

Full Council

24 March 2021

NOTICE OF MOTION – CRAWLEY’S PEOPLES FUTURE

*Mover Councillor Sudan
and Seconder Councillor Fiveash*

Crawley’s economy has been hit hard throughout the pandemic, largely (but not wholly) due to the hit taken by Aviation and related businesses. This council has done all it can to support the Town’s economy in securing a thriving future – perhaps, for better or worse, less reliant on aviation.

Difficult decisions have had to be made and the need to focus on Crawley’s economic recovery is justified. Difficult decisions will no doubt need to be made in the future and it is right that the focus has been on economic recovery because the well-being of Crawley’s residents depends on it.

But this works both ways. The work of the Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel showed that there is a gap in the standard of living between those who live in Crawley and those who live outside the Town and come here to work. Even before the pandemic, Crawley was a very expensive place to live because of high housing costs relative to income. It has long been recognised that there are many ways in which Crawley is not a healthy place to live. The work of that committee also highlighted that the poorer you are, the less likely you are to be able to be economically upwardly mobile and the more reliant you will be on the safety net that is provided by public services – services that are being cut.

The Towns’ Fund is about ‘levelling up’. Levelling up really means greater equality – narrowing the gap between the better and worse off. There is no dispute that Crawley has been severely affected by the pandemic and we know that the highest cost, both socially and financially, will be borne by the ordinary people of our Town. It is not enough to support business. For our people to thrive, we must keep the safety net intact by preserving, for now and for the future, the public services that the council provides.

Just as the well-being of the people of our town depends on its economic well-being, our Town’s economy needs Crawley people. Difficult decisions have been taken and will need to be taken in the future. Budgets are about prioritising, and this council resolves to ensure that the needs of Crawley people – those of us who live here and whose council tax has paid, and will continue to pay, the bills – remain paramount at every stage and at every level. We recognise that, in our efforts to make Crawley a nice, attractive place to work and do business, there is a danger of widening the divide between those who live here and those who come here to work.

In order to avoid this, this council resolves to ensure that, whatever the future holds, whatever we get – or don't get – from the Towns' fund or anywhere else, the interests of Crawley people will be paramount. We resolve to do this by building on the knowledge and understanding that individual members have of our Town, and through proactively seeking, at every stage and at every level, the views of Trades Unions and community organisations of all kinds.