

**Local Plan (Crawley “2029”) Consultation
February/March 2012**

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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.

3.2. The project team included officers from a wide range of disciplines, including planning, communication, policy, community development and support services.

3.3. A consultation plan was drawn up which was agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Development Framework Working Group. This set out a number of ways in which the public and stakeholders would be encouraged to give their views on living and working in Crawley and their expectations for the future of the town. The consultation plan commenced mid January 2012 and ran throughout February.

3.4. A qualitative approach was taken, with a range of options for individuals, businesses, groups and organisations to engage. This comprised:

- ❖ An extensive communication plan:
 - Detailed information on CBC website, Including Twitter, Facebook, CBC e-alerts
 - Local newspaper press releases
 - Flyers advertising drop in events and directing the public to on line questionnaires
 - State of the Borough Debate
- ❖ A range of exhibitions/road shows throughout February 2012 covering all neighbourhoods and the town centre:
 - The officer project team took information to local communities where they actively engaged and encouraged the public to get involved and to feedback their views

- 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
Planning for the future: Crawley 2029	1499
Theme 1: Your Vision	494
Theme 2: Growth	252
Theme 3: Housing	285
Theme 4: Green Space	190
Theme 5: Economy	157
Theme 6: Your Neighbourhood	209
Topic Papers and Background Documents	158
Sustainability Appraisal	68

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 Age Concern meeting at Tilgate; Monday Munch Club at Broadfield; Creches at Bewbush and Langley Green; and church café events at Pound Hill and Furnace Green.
- Tesco: officers spoke to approximately 15 individuals, gave out approximately 35 flyers & 60 paper questionnaires. The same exhibition boards as for neighbourhood consultation were used.
- County Mall: it is estimated that in total officers spoke in detail to over 300 individuals and gave out over 800 flyers. The same exhibition boards as for neighbourhood consultation were used
- K2 Crawley: officers spoke in detail to approx 45 individuals and gave out approximately 40 flyers & 30 paper questionnaires. The same exhibition boards as for neighbourhood consultation were used

4.3. In terms of reaching communities:

- A total of **2,500 flyers** were distributed
- Approx **350 paper questionnaires** distributed
- Almost **700 individuals** were engaged with in detail via events/drop ins. This engagement varied depending on the interest of the individuals. Some took information and indicated they would visit the website; others engaged in conversation with officers.
- **513** Crawley residents via the WSCC panel

4.4. Information which was subsequently received back:

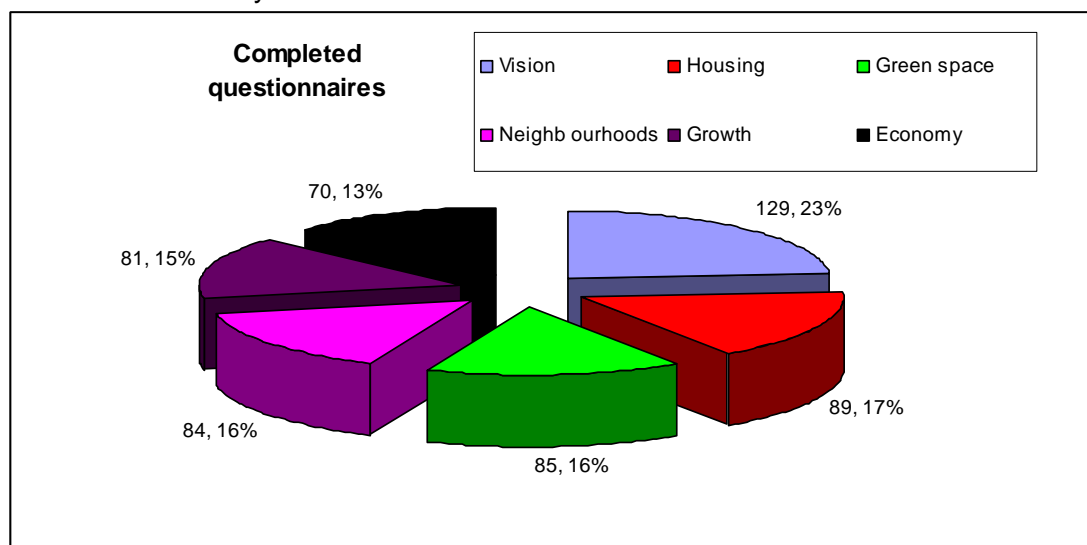
- **538** completed questionnaires were returned across the following 6 themes:
 - Vision, Housing, Green Space, Neighbourhoods, Growth, Economy
- This represents at least 129 individuals; **and most probably in the range of 150-160** (*exact numbers not known because respondents could complete one to six questionnaires or any number between*)
 - 62% of respondents used paper questionnaires
 - 38% used online
- 14 stakeholder responses from the workshop
- 120 responses from the State of the Borough Debate
- 36 stakeholders replied direct to planning

