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1. INTRODUCTION

All Local Authorities have a statutory obligation to consult on their Forward Plan – which includes their vision for the future development in the borough. It can be difficult to engage with members of the public and some other stakeholders on a plan which looks so far into the future and which deals with policy, rather than being very specific.

In previous years, the response back, in terms of people engaging in the process, has been disappointingly low. This time around, the Council wanted to take a more pro-active approach, in the hopes of engaging with residents and stakeholders early in the process.

2. AIM OF THE CONSULTATION

To get an early indication of issues of importance to those living and working in Crawley, in terms of Crawley's future development up to 2029

To afford those living and working in the Borough, the opportunity to get involved early in the forward planning process

To try to take a more innovative approach to strategic thinking which would really flush out perceptions and aspirations, to make for a more meaningful outcome with which people could identify

To share with stakeholders and residents some of the dilemmas facing the Council at the current time and into the future

For the Council to understand the priorities of those living and working in Crawley

For the Council to effectively use this qualitative information when planning Crawley's future up to 2029

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. An officer project team was set up, which reported to the Council's Local Development Framework (Officer and Member) Working Group.

6 themes had been identified; with a feedback questionnaire per theme.
People could complete however many topics interested them; either online or paper copies

Opportunities for other Stakeholders – local organisations, businesses, groups, 6 local secondary schools; to make their views known

Via workshops

Through receipt of letters, emails

Local Economic Action Group

Discussion at Conservation Area Advisory Committees

Online West Sussex County Council e-panel

513 Crawley residents on the WSCC panel alerted to the 2029 project and invited to comment online

Harder to reach communities

Via targeted workshops – to follow, which will include

Crawley Young Persons Council (and further work with secondary schools)

Travellers Community

The value in the qualitative approach would be in the engagement process itself and in the quality of responses received; rather than the *numbers* of respondents.

4. THE EXTENT OF THE ENGAGEMENT

4.1. There was much awareness raising in the weeks leading up to the drop in events. This was achieved through the local press, through associated events in the lead in time and the Council's web site:

Crawley Local Economic Action Group: each of the 18 members were given an information pack on 2029

Members Seminar: 15 members attended and received information packs

Crawley & Three Bridges Railway stations: officers distributed approximately 550 Crawley 2029 flyers

State of the Borough Debate 24 Jan: 120 attendees; 120 flyers distributed

Local Secondary schools: letters sent to 6 inviting them to take part

Extensive information on CBC website

The following statistics show how much interest was shown on the information available on line through the Council's website; with 1499 hits on the main page. The Vision and Housing themes attracted most interest, as evidenced through the questionnaires responses subsequently received back.

Page

User sessions to date

4.2. Officers actively engaged with local communities:

Community Workshop 26 Jan: Invites sent to local interest groups on the Community Development and Planning consultation databases. 14 members of the public, each representing different community groups attended. They were given information about 2029 and encouraged to take this back to the groups/organisations they represented. Their own views on 2029 were also sought at the workshop

Targeted workshops with hard to reach groups – this work is to follow

The Travellers community will be accessed via the housing needs assessment work; and Crawley's Young Persons Council and the 6 secondary schools will also be followed up at a later date to seek their views.

All neighbourhoods via drop in events: an exhibition, staffed by project officers, was taken to each neighbourhood centre/parade during February. Here it is estimated that officers spoke to approx 164 individuals. 588 flyers & 225 paper questionnaires were also distributed, where sometimes members of the public did not want or have time to talk to officers, but they nevertheless took information away to refer to later. The exhibition comprised information on each of the six themes, including a map of the Borough and some of the dilemmas surrounding each topic.

