

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 8 March 2021

Report to Cabinet 10 March 2021

“One Town” - Draft Crawley Economic Recovery Plan

Report of the Head of Economy and Planning, *PES/385*

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report requests Cabinet approval for the draft Crawley Economic Recovery Plan (Appendix A) to go out to public consultation for a period of six weeks.
- 1.2 The draft Recovery Plan presents a Vision for Crawley’s future socio-economic prosperity in 2050 alongside a strategic framework and a set of flagship scheme interventions to be drawn up for delivery towards the achievement of that Vision.
- 1.3 Following the public consultation period, a final draft of the Economic Recovery Plan will return to Cabinet for review and consideration as to its adoption as policy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission considers the report and decides what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

- 2.2 To the Cabinet:

The Cabinet is recommended to approve the draft Crawley Economic Recovery Plan (Appendix A) to go out to public consultation for a period of six weeks.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet approval is sought to go out to public consultation in order to seek feedback and input to help develop the draft Plan and to secure broad support for the proposals.

4. Background

- 4.1 The draft Economic Recovery Plan will provide an overarching strategic framework for Crawley’s future socio-economic prosperity, under which will sit Crawley’s existing programmes of economic regeneration and infrastructure delivery:
 - Town Centre Regeneration Programme
 - Crawley Growth Programme
 - Crawley Town Investment Plan (subject to agreement with the government)
 - Crawley Employment and Skills Programme.
- 4.2 The draft Plan also presents proposed priority flagship scheme interventions to help drive Crawley’s economic recovery and boost job creation and business investment.

5. Description of Issue to be resolved

- 5.1 Crawley's economy has been very badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Gatwick Airport has seen a huge reduction in passenger numbers from an average of almost 4 million passengers per month (2019) to eight hundred and fifty thousand (2020). Airlines are running a fraction of flight services pre-pandemic. The retail, hospitality and leisure sectors have been forced to close during the periods of lockdown and restrictions and many other businesses have been adversely affected, as elsewhere in the country. The cumulative impact of the above has been major redundancies and 25,800 Crawley residents furloughed.
- 5.2 The unemployment claimant count has trebled to 8.3% in Crawley since the start of the pandemic, with over 6,000 unemployed local residents claiming universal credit. Crawley is now in the worst 10% of areas in the country for unemployment. Youth unemployment has reached almost 13%.
- 5.3 The Council is spearheading efforts to boost Crawley's economy and generate new business investment and jobs by continuing to pro-actively lead and facilitate the development of major programmes of new infrastructure, amenity, residential development and economic regeneration. The combined value of this public and private investment in the Town is set to reach over £400 million, thanks to close working between the Council, local partners, residents and the private sector.
- 5.4 Partners include stakeholders on the Crawley Economic Recovery Taskforce and Town Deal Board, the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership, West Sussex County Council, Crawley College, local businesses and private developers.
- 5.5 The draft Economic Recovery Plan also provides a clear pathway for the development of further regeneration schemes to help boost recovery. This will help to unlock further private sector investment in Crawley alongside additional public funding so that the Town is even better placed to achieve the sustainable economic recovery needed to bring about the benefits to Crawley's residents envisaged in the Plan's Vision.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 The Council must have regard to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The public sector equality duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:
- a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under that Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and,
 - c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it, which involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:-
 - (i) tackle prejudice; and,
 - (ii) promote understanding.
- 7.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out as part of the process of drawing up the final draft of the Economic Recovery Plan and the outcome of that Assessment will be presented to Cabinet.

8. Background Papers

None