

# 6

## Topic Paper 6 Employment

Crawley Borough Council adopted its Core Strategy back in November 2007, providing the spatial vision, objectives and development strategy for Crawley up to 2016. The Council has now begun preparing the successor to the Core Strategy – the Core Strategy Review – which will cover a much longer period up to 2026. Although there are aspects of the original Core Strategy that can be retained there are other areas where significant change has occurred in the intervening years and this will need to be reflected in the new document.

This consultation period is the first of the Review and further consultation stages are planned before the document is adopted in early 2012. This is your opportunity to shape the way the town develops over the next 20 years and the Council would appreciate and value any comments you have on this Topic Paper or any of the others that form part of this consultation.

### Summary of the Current Context

Crawley is at the heart of the Crawley / Gatwick sub region and is the economic driver of the Gatwick Diamond. This is largely a consequence of Gatwick Airport being located within its boundaries.

There are a number of economic and employment issues that need to be considered by the Core Strategy Review in terms of planning for the town's future. These issues include: addressing existing economic deficiencies; the future role of Manor Royal and the Town Centre; the type and level of employment floorspace that should be planned for should Crawley remain the economic driver of the sub region; the potential role of smart growth and strategic employment; and the implications of the current economic climate.

### Indication of the Key Issues Relating to Employment

The economic issues influencing the town to 2026 currently include:

- The wider definition of employment in draft Government guidance and how to translate this into planning policy. For example, this could lead to a need to relax a strong employment retention stance.
- How to reconcile a significant development 'pipeline' with an early evidence base that suggests this does not entirely match market demands.
- To what extent the main existing employment areas, as well as future employment development, can contribute to and meet sustainable development objectives.
- Continued uncertainty regarding the possibility of a second runway at Gatwick and the associated economic implications.



- Challenges regarding quantifying the economic implications of the continued growth of Gatwick as a single runway two terminal operation.
- Since the adoption of the Core Strategy the prominence of the Gatwick Diamond has increased.
- The role of Crawley Borough within the Gatwick Diamond economic sub region.
- The extent to which new business development should be accommodated at Crawley to help strengthen the local and sub regional economy against a background of evidence that the sub region may be experiencing a decline relative to other parts of the South East.
- South East Plan Proposed Modifications promote smart growth as a policy approach, against a backdrop of continued promotion of strategic employment by key stakeholders.
- The role of Manor Royal in accommodating new development and the extent to which it should change in the context of the economic challenges of the 21st century.
- The potential for change in the Three Bridges Corridor – an area which provides a mix of employment opportunities primarily at a local level, but given its location could perform a strategic function at a sub regional level.
- The need for and implications of employment development outside the Town Centre and the main employment areas and the potential for identifying a strategic employment location.
- In the context of an early evidence base, the advantages and disadvantages of the Strategic Employment Location are considered to be:
  - possible impact on existing main employment areas, the town centre and neighbourhood towns.
  - implications for implementing smart growth and meeting sustainability objectives

- possible greater competitiveness with other sub regions in the region
- possibly the only manner to accommodate a notable provision of high equality employment floorspace in a desirable environment to attract inward investment
- the impact on labour supply, housing and commuting patterns
- The extent to which a university (campus style) as referred to in South East Plan Proposed Modifications is deliverable and would address Crawley's specific skills deficit.
- The implications of the current economic climate and the extent, if any, of the Council's intervention,
- The extent to which business and industrial land should be protected from changes to other uses.
- Arguments for and against a more relaxed approach to the current policy whereby employment within Gatwick has to be related to airport operation.

### **Indication of the Options for Addressing the Key Issues Outlined Above**

There are considered to be three broad options economically for the town to 2026, which are summarised below.

#### **Strategic**

- Strong promotion of smart growth in terms of promoting site availability, allocation and economic growth.
- Allocation of a sub regional strategic employment location (in a hub format) to provide high equality employment floorspace in a desirable environment to attract inward investment and increase sub regional competition.
- Allocation of a site for a University / Higher Education facility.
- Policies and allocations that accentuate

Crawley's position as the sub regional driver and seek to address the local and sub regional economic deficiencies identified through the early evidence base.

- An emphasis on grade A office accommodation. .
- Provide opportunities for innovation.

#### **Sub Regional**

- Promotion of Smart growth and Manor Royal as the sub region's main employment area.
- Complementary sub regional planning policies within the Gatwick Diamond Core Strategies.
- Work with other local authorities to identify a strategic employment location.
- Facilitated High Education provision.
- Balanced approach to enhancing existing sectors and attracting new sectors, having regard to the complementary sub regional planning policies.
- Provide opportunities for innovation.

#### **Borough**

- Promotion of Smart growth and Manor Royal as the sub region's main employment area.
- Focus on conserving and enhancing existing sectors and main employment areas.

### **Indication of the Potential Direction at this Stage**

In light of the early stage of the evidence base and the uncertainty regarding some of the issues identified in this Topic Paper, the Council's potential policy direction at this stage is outlined below. This is a hybrid of the options outlined above.

- Crawley will be performing economically to a level which helps the sub region to maintain its position against other

## Main Issues for Consultation

- Should a smart growth approach, or strategic employment growth, or a hybrid form be the basis of the Core Strategy Review's employment policy direction?
- Do you agree with the potential policy direction being a hybrid option?
- If you do not agree, what option(s) should be being considered/pursued?
- To what extent should local and sub regional economic deficiencies – aviation reliance, skills deficit, low innovation and low knowledge economy be considered an issue and addressed?
- At Manor Royal should 'smart' growth be promoted in conjunction with plan led environmental improvements/regeneration? If a plan led approach is to be adopted, how do you think this would be best achieved? What do you anticipate Manor Royal's function, role and primary use being in 2016 and 2026?
- Should change and development in the Three Bridges Corridor be planned for?
- How valuable to you believe improved higher education provision is for the town and to what extent should the Council support delivery?
- Should the Council maintain its strong policy for retaining business and industrial land, or should a more relaxed approach be adopted which acknowledges other land use pressures and which takes into account wider opportunities for employment, for example retail and education?
- In your opinion what form(s) of employment floorspace are particularly underrepresented in the town, or which provision is too great?

comparable sub regions.