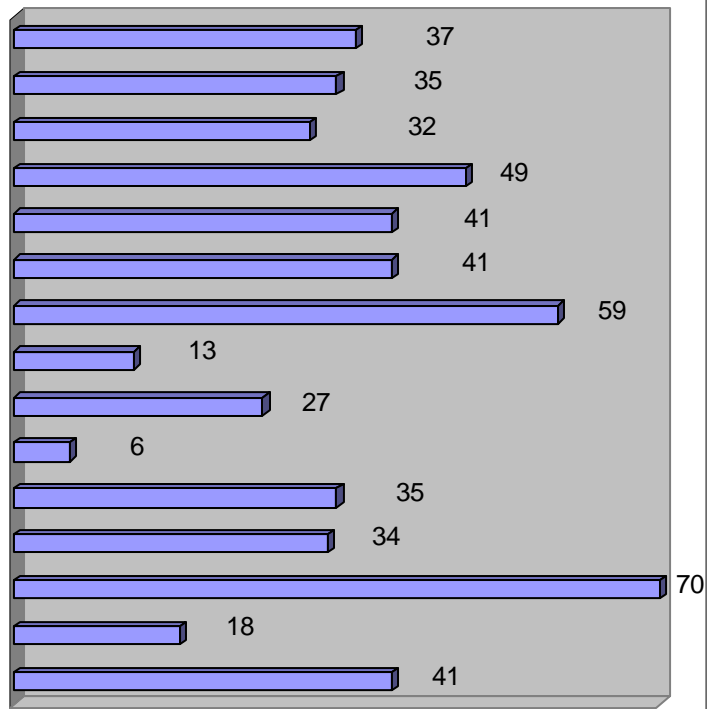
Where possible, opportunities were taken to arrange exhibitions at times which coincided with other events/activities; including the 0 gs /TT0 1 Tf 0.0009 gye(F002 rhd6(s

5. SUMMARY OF ISSUES FROM ALL CONSULTATION METHODS

Vision tops the bill in terms of most responses. Housing, Green Space and Neighbourhoods come next; but interest is not as prolific in Growth or the Economy.

9 in 10 of respondents live in Crawley

40% of respondents work in Crawley. However, this is most probably a reflection of the fact that there were high numbers of older (and hence retired) people completing the questionnaires.



7.1. Vision

This was the topic which received the most responses, accounting for 129 of the 538 questionnaires received, (23%).

A range of issues were raised regarding Vision. All verbatim comments for this theme are listed in Appendix 4. Highlighted below are some of the more commonly raised themes to have emerged.

7.1.1. Excellent Access, Good Facilities

Crawley's location is much appreciated. It is complimented for its' good road, rail and air links, making it an easy and convenient place in which to live and work. Not only are these links seen as advantageous in terms of making London, the coast and other parts of the world easily accessed; Crawley's location is also praised for being close to open countryside.

"Nice size of town with all the basic amenities in a very convenient location between London and Brighton. Close to Gatwick, the motorway network and pleasant countryside". (Three Bridges resident)

It is also seen as a very compact town, (with the associated convenience bonuses this brings); with a range of excellent leisure facilities on the doorstep
"I think Crawley has great facilities, such as Hawth, K2, Tilgate etc. There is always something going on in the area and is a vibrant town to live" (Bewbush resident)

"It has an excellent library, good GP facilities, a wonderful sports centre, the entertainment area and The Hawth" (Furnace Green resident)

"It has lots of facilities within it - forest, transport, sport, music". (Southgate resident)

There are frequent mentions of The Hawth, Tilgate Park, sport and leisure facilities, including K2 Crawley; and generally green open spaces; all of which are highly valued and seen as real flagships for the town.

"The contribution from parks and gardens who make the town centre and approaches beautiful with flower boxes/displays; and maintenance of parks" (Pound Hill resident)

The town is seen by some as offering diversity, catering for all age groups:

"Crawley is a good place to live in - almost irrespective of your age group, nationality or gender". (Furnace Green resident)

It is also seen as a progressive town, "not stuck in the past"; a place which is willing to move forward.

Neighbourhood shops and town centre shopping are also valued; alongside access to medical centres, and GP's. To a lesser extent, Crawley having good schools is mentioned.