5. SUMMARY OF ISSUES FROM ALL CONSULTATION METHODS

- Modest development of the town preferred
 - Ensure quality of life for local people is maintained or improved
 - Don't build too many houses and keep them small
 - Better use of empty buildings for housing
 - Fears that existing infrastructure problems will be exacerbated; e.g. parking, traffic, health and hospital facilities, schools
- Don't build on green space – *all* green space is valued
- Focus on local people – families especially; and don't forget increasing numbers of older people
- Maintain well what is already here – keep it clean and tidy
 - Retain the “likes” – compact town; convenience; leisure facilities; parks and open spaces; progressive town; diverse
- Crawley to offer something different to other towns
- Better range of shops in Town Centre and regenerate Queens Square; mix of activities to support retail to make it vibrant
- Retain neighbourhood principle and parades and encourage more diversity of retail outlets – limit take-aways and betting shops
- Improve the “image” of Crawley
- More interesting architecture – heritage and design to be a priority
- Mixed views on % of social housing – no clear preferences
- Mixed messages on 2nd runway Gatwick Airport
- Need to encourage greater diversity of industry – less restrictions on use of Manor Royal

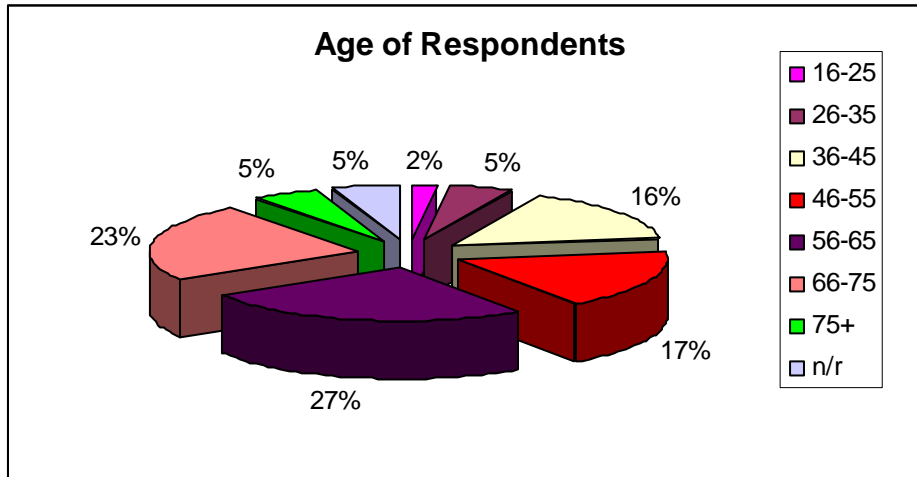
6. WHO RESPONDED VIA THE QUESTIONNAIRES?

- ❖ Total questionnaires completed, (online plus paper), was 538. This does not represent 538 *different* people because respondents could complete one to six of the themes. However, it represents at least 129 different people and most probably in the range of 150-160 different people, as respondents tended to always complete at least 3 or 4 questionnaires.
- ❖ A breakdown of the themes:
 - Vision: 129
 - Housing: 89
 - Green Space: 85
 - Neighbourhoods: 84
 - Growth: 81
 - Economy: 70