- Crawley will remain the economic heart and driver of the sub region.
- The ethos of the Gatwick Diamond will be embraced in the Crawley context.
- Policy and allocations will complement the planning policy of the other Gatwick Diamond authorities.
- Development will be of a scale suitable to achieve the above, but that will not undermine the existing main employment areas and neighbouring towns.
- Manor Royal will still be fulfilling its function as a strategically important employment location and may have undergone a degree of planned environmental renewal/regeneration.
- Smart growth will be at the heart of development delivery.
- A strategic development location may have been developed to meet broader sub regional requirements.
- A university may have been developed / been planned for, but Higher Education opportunities will be enhanced.
- The town and sub region's economic vibrancy and buoyancy will be conserved / enhanced. However, to some degree long standing deficiencies regarding

sector representation, limited innovation culture, low knowledge economy representation and skill levels will be addressed through policy and allocations.

### Current Context

#### Planning Policy Statement 12 - Local Spatial Planning

- Sub regional approach to issues, including employment and a requirement for Core Strategies to provide a flexible supply of employment land in sustainable locations.
- Ability to allocate strategic sites in Core Strategies, which are critical to ensuring the delivery of a Core Strategy's vision, objectives and development strategy.
- Requirement for a Core Strategy's vision, objectives and development strategy to be deliverable in terms of agreed infrastructure provision set out in an Implementation Plan.

#### Draft Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Development

- Employment Land Reviews (ELR) remain a requirement to support policy formulation.

- Definition of employment broadened beyond the class B land uses.
- Requirement for a more intelligent policy approach, for example linked to labour and sector trends.
- Overall objective, more intelligent employment policies and allocations, which provide opportunities for appropriate economic development locally and sub regionally.

#### South East Plan Proposed Modifications

- Crawley / Gatwick sub region is identified as a sub regional economic hub.
- The plan does not outline specific floorspace requirements, but does include reference to likely job numbers by sub region.
- A policy approach of 'smart' growth is promoted.
- The potential for a university campus at Crawley forms part of policy.

#### South East Economic Strategy

- Gatwick Diamond identified as a key area for investment and growth.
- Crawley / Gatwick sub region identified as a regional hub for economic activity and transport services
- Three main objectives:
  - Global Competitiveness: achieving it



- Smart Growth: spreading the benefits of competitiveness
- Sustainable Prosperity: ensuring that competitiveness is consistent with the principles of sustainable development

#### **Crawley Borough Core Strategy**

- West Sussex Structure Plan floorspace requirements planned for (280,000 sq m 2001 – 2016).
- To meet this requirement two Employment Opportunity Areas are identified.
- Strong policy towards employment retention, especially within the main employment areas

#### **Crawley Borough Council Economic Strategy**

- Gatwick Airport is a dominant growth driver with a range of service industries, the future of which is uncertain until the government makes a decision about Gatwick's second runway.
- Decline of businesses at neighbourhood parades should be addressed.
- Further development of town centre to attract visitors in order to maintain regional status in top 60 retail destinations in UK.
- Unemployment is currently low in Crawley, with Gatwick and related industries a key employer, but there is also a need to encourage businesses that are not airport dependent.

#### **West of Bewbush Joint Area Action Plan**

- 8000 sq m of employment floorspace is identified as part of the neighbourhood centre.

#### **Gatwick Diamond Futures Plan 2008 – 16**

- Vision – By 2016 the Gatwick Diamond will be a world-class, internationally recognised business location achieving sustainable prosperity.
- In accordance with this vision three strategic initiatives have been defined as Inspire, Connect and Grow.

#### **GHK Diamond Report**

- Advocates policy to promote the Gatwick Diamond as an international business destination.
- Suggests that strategic employment provision could be a component of the sub region's future.

#### **GVA Grimley Local Development Framework Diamond Report**

- Identified the following sub regional economic deficiencies – reliance on the aviation sector, high skills deficit within Crawley Borough, low innovation and low representation of the knowledge economy
- Suggested the sub region could pursue the following three options, or a hybrid, which was recommended.
  - Business As Usual
  - Enhanced Growth
  - Transformational Growth
- Indicated that strategic employment could form part of the sub regional economic strategy, whilst advocating 'smart' growth as a policy approach.

#### **Evidence Base**

The evidence base informing this early stage of the formulation of the Core Strategy review's employment policy is:

#### **Sub Regional Employment Land Review - Part 1 (2009) (Commissioned by Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council and Mid Sussex District Council)**

- Comparatively, the Crawley/Gatwick sub region has slightly under performed against other sub regions in the region.
- All towns within the sub region perform an individual economic function, with Crawley the driver of the sub regional economy.
- Local and sub regional economic deficiencies include aviation reliance, skills deficit, low innovation, low knowledge economy representation and the development pipeline not necessarily reflecting market commercial floorspace demand.
- Opportunities exist to improve employment provision (to be determined whether strategic growth, or smart growth, or hybrid approach), but in the current climate caution should be applied to ensure planned growth does not negatively impact upon existing employment areas and towns.

#### **Regeneris Report (2008)**

- This assessed the opportunities and challenges facing Manor Royal.

#### **Manor Royal Regeneration Improvement Project**

- The project is developing how Crawley Borough Council identify a strategic way forward for the Manor Royal Industrial area.