7.1.2. Parking, Roads, Traffic and Public Transport

Understandably, residents are anxious to protect those aspects of living in Crawley which they most value and which enhances their quality of life. Hence, most of their issues of concern relate to protecting open space; the neighbourhood principle and all the services which go with this; to ensure a modest growth in the town as it is already perceived as congested in terms of cars and traffic; and generally improving its' perceived negative image by those living outside of the Borough.

There were very many comments about inadequate parking in neighbourhoods, with parking on grass verges being frequently brought up. Whilst seen in many instances as inevitable, it is nevertheless regretted as it removes much valued

“green areas”. There were also some comments about the perceived high cost of town centre parking. Inadequate parking provision at K2 Crawley was also mentioned.

“The problem across the borough with street parking - blocked vision for motorists from cars, and in particular commercial vans being parked over night on corners and in narrow side streets. Dreadful congestion it causes.”
(Furnace Green resident)

“Parking problems in narrower streets in many neighbourhoods (level of car ownership not anticipated when the new town was designed).”

The poor condition of the roads was a concern for some, alongside traffic congestion generally; although this was generally mentioned to a lesser extent than parking. It seemed that congestion was primarily related to there being too many parked cars; also causing safety concerns. Respondents understood the reasons – the original design of the town had not factored an increase in car ownership into the design of neighbourhoods, and multiple occupancy households being highlighted. Higher density housing was also seen as a contributing factor.

There were some negative comments about the availability of public transport and the poor state of the railways stations, but equally, there were some positive comments about how easy it was to get public transport in the Borough and Crawley’s good road, rail and air links as a town. As residents generally see access as a real plus for the town, they are anxious to ensure it is adequately maintained and improved wherever possible.

A few people mentioned how the Fastway system had reduced the amount of road space and this was perceived as adding to traffic congestion.

Some requested more cycle routes and others suggested a park and ride scheme to reduce congestion and make for a more environmentally friendly town.

7.1.3. Shopping

Shopping is very important to residents and the closure of several shops in the Town Centre, is much regretted. The Town Centre tends to be perceived as run down and in need of a face lift. There was mention of too many “cheap” shops and too many charity shops; where instead residents would prefer smaller individual shops, with a similar selection to those available in other towns such as Horsham.

“The town centre has become very run down. With the economic down turn I understand that businesses have closed but I feel that the council should encourage more new business to open in the centre. We have far too many cheap shops and tat shops. This is not ideal especially when you look at Horsham a smaller town but who seem to have more high street brands on offer. There is a lack of small bars and cafes which would make the town more appealing to the surrounding towns and villages” (Pound Hill resident)

“With the closing of so many shops in the town this has made way for pound shop to pop and shop that are open for a short time at Christmas make the town look cheap and dirty.” (Bewbush resident)

Neighbourhood parades are also important to local residents and ways of encouraging more retailers to invest at a local level would be appreciated. Neighbourhood shops are still highly valued. Perceived high rates for retailers were seen as a deterrent.

There seems to be an expectation from some residents that the Council should be doing more to support retailers, possibly by reducing rates.

Some respondents blamed the high cost of commercial rents on the number of empty buildings and decline in business.

As the town develops and grows, residents are looking to see improvements in shopping facilities. There was specific mention of bringing John Lewis to Crawley and/or another departmental store, as well as encouraging a greater range of retail outlets, especially more individual boutique type shops.

7.1.4. The general image and architecture of Crawley

As well as being perceived as run down, the architecture and layout of the Town is perceived by some as quite uninspiring. Some residents are looking for more interest in the design of buildings

“Drab & institutionalised looking buildings - especially new build flats - look like prisons!” (Gossops Green resident)

“Crawley is an ugly town without any real architectural comfort about the Town Centre; Town centre planning has been poor since the NTC first designed it and it has improved little since [County Mall excepted]”

“General look and feel of the town, with regards to the design of the houses within many of the neighbourhoods and the look of the town centre.” (Maidenbower resident)

There was some mention of poor quality buildings and a regret that older buildings of historical interest had been removed instead of being protected. The heritage of the town was important to local people.