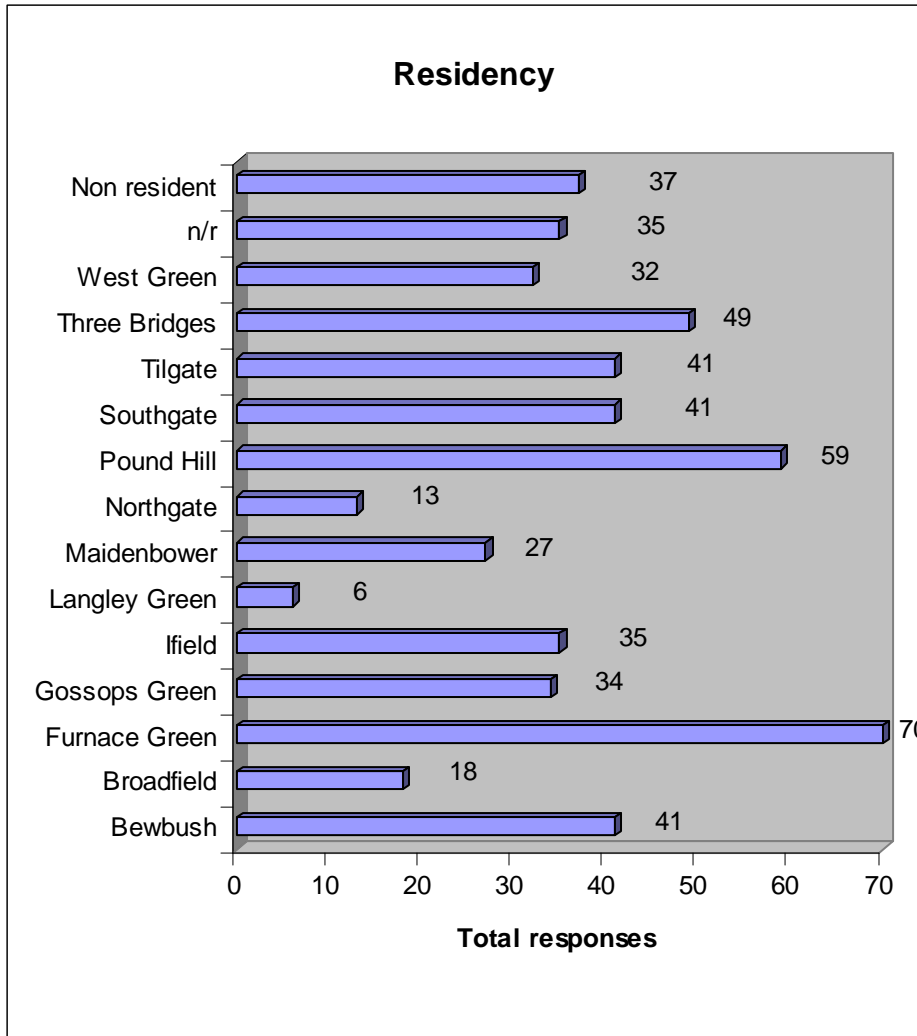


Vision tops the bill in terms of most responses. Housing, Green Space and Neighbourhoods come next; but interest is not as prolific in Growth or the Economy.

- ❖ 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.



- ❖ 54.2% are over the age of 56
This is despite engaging with a wide age range at events in the community
- ❖ Only 10 are under the age of 25 and there are none under the age of 16
- ❖ 84% are White British; 9.7% not answered ethnic origin; very low response from other non white ethnic groups
This is despite engaging with a wide range of ethnic groups at events in the community
- ❖ All neighbourhoods are represented in the responses received
- ❖ **Highest response rate** from
 - Furnace Green – 13%;
 - Pound Hill – 11%;
 - Three Bridges – 9.1%*These figures tend to mirror the higher numbers engaged with at Pound Hill (50) and Furnace Green (20); but not at Three Bridges (only 8)*
- ❖ **Lowest response rate** from
 - Langley Green – 1.1%;
 - Northgate – 2.4%
 - Broadfield – 3.3%*These figures do not reflect the higher numbers engaged with at Langley Green (20) or Broadfield (15). Northgate was the first neighbourhood event*



❖ Observations made during the consultation events themselves, confirms that we engaged with a wide range of ethnic groups, and a wide range of ages. A broad range of groups was also invited to take part in the community workshop on 26th January. However, those who subsequently decided to give their feedback via the questionnaires does not match this broader profile. This suggests that although a wide range of people were equally given the opportunity to engage, it was mainly White British and older people who took this up. Self selecting consultation of this type tends to attract older white people. Hence, it will be important to specifically target certain groups to further encourage their involvement in the process and to more accurately reflect the profile of Crawley's residents. This work will form part of the ongoing early engagement process, and will be progressed in good time to inform the Preferred Strategy. It may be that a better response will be generated when there are more tangible propositions for consideration and discussion, as it can sometimes be difficult to engage people in strategic matters.

7. DETAILED FINDINGS FROM ALL CONSULTATION METHODS

This section includes the following:

1. The detailed findings of each of the 6 topic questionnaires
2. Feedback from the workshop of 14 local groups/organisations held on 26th January 2012
3. Issues raised at the State of the Borough Debate 24th January 2012
4. Issues raised via the stakeholders corresponding directly with Planning

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)

“Towns are becoming too similar. Crawley has a unique opportunity to attract outsiders because of its proximity to Gatwick Airport and its good rail and road connections. It contrasts well with Horsham and East Grinstead”. (Pound Hill resident)

“We are already so different to the quaint little towns of Reigate, Dorking and Horsham, we will never be able to be like these places, so lets go totally futuristic, blow the other towns and cities of the UK's socks off. Offer something different that Crawley can be renowned for. To attract people from other areas of the country to visit not to live!” (Langley Green resident)

“It is different to other Sussex towns as it is a new town and its population is more mixed. It can't compete with the likes of Brighton and Croydon but it can be something different”

“It is not a typical Sussex town and never will be, so it is better to form its own identity. We should be the major centre in Sussex for retail and leisure facilities.” (Broadfield resident)

“Crawley needs to give something different as well to attract people to live, visit and work”. (Tilgate resident)

“We have a different history and different attitude to surrounding towns - we shouldn't be afraid to express that.” (West Green resident)

- ❖ There was quite a theme running through several of the comments made about keeping Crawley for local people, and the children of existing residents. Comments made on the Housing theme further amplify this sentiment.

