

Councillors Written Questions and the Responses

Full Council – 16 December 2020

(Questions in *italics and Answers in RED*)

1. Questions to Councillor Jhans (Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability) from Councillor Jaggard

Following the motion 'Parking and Safety outside our Schools' that was passed at the July 2019 Full Council meeting, where it was agreed that the Civil Enforcement Officers' current pattern of patrols be adapted to ensure patrols outside of our primary schools during the drop-off and pick-up times, please state for the Autumn Term so far covering the months of September, October and November 2020:

- 1. which Crawley's schools have been patrolled at drop-off and pick-up times?*
- 2. the dates of these patrols?*
- 3. how many Civil Enforcement penalties were issued?*

Due to COVID-19 most schools, particularly primary schools, have introduced staggered start and finish times to aid social distancing and therefore this has altered our approach of enforcement. As a result, the number of carers outside a school collecting/ dropping off children at the same time varies as does the demand for space to park.

I can confirm that all schools across the Borough have been the subject of enforcement and monitoring patrols. The Schools within the controlled zones are visited as part of a targeted action plan at least weekly, In relation to schools outside of the controlled parking zone, these have been visited at least fortnightly.

In relation to the numbers of Penalty Charge Notices, prior to lockdown one in March 2020, 12 Notices were issued. Since lockdown, 3 Notices have been issued. Our experience has shown that the visible presence of Uniform Civil Enforcement Officers acts as a powerful deterrent and staff continue to focus on education and advice.

2. Questions to Councillor Lamb (Leader of the Council) from Councillor Crow

On the 17th of November, the Council issued a press release encouraging local businesses who qualified to apply for the Business Support Grant for the second period of national Covid-19 restrictions that lasted four weeks from 5th November to 2nd December. This press release read as follows:

Eligible businesses can now apply for the latest round of business grants but Crawley Borough Council says the funding is not nearly enough.

Despite Crawley being responsible for 25 per cent of the economic output in West Sussex, it has been given some of the lowest grant funding in the county.

The government has given the council £3,733,396 made up of:

- *£1,485,216 in Local Restrictions Support Grant to distribute to businesses that pay business rates and have had to close during the second lockdown*
- *£2,248,180 in Additional Restrictions Grant, which is given to businesses that don't pay business rates and have been affected by the lockdown but not legally required to close.*

Out of seven local authorities in West Sussex, only one received less than Crawley's combined grants figure. Five councils received more.

The Additional Restrictions Grant is based on £20 per person in Crawley rather than the number of businesses in the town. This means that Arun District Council, for example, has received £3,215,160 due to a larger population but smaller economy.

And only one council in West Sussex received less than Crawley across both rounds of grant funding in April and November. Crawley received a total of £17,167,646. The highest – Chichester District Council – received £43,739,396.

In the first round of grants earlier this year only 23 per cent of Crawley businesses received financial help from the government.

Councillor Peter Lamb, Leader of the Council, said: "The pot of grant funding provided by the government is very limited and does not recognise the number of businesses we have in Crawley.

"The way the grant settlement is calculated – on population and not on the size of the economy – means we have to turn most businesses away, while other councils have millions to spare. This is causing major hardship at a time when Crawley is already the hardest-hit economy in the UK."

Businesses that have had to close during the second lockdown can apply for a Local Restrictions Support Grant by visiting <https://grantapproval.co.uk>

For more information visit www.crawley.gov.uk/emergency/coronavirus-information/businesses-and-employers/business-support-grants

1. With applications closing on 13th December and noting that the press release states “but Crawley Borough Council says the funding is not nearly enough” and the Leader’s quote saying “The pot of grant funding by the government is very limited”, how much of the £3.73 million available from the government has been allocated for payment so far by the Council?

Across West Sussex the closing date for Discretionary (Additional Restrictions) grants was 13th December. All authorities are undersubscribed and will be reopening the scheme. Funding levels are given below –

Local Authority	Additional Restrictions £20 per Head of population	Local Restrictions Support (Closed Addendum)	Total	Original business rates bills 2020/21 before retail reliefs
	£	£	£	£m
Adur	1,286,020	786,276	2,072,296	19.7
Arun	3,215,160	2,583,864	5,799,024	36.5
Chichester	2,422,580	2,955,816	5,378,396	49.6
Crawley	2,248,180	1,485,216	3,733,396	129.9
Horsham	2,875,820	2,040,498	4,916,318	46.7
Mid Sussex	3,020,440	2,211,552	5,231,992	49.3
Worthing	2,211,400	2,157,642	4,369,042	31.9
TOTAL	17,279,600	14,220,864	31,500,464	363.6

As at 14th December 2020, £269,706 of Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed Addendum) has been paid. The amount of grants paid will increase during the week commencing 14th December 2020 as Additional Restrictions (discretionary) grants are paid, including payments for taxi drivers who have applied. The £3,733,396 is to fund businesses up until 31st March 2022.

There are several types of grants announced by the Government. These are –

Grant Scheme name	Status	Description	Priority Sectors	Business Rates Payers Only?	Grant Value
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed Addendum)	Currently open	Businesses mandated to close during the 2 nd National Lockdown	All Sectors	Yes	One off payment Rateable value up to £15,000 = £1,334 RV £15,000 to £51,000 = £2,000 RV over £51,000 £3,000
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open)	Currently open	Businesses financially impacted due to Tier 2 restrictions For the two weeks from 2 December 2020	Leisure, Hospitality, Hotels, Bed & Breakfast	Yes	Rateable value up to £15,000 = £467 RV £15,000 to £51,000 = £700 RV over £51,000 £1,050
Wet-Led Pubs Grant	Closes: 29 December 2020	Any wet-let pub with less than 50% income from food	Hospitality	Yes	One-off grant £1,000 For Christmas period
Additional Restrictions Grant	Closed 13 th Dec – will be reopening	Businesses financially impacted due to the pandemic	All Sectors	No	Taxi drivers £250 Market stall holders £500 Rateable value or running costs up to £15,000 = £1,334 RV or running costs £15,000 to £51,000 = £2,000 RV or running costs over £51,000 £3,000

Feedback from businesses is that they find it difficult to understand which scheme(s) they are eligible for and/or that for the sums involved and the risk of not receiving anything, it's not worth the time spent applying. Staff within Corporate Finance and Economic Development have been seconded onto the management of claims, which is taking considerable time.

2. *Noting that the Leader's quote also states "means we have to turn most businesses away", to date how many Crawley businesses have been turned away due to there being inadequate funding available?*

The table below shows the grants paid across West Sussex for the first lockdown.

Local Authority	Retail & Hospitality	Discretionary	Total
	£	£	£
Adur	11,020,000	555,000	11,575,000
Arun	31,785,000	1,538,500	33,323,500
Chichester	36,585,000	1,776,000	38,361,000
Crawley	12,795,000	639,250	13,434,250
Horsham	28,160,000	1,317,500	29,477,500
Mid Sussex	26,400,000	1,463,500	27,863,500
Worthing	19,215,000	972,500	20,187,500
TOTAL	165,960,000	8,262,250	174,222,250

We had an allocation of £639,250 for discretionary grants. We received applications to the value of £1.2m so were able to pay 50% of them by value.

We received 170 applications and made payments to 68 businesses through the discretionary scheme.