Some residents mentioned with regret how poorly Crawley is perceived by neighbouring towns; and there is eagerness to remove this poor perception, which for some, is considered unjustified.

There were several negative comments about Crawley being dated, areas being somewhat run down and the general need for a face lift.

7.1.5. Health

People criticised inadequate hospital and health facilities generally, especially with an expanding population. There was also mention of travel difficulties in reaching East Surrey hospital.

As the town develops and grows, health and hospital facilities are seen as a real priority. The availability of health centres/doctors surgeries is very important to people in improving their quality of life within neighbourhoods, and where access to doctors' surgeries is limited at neighbourhood level, negative comments are more forthcoming.

There were many negative comments made about Crawley Hospital not having an Accident and Emergency service.

“A proper hospital - one that caters for ALL the needs of the community”. (Pound Hill resident)

“A&E - East Surrey is too far to go and does not have enough resources.” (Ifield resident)

“Better provision for health care. A proper maternity ward and A and E back in Crawley”. (Bewbush resident)

7.1.6. Empty Buildings

This concern came up under the Vision theme and again under the Housing theme. Not only are empty buildings (whether shops or offices), perceived as being an eyesore, they are also regarded as a waste in terms of the potential

they offer for development; and should be used in preference to building on green open space.

“The town centre has a neglected air about it and the number of empty office blocks for rent doesn't help that perception.” (Maidenbower resident)

“Too many unused offices in and around town centre. Empty houses boarded up when there is a waiting list for social housing. The allocation for new shopping units in town centre when we already have empty retail units. An apartment block aimed at students would have provided necessary accommodation for new university.” (Furnace Green resident)

7.1.7. Facilities, Entertainment and Leisure

As far as local people are concerned, there seems to be very little missing from Crawley's range of facilities, in terms of leisure and activities, apart from an ice rink, (which always crops up in consultation of this type); and a few calls for more arts related activities – free festivals; more music events in town; sculptures; art galleries; and the protection of Crawley's heritage.

There were a few calls for more restaurants and night life, but this is balanced against a wish to move away from the rowdy night club image that others perceive the town having. Certainly a move away from fast food outlets is evident, with greater choice of all types of restaurants being requested, in order to upgrade the perceived poor image of the town.

There were several comments related to Crawley's ageing population, both in terms of needing to provide appropriate accommodation and also entertainment for this older age group. This probably reflects the large numbers of older people who responded to this consultation.

Some thought there were far too many gambling premises available in the town.

7.1.8. Vandalism and anti social behaviour

There were a few references to anti social behaviour and some mention that groups of young men hanging around made some residents feel uncomfortable. However, anti social behaviour and vandalism concerns were not as frequently mentioned as parking, shopping and empty building issues.

Other ad hoc issues were raised and these are all listed in Appendix 4.

7.1.9. Looking to the future

Many of the issues of concern about Crawley as a town now, are reflected in improvements that people would like to see in the future:

- Better parking
- Better range and standard of shops in the Town Centre and in neighbourhoods
- Less road congestion
- Better use of empty buildings
- More interesting architecture
- Pride in the town to encourage an improved perception of Crawley by those living outside
- Better health and hospital facilities
- More facilities for older people – sheltered housing, care homes and entertainment

Respondents were more likely to think that Crawley should offer something different to other towns in the area.

“To help with the bad reputation I think Crawley needs to offer something different, be it the best shopping in the area, the best park, or theatre.” (Bewbush resident)

which the public responded to.
responses.