“Any town should concentrate on pleasing its inhabitants; this will make it more attractive to outsiders.” (Tilgate resident)

“Should cater for children/grandchildren born in Crawley”

- ❖ Some respondents acknowledged that Crawley was already different to neighbouring towns. Indeed, its demographic make up made it thus and it was therefore important for it to retain that difference and use it to its advantage.

“Someone once described Crawley to me as being like a London Borough and I think it is. It is forward thinking, 'edgy', has areas of deprivation, a diverse cultural population and the Airport gives it a 24/7 cosmopolitan vibe. It is a good place to live and work”. (Furnace Green resident)

“The population in Crawley is very different to the other towns in West Sussex we have a larger ethnic population that should be considered, and a younger population”. (Furnace Green resident)

- ❖ There were a few calls for improved local schools and the occasional mention of Crawley requiring a University.
- ❖ In terms of making the town more environmentally friendly, there were suggestions to remove cars from the town centre, more park and ride schemes, more cycle routes, more pedestrian routes, greater use of solar energy, incentives for businesses with lower carbon footprints.

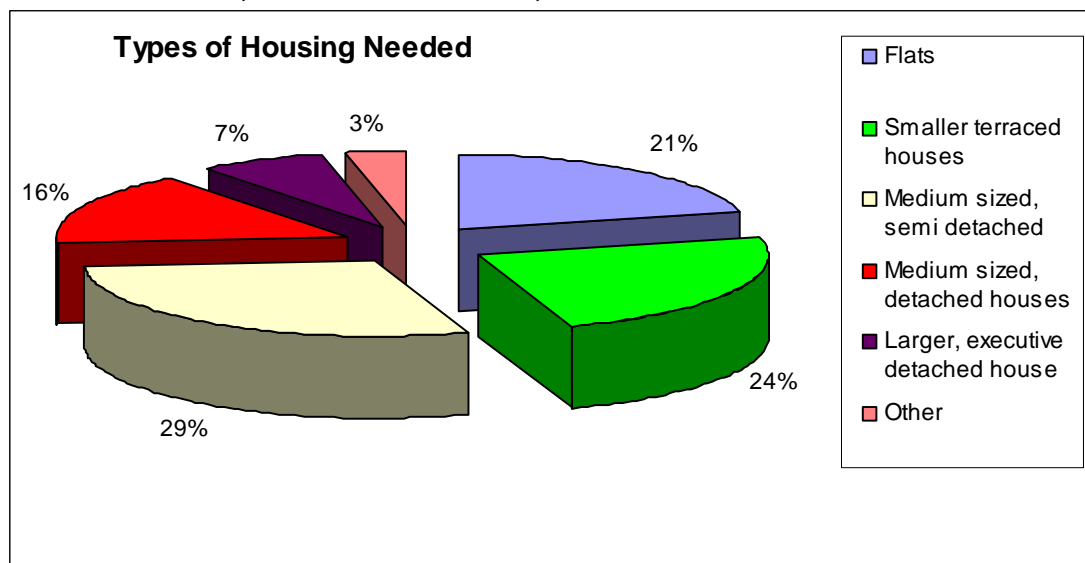
7.2. Housing

The Housing topic was the second most popular topic which the public responded to. 89 responses were received, representing 16% of all responses.

All verbatim comments for this theme are listed in Appendix 5.

7.2.1. Types of Homes

- ❖ There was very little support for larger executive homes being built, although there was a smattering a positive comment on larger dwellings in the context of the economic growth of the borough.
- ❖ 29% went for medium sized semi-detached housing; a quarter said smaller terraced and 16% said flats. This concurs with the fact many people thought the priority should be to house young families. Houses were considered more suitable for families (largely due to having gardens), than flats.
- ❖ Flats not liked because they were seen as too dense and too high. There were several comments about there already being sufficient. There were views that blocks of flats lead to more social problems.
 - “Too many flats being built. Houses are needed”. (Tilgate resident)*
 - “We have too many flats - overcrowded with families”. (Southgate resident)*
 - “If you squash too many people together fights happen - people need their own space”.*
- ❖ If flats were to be built, they would be best placed in the town centre.
- ❖ Some commented that there was sufficient “starter” housing for single or young couples – flats perceived as ideal for this market.
- ❖ In some instances, the reason for suggesting that smaller dwellings were required, was linked to the employment opportunities on offer in Crawley – perceived by some as at the lower end of the scale, just above the minimum wage.
- ❖ Others suggested that smaller dwellings are required to cater for a higher number of divorced people living in Crawley. Smaller homes are also required as Crawley’s population ages and people downsize.
 - “Divorce/separation brings the need for smaller units for single adults or parent/child scenario. Some older people may also prefer to move to smaller modern accommodation thereby releasing larger properties for occupation by families”. (Maidenbower resident)*



