan and the council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) will review progress through dedicated time at specified meetings. Member level responsibility will be provided by the Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development.

The Crawley Local Economy Action Group (LEAG) will have a defined role as a working public-private sector partnership in supporting the council to deliver its plan, as set out in its agreed terms of reference. The LEAG will do this principally by providing an external scrutiny-type function. Progress reports will be presented at LEAG meetings to assist the LEAG in this scrutiny function.

Reports and minutes of LEAG meetings will be made publicly available on the business pages of the Crawley Borough Council website at www.crawley.gov.uk/business

The Economic Plan, its contents and performance framework will be reviewed annually – and revised where necessary – as part of the council's Corporate Plan review.

Crawley's Economic Plan (2011-2016)

"Measuring prosperity"

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- c. Measuring local action

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a. Background to economic measurement

The "Prosperity" theme of the council's Corporate Plan "Creating a successful future for Crawley" describes a series of high level economic aspirations for the town. The Economic Plan provides the detail about what action the council will take in order to deliver on its stated aspirations.

When managing and measuring progress it can be difficult to quantify the impact certain actions undertaken by any individual partner or agency have on a headline economic indicator. Measuring performance at a local and organisational level is dependent upon a clear understanding and statement about what that organisation will do and a commitment to work with other agencies as appropriate.

In some areas Crawley Borough Council, while recognising the need for improvement, will not be the primary provider of the required services. In these instances the council's role is as a supportive partner, encouraging others to act in the best interest of the town, its businesses and residents. The council will adopt a more active delivery role where it is practical, prudent and necessary to do so.

This note on managing performance should be read in conjunction with the Economic Plan and sets out how the performance of the local economy will be measured generally and, more specifically, how the activities of the council will be measured.

The use of arbitrary targets and indicators has been deliberately avoided. Instead Section C describes a series of actions the council will expect to deliver by the end of the plan period, subject to annual review to ensure the council remains flexible and responsive to change. A lead officer has been assigned to each action and will be responsible for reporting on progress. This will help local businesses, residents and partners assess progress against the Economic Plan through regular and publicly available updates.

b. Measuring the performance of the local economy

Listed here are typical measures of local economic prosperity. The unique contribution of local actions to changes in these indicators is difficult to quantify. However, it is positive improvement in these areas that local actions are designed to affect.

- Volume of commercial property vacancy (number and percentage of vacant properties / assessment of rateable value of commercial vacancy) – NNDR records
- Number of commercial planning applications (by type but not advert consents) – planning data
- New investment and development transactions – planning and ad hoc data e.g. from agents and property deal data
- Economic activity / inactivity rates – ONS data
- Number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (resident-based) – ONS data
- Enterprise and business stock (taking account of business births and deaths) – ONS data
- Qualifications profile (resident-based) – ONS data
- Workplace and resident earnings profile – ONS data
- Reduction in the carbon footprint, particularly in relation to commercial activity and business.