Annex 5.

flats being built, although
dwelling in the context of

a quarter said smaller
many people thought the
were considered more
in flats.

price too high. There were

7.2.2. Where to build new homes

There were some clear messages here about *not* using green open space for new housing development. The value placed on green space is considerable, whether or not it is used actively. Just having the space is of value to residents, as evidenced by the many comments made by residents across the Borough,

7.2.3. Who should homes be for?

"I drive to Tilgate park every morning to walk my dogs and sometimes in the evening in summer. I love the fact that this park is for the people of Crawley and NOT commercial". (Gossops Green resident)

"Tilgate Park - local and able to walk to them. Enjoy the green space, animals and lakes." (West Green resident)

"Tilgate Park, I either walk or cycle. Tilgate Park is a haven of tranquillity." (Three Bridges resident)

Ifield Mill Pond and area; Goffs Park, Buchan Park, Worth Park (Milton Mount Gardens); West Green and Memorial Gardens are also used and appreciated.

"Goffs Park. Walk through. I like these spaces because they are well organised and provide many different activities. Makes you feel good." (Southgate resident)

"Ifield - walk, unspoilt countryside, ancient woodland. Tilgate Forest - walk, unspoilt woodland. Goffs Park - walk." (Ifield resident)

"Ifield, Rusper etc, again on the Healthy Walks. Beautiful countryside right on our doorstep". (Furnace Green resident)

Other green spaces/parks in neighbourhoods are also valued and even if they are not actively used, they are well appreciated for the peace and quiet they offer and for just "being there". The value placed on green space is considerable.

"We need them for refreshment of our eyes, our bodies and souls; just to know there is green space around". (Bewbush resident)

"To many people in Crawley all green space is valued simply because it is there. This makes them special". (Three Bridges resident)

The positive comments surrounding green spaces are tireless and really show how truly valued they are. There is even mention of the importance of grass verges and some negative comments about using them for parking.

"Any green area in or near such a sprawling town like Crawley is essential for all. Just knowing it is there is sufficient to bring a sense of well-being"

Trees and their maintenance are important; also shrubs, with a few comments here and there about shrub areas not always being well kept.

Children's play areas are also valued and throughout, there are clear messages about the importance of retaining open leisure areas.

Other research which has been carried out within Community Services on the value and usage of parks and playing fields supports these findings. Furthermore, many people are now looking for the development of parks and open spaces as affording outside entertainment by way of low cost family festivals/events etc.

The promotion of parks and open spaces is also seen as important – healthy walks being cited as an example.

Facilities which help enhance the use of parks and open spaces include better car parking; toilet facilities; pathways; more colour by way of planting; and areas to be kept clean and tidy (litter and dog mess).

7.4. Neighbourhoods

The Neighbourhood topic was the third most popular topic which the public responded to. 84 responses were received, representing 16% of all responses.

All verbatim comments for this theme are listed in Appendix 7.

7.4.1. What matters most to enhancing the quality of life in neighbourhoods?

Once again, the importance of local shops in neighbourhoods is highlighted. They are seen as a focal point within the community. It is the variety and quality of shops which matters most, with a few comments about too many take-aways and betting shops. Generally, there is an expectation from local residents that local shopping parades should be provided. They are seen as integral to a feeling of community. There are some specific mentions about the quality and variety of shops – at Gossops Green, some comments about how the shops could be better; some feelings also at Furnace Green that shops are limited.

“The local shopping centre in Gossops Green is not good. It can be very intimidating going to the shops especially later in the day. It is very closed in and it would be much better if the design was changed completely to be more like Tilgate / Ifield. There are too many unused shops”. (Gossops Green

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7.4.2. A sense of Community

Residents says that a sense of community is important to them. Again, the importance of shops, having a meeting point (e.g. coffee shop); the layout of areas to ensure “feeling safe” are all very relevant to ensuring an areas feels a good place to live. Having “good” neighbours is also mentioned in some instances.