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, irrespective of the neighbourhoods in which they lived.
 - “Leave the green spaces alone - we need them to breath”. (Pound Hill resident)*
 - “Already Crawley has become concrete jungle. We must protect green space”. (Bewbush resident)*
 - “Taking away green space will lead to the town feeling more cramped. Currently underused green space could be developed for recreational use - NOT houses”. (Three Bridges resident)*
- ❖ The protection of green space was vital. There were implications that the further development of neighbourhoods would be opted for in preference to using green space.
- ❖ There were frequent references to “empty buildings”, especially commercial (and notably office) properties, with thoughts that these should be used for housing. There was also support for using brown field sites for development, and re-developing run down areas. The comments imply that residents think there is plenty of scope for this.
 - “Too many commercial sites are empty”. (Maidenbower resident)*
 - “Use areas that have already been built on. Update and build higher instead of green areas”. (Bewbush resident)*
 - “Use existing developed pieces of land. If they aren't being used they look unsightly”. (Three Bridges resident)*
 - “We have the old nursing home and the orange building next to the post office. Both very ugly”. (West Green resident)*
- ❖ There was some support for increasing residential development in the town centre, which was considered suitable for flats in particular. Some referred to other European countries where this approach had been successfully adopted in terms of regenerating town centres.
- ❖ 19% would build outside of the Borough’s boundary. However, for some respondents, there were concerns about “joining up” with Horsham and some underlying implications that this could mean we take on the “problems” of other boroughs. Some thought there was ample room to build beyond the Borough’s boundary, but if this was opted for, the boundary would need to be re-defined.
 - “The town is already highly developed. However development outside the boundary must then be brought in as part of Crawley”. (West Green resident)*
- ❖ The use of brown field sites was preferred and by some, there is a perceived abundance of it:
 - “There is too much vacant brown field sites/offices not used”. (Furnace Green resident)*
 - “Brown sites should always be exhausted before green sites are utilised”*
- ❖ There were a few adverse comments about using large gardens for building

7.2.3. Who should homes be for?

- ❖ There were quite a few comments about homes in Crawley being for local residents and their families, rather than encouraging people from outside of the Borough to move into the town, especially if this was to house those on lower incomes. Encouraging migration to the town to enhance its economic prosperity was felt to be more acceptable, but not widely mentioned.
- ❖ The question on allocation of affordable housing generated some conflicting views. On the one hand, there was support for the 40% affordable housing ratio currently adopted; on the other, this was considered too high for some and considered too low for others. Where 40% was considered too high, some very negative attitudes were expressed, implying that if the percentage was high, people would be encouraged to take less responsibility for their housing needs:
“It must be changed. People want to buy their own home. At the moment immigrants and criminals, layabouts, take council properties”. (Bewbush resident)

“It needs to be changed. I feel that people need to take responsibility and should look to help themselves it seems to me that the government whoever is in and the councils take too much on for people who do not take their own responsibility” (Tilgate resident)
- ❖ On the other hand, others thought that given Crawley’s population mix, 40% social housing should be increased, to more accurately reflect the needs of the people who live here.
“Having read the topic paper on housing it looks more reasonable to increase this to 50%. The population is young and the birth rate will increase the number of young people in the town. Until they are earning reasonable salaries they will need cheaper housing”.

7.2.4. Other housing development concerns

- ❖ Several respondents thought that Crawley should say no to future housing development on the basis that it is already overcrowded. Others understood the Council’s dilemma to provide more housing.
- ❖ There were a few negative comments about the architecture of the town, perceived as quite bland and uninspiring. High rise flats are not liked for their design; yet some people see the need to build “upwards” due to lack of space.
- ❖ However much more housing is provided, there remains a great deal of concern amongst residents that it will cause overcrowding; that green space (albeit it grass verges, trees and shrubs), will be lost; that existing parking problems will be exacerbated and that traffic will increase congestion on already busy roads. Hence, a more modest approach to house building is the message to emerge. Therefore, whilst residents broadly accept that more housing is needed, issues of precisely how much housing is required, along with consideration of housing type, location and tenure, provided a range of views.

7.3. Green Space

There were 85 responses to this questionnaire; 16% of all responses received.

All verbatim comments for this theme are listed in Appendix 6.

- ❖ Tilgate Park is most frequently used by residents from all neighbourhoods. It is valued for its natural beauty, walking opportunities, being a good place for children and the fact it is free. Positive comments on it are endless. Here are just a few:

"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.

"All green spaces should be kept alone and a bid by the 'green belt are' that was brought in when these estates were built. Stop building or there won't be any left too enjoy!"