c. Measuring local action against the plan (what the council expects to achieve by the end of the plan period)	<i>Responsible officer (*)</i>
2. Maximise the performance of the town's existing core commercial areas	
(c) Revitalise the town centre (Pledges 1, 2 and 3 relate)	
<i>Formal negotiations for a revised Town Centre North scheme have been progressed</i>	Resources
<i>Development of key sites have been actively encouraged and related planning applications determined</i>	Resources
<i>The commitment of landowners and other partners to an improved Crawley Station and surrounding area has been gained</i>	Resources
The approach to encouraging breadth of town centre uses and activity is defined (including monitoring of empty units)	Environment and Housing
(d) Enhance Manor Royal Business District (Pledges 1, 2 and 3 relate)	
<i>The Manor Royal Improvement Business Plan (via the business group) has been produced and there is evidence of progress</i>	Environment and Housing
The Planning framework (including the production of design and development principle statements) is in place	Environment and Housing
The feasibility of local incentive options have been undertaken (and implemented where appropriate)	Environment and Housing
The activities of the Business Group is formalised and made sustainable (via support to Business Group)	Environment and Housing
(c) Support the development of a sustainable Gatwick (Pledges 1 and 2 relate)	
Opportunities for joint work have been explored, developed and are in place	Chief Executive
There is evidence of support for plans to increase passenger throughput in current configuration	Environment and Housing
The council has responded to key strategic plans and documents	Environment and Housing
2. Encourage new business and local supply chain opportunities (Pledges 1, 2 and 6 relate)	
Developer Charter, contract clauses or equivalent, are in place to encourage local benefits from development	Chief Executive
Local supply chain development events have been supported and delivered	Resources
Opportunities for local firms to supply to the council have been promoted	Resources
The role of the council in encouraging inward investment has been defined	Chief Executive
3. Contribute to the development of skilled and enterprising people and businesses (Pledges 2, 6 and 7)	
Support for skills, employment and enterprise promotion activities have been provided, including the promotion of a more prominent higher education presence and participation	Chief Executive/ Resources
The council has reviewed and made clear its approach to providing business support	Chief Executive
Opportunities and merits of providing additional land / premises to support innovation linked to higher education assessed	Environment and Housing
4. Support housing supply and sustainable transport improvements (Pledges 5, 7 and 8)	
An assessment of housing need has been undertaken (locally and in partnership across the Gatwick Diamond)	Environment and Housing
Land is identified in planning documents to help meet housing need linked to economic growth	Environment and Housing

There is evidence of a proactive approach to providing housing (including site development and consideration of other practical and deliverable housing solutions)	Environment and Housing
The council can demonstrate efforts it has taken to promote sustainable forms of transport and reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys	Community Services
5. Develop an economy noted for its environmental excellence (Pledge 5)	
The Carbon Reduction Strategy is in place and key objectives pursued and delivered	Community Services
There are increased numbers of businesses engaged in the Green Business Programme and easitCRAWLEY	Community Services
Green energy and joint procurement of recycling and other related services have been promoted to Manor Royal businesses	Community Services

() In each case the responsible officer is the most appropriate director of the council*

Appendix 1:

How progress might be challenged

Listed below are the questions that might reasonably be asked about progress against the plan.

1. Maximise the performance of the town's existing core commercial areas

(a) Revitalise the town centre

- What is the progress on a revised Town Centre North scheme (TCN)?
- What are the priority sites for development (other than TCN)?
- How is the council demonstrating active leadership to encourage and facilitate investment?
- How is the council encouraging different types of town centre uses, activities and events?

(b) Enhance Manor Royal Business District

- Has the Business Plan for Manor Royal been produced? What are the priorities for action?
- Has the approach to land use planning been agreed?
- What local incentives are being considered and made available?
- What is the progress towards sustaining the activities of the Business Group?

(c) Support the development of a sustainable Gatwick

- What are the opportunities for joint work and how have they been taken forward?
- In what ways has the council supported the development of Gatwick? If it hasn't been able to, why not?
- How has the council responded to strategic plans affecting the airport and its operation, including government aviation policy?

2. Encourage new business and local supply chain opportunities

- How is the council working to encourage inward investment?
- How is the council encouraging local benefits from development?
- How is the council promoting contract opportunities to local suppliers, including raising awareness of lower value contracts?
- Is there evidence that contracts are being placed locally and with smaller firms?

3. Contribute to the development of skilled and enterprising people and businesses

- Has the council assessed the requirements and merits of providing land and premises in or near Crawley to provide adequate provision to support innovative, science and knowledge-based activities?
- How is the council supporting skills, employment and enterprise promotion?
- What are the prospects for higher education provision locally?
- How is business support provided locally and what is the role of the council in this?
- What progress and impact is the Business Community Partnership making?

4. Support housing supply and sustainable transport improvements

- Has land for residential development been identified, either in or near Crawley, and have the needs of the economy been factored in?
- Are sites for housing being delivered, either in or near Crawley, or likely to be?
- What other housing supply solutions are being considered and can they be taken forward?
- What joint working or discrete initiatives is the council involved with to improve transport and congestion?

5. Develop an economy noted for its environmental excellence

- Is the Carbon Strategy in place? What are the benefits to business and how will they be promoted?

- How many businesses are engaged in the Green Business Programme?
- How are businesses benefiting from improved sustainable businesses practice on Manor Royal?