“It has improved in the 10 years that I have been here, with the new community centre the other good thing to have happened is that the pub went, a lot of people were cheering when that went as it seemed that it was a beacon for the local ne'er do wells, with them congregating outside and the abuse that they doled out, it now doesn't worry me to visit the local shops.” (Bewbush resident)

*“Community meeting point provided by St Andrews Church, coffee shop”.
(Furnace Green resident)*

“We have an active forum with many people willing to work towards providing an excellent neighbourhood”. (Three Bridges resident)

However, whilst residents might say that a feeling of community is important to them, their comments do not imply that this is necessarily prevalent.

“Much less than in the past - when people need to use a car to get into

Many of the comments under this topic reiterate those made previously under the other topic headings. They reflect the priorities that residents have already identified. It is clear that any future growth needs to protect the quality of life for residents and the growth of the town is more likely to be viewed positively if opportunities are taken to rectify the current negatives of living in the Borough through any growth programme.

7.5.1. Public Transport

Whilst largely perceived as currently quite good, more evening and weekend bus services are requested. Residents indicate that they would be less inclined to use their cars if public transport was more frequent and fares were cheap. However, others say they would not give up their cars or use them less simply due to the convenience they offer.

Improvements to the railways stations buildings are suggested, along with improvements to the rail service itself. This would include more trains at peak times, the re-opening of a line to East Grinstead, and cheaper fares.

There are several mentions of a park and ride scheme to help alleviate traffic congestion in the town centre and to make for a more environmentally friendly town.

More cycle lanes were suggested. However, these need to be improved upon current designs which are often seen as unsafe. Bike security is also important, so some secure method of parking cycles needs to be available.

“Better quality cycle lanes. Whoever in Crawley designs the cycle lanes certainly never uses them - They are useless!” (Pound Hill resident)

“Good safe cycle tracks”. (Three Bridges resident)

“The cycle network is not safe enough in places”. (Three Bridges resident)

7.5.2. Roads and Pavements

Reflecting the fact that residents currently see roads and pavements as in need of repair, comes a request that with any future growth of the town, road surfaces need to be properly maintained and the road infrastructure needs to adequately cater for more traffic. Similarly, pavements and their surfaces need to be adequately provided and well maintained.

Specifically making junction 10a on the M23 accessible both north and south

7.5.3. Parking

Again, reflecting concerns about inadequate parking, comes a request for a large multi storey car park at railways stations. Also, adequate parking provision to be included with any new housing developments.

Some mention wanting more of the same – in terms of provision for specific groups, such as younger people

7.5.5. What other leisure facilities should be provided as the town grows?

In terms of new provision – an Ice Rink is mentioned, (and frequently is with this type of research, as it seems to be the one perceived missing element from the leisure offer). It is perceived as an opportunity to bring people into the town, (as visitors rather than encouraging residency); as well as of benefit to local residents.

There are some specifics:

- Bigger Football Stadium as existing team grows
- Another K2 Crawley Leisure Centre on the eastern side of the town
- Another Hawth Theatre
- Ski slope
- Swimming Pool at Bewbush
- Outdoor Pool area
- Leisure facilities/clubs for over 50's as older population increases
- More suitable evening entertainment places in the Town Centre for older people (not night clubs)

Whatever the leisure offer, there is a request for prices to be cheaper for the resident than the non resident.

7.5.6. What other facilities will the town need as it grows?

Once again, issues forthcoming under this topic are repeats of points made in response to other sections.

Health facilities – with a growing town, more health facilities will be needed, strengthening the argument further for improved access to hospital facilities too
Leisure facilities – it is anticipated that with a growing population more leisure opportunities will be required

For others, a second runway was not supported, mainly on environmental grounds, but also in terms of limiting employment opportunities to lower paid unskilled jobs; whereas some residents feel that Crawley should aspire to provide higher paid careers.

Having just been to Gatwick to pick up a friend coming from France, unless it can be better organised, I shan't go there again. It is already a brave new world, which people don't like using or working in. Also it pays people too much for doing dead end jobs to the detriment of other businesses in Crawley. I hope the future for rail travel is better than air travel. If you travel from Southampton Airport, it is small, informal and friendly. (Furnace Green resident)

"Say absolutely not, due to pollution, traffic, loss of land, need to relocate business, housing etc. Would rather encourage other businesses to the area (e.g. the recent news that Nestle is moving here) than expand the airport." (Maidenbower resident)

7.6. Economy

There were 70 responses received to this questionnaire, representing 13% of all responses.