"I walk or cycle to reach woodland and green space. I walk through parks and woodland to enjoy fresh air." (Bewbush resident)

"I also enjoy seeing all the green spaces in and around Crawley and the bulbs and wild flowers which grow through the year." (Tilgate resident)

"Lovely tracks for hacking with unspoilt wildlife". (Furnace Green resident)

- ❖ 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 resident)
- ❖ There are some implications that the range and quality of neighbourhood shops has deteriorated over the years. When considering how Crawley could be more environmentally friendly, encouraging people to shop locally was mentioned as a way of saving on car journeys. Some see the Council having a role to encourage an increase in local retailers.

“Local shopping parade has degenerated, partly due to the changes in buying habits (supermarkets mainly). Council should be more aware that profit (ie rent income) is less important than encouraging butchers/green grocers to comeback”. (Furnace Green resident)
- ❖ Similarly, green and open spaces are important to local communities. These are appreciated not only by those living in neighbourhoods which have larger parks on their doorsteps, such as Tilgate or Goffs Park; but also other smaller areas of open space and “greenery”.

“Well laid out with plenty of open space and woodland”. (Maidenbower resident)

“There are still numerous trees”. (Furnace Green resident)
- ❖ The proper maintenance of these spaces is also a priority for residents and there are some negative comments about the condition of some trees and shrubs.
- ❖ The overall layout of housing is important in this regard to ensure feelings of space.
- ❖ Adequate parking is essential and perceived as sadly lacking in most neighbourhoods.
- ❖ The lack of a GP surgery in West Green is regretted.
- ❖ An advantage for Southgate and Northgate residents is being close to the Town Centre, with all the transport opportunities this brings. Residents in Three Bridges also tend to mention the accessibility to the railway station as a plus for living there.

7.4.2. A sense of Community

- ❖ Residents say 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 area 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 town/supermarket/gym etc then they stop being pedestrians and communities are built upon pedestrians meeting and talking!” (Furnace Green resident)

“Limited, but feel part of our community”. (Gossops Green resident)

- ❖ Others even feel that the Council should not get involved; rather it should be left to the people themselves to generate their own sense of community, if and when required.

*“The only time neighbourhoods get together, ever is things like street parties - like the Queens jubilee. Otherwise I don't believe people really want to know and I'm not sure why the council are so focused on this being an issue”.
(Gossops Green resident)*

- ❖ However, this is countered by others who think that a greater use of civic buildings and schools in the evenings would generate more community spirit.
- ❖ Some neighbourhoods, such as Tilgate, stand out as being well established, with populations of longer standing residents. In these instances, it is implied that there is a greater sense of community because residents have lived in the area for a long time.
- ❖ Other neighbourhoods, such as Pound Hill, mention that a sense of community is forthcoming when there are mutual issues of concern.
- ❖ Others – such as Broadfield – seem to imply that there is a lack of community feel, with the condition and atmosphere of the local shops being blamed in some instances for this, together with a request for a “proper” community centre – as the existing Youth & Community Centre is not perceived as fulfilling this role.
- ❖ Hence, feeling part of a community seems to come down to personal choice. Expectations of what “community” means, clearly vary. For some, simply getting on with immediate neighbours is sufficient, whilst for others a greater involvement in the wider issues affecting the community will matter.

7.5. Growth

There were 81 responses to this questionnaire, representing 15% of all responses.

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

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.

7.5.4. Living a Happy and Healthy Life in Crawley

This question was focusing on quality of life.

- ❖ It is not surprising to see a repeat of many of the previous issues raised. Green space, leisure facilities and opportunities, location, schools, health provision, sense of community, employment opportunities and housing are all important ingredients in the mix.
- ❖ From the comments made, it is accessibility to green space and the wide range of leisure facilities which top the bill. Crawley is well regarded for its offer.
- ❖ Retaining and properly maintaining the open space and existing leisure offer is important.

- ❖ 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
- ❖ Infrastructure – again, the importance of adequate roads, public transport, and parking facilities
- ❖ Shopping – top class, more of it and greater variety
- ❖ Sufficient schools and higher education opportunities – a University, perhaps
- ❖ More housing of all types

7.5.7. The Proposal for a second Runway at Gatwick

Views were mixed on this question.

- ❖ For many, it was seen as essential that the Council should support a second runway; largely for fears of being left behind and that business would go elsewhere. This would be perceived as a backward step for Crawley's future direction and prosperity.