All verbatim comments for this theme are listed in Appendix 8.

7.6.1. Confidence in the future Prosperity of the town

Some responses are buoyant about the future

"Yes. Crawley has a good reputation in the region and of course we are close to Gatwick airport. it must make us more resilient". (Three Bridges resident)

"Yes. Despite the current economic situation the town is ahead of the curve. The people of Crawley will want to keep it that way." (Three Bridges resident)

"Yes with the Airport and in the vicinity to major road and rail routes Crawley is in a good position compare to further south in the county". (Northgate resident)

However, just as some see Gatwick Airport as a strength, so others see the over dependence upon it as a weakness; and advocate the need for a more diverse business base with more varied employment opportunities.

"I have concerns that much of the prosperity of the town depends on Gatwick airport this makes the town vulnerable to the collapse of the airport industry (which for environmental reasons would not be a bad thing)." (Ifield resident)

"Not really. We depend too much on Gatwick Airport. Need to have employment that does not depend on or is associated with the airport" (Maidenbower resident)

".....given the change in the local economy over the last 50 years, I think it important that the council look at harnessing broader and sustainable economic and business opportunities". (Furnace Green resident)

7.6.2. Industries to support

There are suggestions that the focus should instead be on encouraging more manufacturing back into Crawley, with apprentice and training schemes to

support this. Others suggest more high tech. There are several suggesting a mix of employment opportunities.

Whatever the suggestions being made, it represents a clear message to move away from relying entirely on Gatwick Airport.

From the few responses from non residents, it would be employment opportunities that would encourage them to live in Crawley.

7.6.3. Encouraging Business

Possible reasons for businesses not being encouraged to set up in Crawley include:

- Traffic congestion can deter businesses.
- High business rates
- The stigma attached to the word “Crawley”; hence the word “Gatwick” often used instead

Many of the suggestions for making the town a more attractive place to visit rotate around the issues previously raised about needing the variety and quality of shops, to have good transport to and within the Borough; and the general attractiveness of the town.

Some of the comments imply that the Council could have a role in helping to determine the mix of retail and business in the town

“There should be a limitation on businesses of certain kinds; not multiple phone shops, shoes shops etc”. (Bewbush resident)

Also, the Council could assist by reducing rates

“Business rates have to be significantly reduced to allow diverse and niche traders a chance to get established and with the aim of 100% full units.” (Furnace Green resident)

The further development of Manor Royal, Town Centre and the neighbourhoods themselves was most frequently suggested; rather than Gatwick Airport, which although mentioned, was mentioned to a lesser extent. This tends to support the views expressed elsewhere about the danger of over dependence on the airport.

7.7. Community Workshop 26th January 2012

Over 125 local organisations, community groups and key stakeholders were invited to the event. It was therefore slightly disappointing that only 14 people attended. However, there was representation from local residents’ forums, conservation and transport groups; and those present were then able to take information away back to their respective groups to generate further discussion and interest.

The aim of the workshop was to raise awareness amongst key stakeholders of the 2029 consultation, encouraging those present to act as ambassadors within their respective groups to generate interest and encourage engagement. The opportunity was also taken to gain some insight into the views of the 14 people who attended, to understand what their priorities for the future of the borough might be.

The detailed outcomes of the discussions and of the “voting exercise” are given in Appendix 9. It must be remembered that numbers are *very low*, so not too much must be read into them alone. However, due to the smaller numbers, some detailed discussion ensued and it was interesting and useful for those present to exchange views and opinions with others.