“This is the one area in Crawley where I think we could grow without having major transport issues for the local residential and shopping areas in the Town. As long as the runway access remains east/west so as to avoid noise issues over the heavily populated areas within the town, I think we should say YES”. (Furnace Green resident)

“This should be encouraged so that Gatwick can grow and directly support Crawley. Otherwise the investment will go elsewhere, Gatwick and then Crawley will stagnate. Crawley people and Crawley council need to realise how much we benefit from Gatwick and how the two are mutually beneficial. Build a second runway now.” (Broadfield resident)

“Yes - we should have it to ensure Crawley's economic growth”. (Bewbush resident)

- ❖ 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, when looking at the discussions which participants then held with officers at the workshop, it is clear that open space *is* valued and should be protected; so a discrepancy here.
- ❖ Other issues which emerged during the discussions included:
 - The very different complexions of neighbourhoods. Certainly a “one size fits all” approach does not apply. Northgate, for instance, does not feel “one place”, due to some of it being close to the town centre, but it also includes the industrial area
 - The value placed on “community”; with some very positive comments about recent improvements in Bewbush and wanting these replicated elsewhere in the town
 - The infrastructure of local neighbourhoods is important in generating a community feel – schools, local shops, health centres/surgeries all being mentioned as key – as well as a place which feels “safe”; all of which are important components in helping people to enjoy a happy and healthy lifestyle
 - The perceived under use of school playing fields
 - The need to maintain and consolidate what Crawley already has. This included properly maintaining public areas and facilities
 - The need to improve the image of Crawley to those living outside, through generating a sense of pride in the town; that the town needs to be architecturally appealing, without the uniformity of design it is currently perceived as having
 - A greater focus on “quality” to help raise the perceived poor image of the town

- 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

36 responses were made directly to Planning. These came from key stakeholders and included comments on the topic papers made available. A full list of the comments made is given in Appendix 12. Key issues emerging included:

7.9.1. Vision and Objectives

- ❖ Sub-Region: Crawley’s policies should reflect its status within the Sub-Region and aspire to be a focus for investment within the South-East. Support for Crawley to maintain and grow its economic strength in the sub-region.
- ❖ Economic Development: Positive approach in policy and vision that is orientated towards economic growth. A need to be realistic in expectation of what development can be achieved. Support for sustainable development and low carbon development.
- ❖ Gatwick Airport: support for the Vision to reflect Gatwick Airport’s current masterplan.
- ❖ Retail: support for the aspiration to deliver high quality retail development in Town Centre North. Concern that a narrow policy regarding retail elsewhere may lead to undermining the viability of Town Centre North with developments going to other centres. Redevelopment of the town centre for vibrancy and a mix of residential and retail.
- ❖ Character: Inspiring vision – not just from appraisal of historic evidence. Continued conservation and enhancement of the town social, natural, environmental and built quality and character in the context of increased sub-regional growth. More aspiring in terms of architecture. A local approach to

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 and sustainable construction
- ❖ Technical terms to be defined and clearly explained

7.9.3. Design & Heritage

- ❖ Support for the role of heritage in defining the character of the town and influencing new development
- ❖ Specific responses were received on defining and assessing Conservation Areas and any potential improvement that can be made
- ❖ The use of Building for Life assessments for new development was suggested
- ❖ The importance of the existing character vista and spaces between dwellings was considered very important
- ❖ The retention of key spaces and features should be central to any design or heritage policies
- ❖ Heritage and design should be a priority

7.9.4. Air Quality, Noise and Flood

- ❖ Felt that air quality, flood risk, and noise should each be considered under a separate planning policy;
- ❖ Support for a locally specific flood management policy.
- ❖ Culverting of watercourses should be discouraged
- ❖ Use national guidance re: air quality and noise – note town affected by M23 and A23 – support quiet areas.

7.9.5. Housing

- ❖ It was recognised that Crawley has, and will continue to have, a significant housing need. As such, broad support was expressed for pursuing higher growth options.
- ❖ Suggested that the priority for residential development should be to allocate sites within Crawley's administrative boundary
- ❖ Considered that sites which are available and achievable and located within the Borough should be prioritised in assessing development potential.
- ❖ Some support expressed for exploring land outside the Borough boundary as an approach to meeting some of Crawley's future housing needs, in line with Government guidance and the duty to cooperate. However, this approach would potentially be of concern to Horsham and Mid Sussex District Councils.

- ❖ 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
- ❖ Suggested that more development should be directed towards the town centre
- ❖ Several sites were put forward as possible locations to accommodate housing need.

7.9.6. Economy

- ❖ Diversifying the economy seems key
- ❖ Less restrictions on the types of use in Manor Royal and greater flexibility to encourage more jobs
- ❖ However, some concerns about allowing too much retail
- ❖ Support for a modern science or technology campus
- ❖ Gatwick Airport expressed strong support for a relaxation of restrictions on the occupiers of office floorspace within the designated airport boundary. One respondent offered support for the retention of these restrictions (outlined under the Gatwick Topic Area).

7.9.8 Transport

- ❖ Support for development of clear transport strategy and proposed modelling work by the Highways Agency and WSCC.
- ❖ Potential concerns were expressed by the Highways Agency about capacity of the motorway junctions.
- ❖ Overall support for the improvement of public transport and sustainable forms of transport as part of the transport strategy
- ❖ Fastway should be extended to East Grinstead and other areas
- ❖ Site specific matters were raised regarding the Gatwick Green development and the transport benefits it could bring including reducing out-commuting from the area.
- ❖ Developer supporting park and ride scheme at Manor Royal although no further details were provided.

7.9.9. Town Centre & Retail

- ❖ Support for redevelopment at Town Centre North with a mix of uses to enhance Crawley's attraction as sub-regional retail destination and public transport interchange.
- ❖ Some support for flexible policies to enable non-central retail development whilst Town Centre North awaited. Could use Manor Royal to support Town Centre
- ❖ Reigate and Banstead Council largely support Town Centre North, but some concerns that it could take trade from Redhill
- ❖ Town Centre needs to be developed with a broad mix of activities to support retail to make it a vibrant centre; so non retail use to include financial and professional services, residential and promote night time economy
- ❖ Gap between London Road Retail Park and Crawley Leisure Park could be filled
- ❖ Ways to encourage attractive e street scene - Street markets, window shopping competitions

7.9.10. Gatwick Airport

- ❖ Support from a number of stakeholders for the growth of the airport within its current configuration (one runway, two terminals) supported by appropriate environmental measures.
- ❖ A range of views were expressed about whether a second runway is needed and whether the Council should support or oppose the development of another runway. It was felt that a full debate is needed within the context of emerging national aviation policy about the second runway issue.
- ❖ A range of views were also expressed about whether land should continue to be safeguarded for a second runway. Some stakeholders including the airport operator stated that safeguarding was still required by government policy whereas others including developers stated that the land should be released for development.
- ❖ The response of Gatwick Airport Limited reflected the content of the Draft Airport Master Plan 2011 in that whilst there are no current plans for a second runway, future asset planning should cater for all eventualities and that a second runway may be needed at some point in the future. On this basis it was put forward that land should continue to be safeguarded for a second runway.
- ❖ The airport operator also sought the lifting of the restriction of office development on the airport to airport related uses on a permanent basis due to the amount of vacant office floorspace on the airport.
- ❖ Site specific issues in relation to Gatwick Green and an amendment to the airport boundary were raised.
- ❖ There was support from a number of stakeholders for policies restricting airport related parking in employment areas or the countryside.

7.9.11. Green Infrastructure

- ❖ Suggested provision of a multi use open space network around the urban fringe with access into the town and out into the countryside
- ❖ Felt that Council should use Community Infrastructure Levy to improve open space that is run down rather than using them for development.
- ❖ General support for principle of retaining a built up area boundary approach to provide strong protection from development not appropriate in the countryside.
- ❖ Developer responses suggested some amendments to the built up area boundary, where it is felt that some areas currently classed as countryside are in fact more urban in character/land use.
- ❖ General support for the protection and enhancement of public rights of way.
- ❖ Support for landscape character assessment to replace strategic gap policy which is no longer supported by government guidance.
- ❖ Encourage the use of disused farm buildings for small industrial sites to bring them back to life.
- ❖ British Horse Society is of the view that development must not create a barrier to countryside access rather a gateway to the countryside and also highlights the negative impact of edge of settlement development on equestrian activity.
- ❖ Encourage a policy of seeking a net gain of biodiversity in all possible cases rather than no net loss because of the urban nature of the borough.
- ❖ Encouragement for a policy that requires a buffer zone for development near ancient woodland and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). Request to update SNCI management plans which are outdated.
- ❖ Strong support for developing green infrastructure policies identifying opportunities to enhance and develop new green infrastructure assets as well as protecting the most valued green space.

- ❖ 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

8. Continuing Consultation

This exercise has provided a very useful first step in an ongoing consultation process; highlighting some important issues of concern for local people.

Even though there was as a high percentage of White British older people engaging in this exercise, this imbalance of views should be redressed during the preferred strategy consultation period which follows. It is often easier to engage with a wider range of people once there is something more tangible to discuss.

At the preferred strategy stage, further consultation will be targeted at:

- ❖ Non White people
- ❖ Younger people (this is already planned)
- ❖ Travellers community (already planned)
- ❖ Young families

9. Implications of the Consultation to date

Respondents to this consultation exercise think that Crawley should offer something different to other nearby towns. They highlight many strengths linked in particular to Crawley's location, (good road, rail and air links); it being close to countryside and offering retail and employment potential. They acknowledge that more industry is required to regenerate the town and improve its image.

Residents are also keen to retain what Crawley already has to offer. They see it as a town for local families rather than encouraging new comers to live in it. This protection of what is already on offer in Crawley tends to give some respondents a

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