In addition, several of the views expressed mirror those subsequently given through the questionnaires

- Particular issues include:
 - 60% wanted only small changes to Crawley, to meet residents' needs. This tends to concur with the general views of respondents who see a focus on local people as the priority
 - Most want to limit house building – we see this in other comments made
 - If flats are to be built, then the Town Centre seems more appropriate
 - Flats disliked for their design and the perceived social problems they encourage
 - Emphasis on providing housing for families
 - Health improvements and road improvements are high priority – as also seen via the questionnaire responses
 - The very high value placed on green space; the need to retain it and to make best possible use of it in terms of it being a recreational facility
 - Great appreciation for Crawley's location – close to open countryside, yet having good road, rail and air links to other towns, cities and countries
 - Concern across all neighbourhoods that parking is a problem; that roads are congested and that public transport could be better

The differences include:

- There is more support for building houses outside of the Borough than expressed via the questionnaires
- There is more support for taking a balanced approach to use of land which may well include building on open space. However,

- There were some issues around housing allocation policy with some people feeling that they way the Council allocated housing could be improved

7.8. State of the Borough debate 24th January 2012

This was attended by 120 people. Hence, numbers are slightly more significant, but the debate was about a range of issues, and not specifically focused on the Local Plan 2029; so there was no in depth discussion specifically. Nevertheless, the opportunity was taken to introduce 2029 and to get some initial feedback.

All verbatim comments for this theme are listed in Appendix 10.

Those present were given the opportunity to engage in a “voting exercise” on some key issues facing the Council.

Most of the views expressed mirror those subsequently given through the questionnaires

- Particular issues include:
 - Strong support for the neighbourhood principle - 89% agree it should be retained
 - Strong support for the protection of open space – only a quarter think it should not be protected
 - Health facilities and road networks are both priorities for improvement
 - Modest house building of between 350-450 dwellings
 - Crawley should offer something different rather than competing with neighbouring towns
 - Important to focus on the needs of local people

7.9. Stakeholder Comments

ecology preferred over the South East focus. Strengthen the neighbourhood identifies.

Residential: Accommodate all the necessary housing – using imaginative higher density apartments and town houses, including in the town centre.

7.9.2. Climate Change and Sustainability

Suggestions regarding the merits of local or town wide, or national targets were raised as well as the need to ensure any policies do not restrict development or are overly prescriptive

All development to ensure sustainability

All development to consider water stress and water efficiencies

There was strong support for going above national targets but also strong opposition about making any new or additional targets

Policies to help explain meaning of sustainable development wide, on cent ri6(he myc11 Tc 1.639 -

7.93. DResng

Outlined that development on sport, recreation or open space facilities is considered to be too short-term in scope....people need recreational space/facilities close to their homes
...but conversely, also suggested that house building can make effective use of under-used green space

7.9.10. Gatwick Airport

Comments encourage the protection of long views into the countryside and maintaining the quality of Crawley's mature trees.

7.9.12 Infrastructure

Response from Thames Water supporting the assessment of the provision of sewerage and water infrastructure to ensure that appropriate provision is made for new development.

Thames Water highlight that they are regulated and plan in 5 year periods therefore it is difficult to identify all the infrastructure needed over the plan period.

Specific issues raised by individual respondents include:

- The LEAG supports and encourages an approach that looks positively at how R&D might be co-located with higher education and commercial activities.
- There should be improvements to Crawley bus station
- Better night club provision should be made.

7.9.13. Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Report

Support expressed for the findings of the SA/SEA scoping report and proposed SA/SEA methodology

Felt that the HRA screening report appears to provide a reasonable and objective assessment of the possible effects of the local plan on European Sites

West Sussex County Council and Environment Agency provided detailed technical guidance to be factored into the next stage of the SA/SEA process.

Suggested that the list of engagement partners set out in SA/SEA Appendix B would benefit from greater representation in relation to the local economy

fairly modest attitude towards the future development of the town. For some, there seems to be a fear that more development would adversely affect quality of life for existing residents, hence a balanced approach to development is implied.

Support Services
April 2012