

Wednesday, 24 February 2021

Confidential Working Draft

Meeting Notes

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<p>Chris Maidment (CM) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shelagh Legrave (Chichester College Group)</li><li>- Catherine Scott (DWP)</li></ul> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting (<a href="#">16<sup>th</sup> December 2020</a>) were accepted. CM referred to the composition of the draft Town Investment Plan sub-groups and invited members of the Task Force to submit suggestions if they think a topic or priority subject is missing.</p>	

CM invited Julie Kapsalis (JK) from Chichester College Group to update on their recent bid for an \_\_\_\_\_ seeking £12m government funding to invest in new vocational skills training facilities in the Coast to Capital area. The IoT will focus on engineering, manufacturing, ICT, construction,1

£8.6m investment from 'Getting Building Fund' for Crawley Innovation Centre in Manor Royal - business case progressing.

- part funding the Creative Crawley '[Right Here](#)' micro-festival 29/30<sup>th</sup> January
  - a positive event that led to a 49% increase in footfall after the final event.
- Funding membership of the Crawley & Gatwick Business Watch for all BID levy payers.
- Currently interviewing for a new BID Manager

A recent survey confirmed a 12% vacancy rate across the town centre (10% in County Mall). The town centre remains closed for all non-essential retail however businesses are hopeful they will be able to re-open from 12<sup>th</sup> April. Debenhams will re-open on the 12<sup>th</sup> and continue to trade to clear stock before closing permanently. There have also been some new openings including Five Guys and Wagamamas.

NC confirmed that the town centre re-opening will be significant and we are hoping for a bounce-back as Crawley has always performed well as a regional retail centre. The BID is doing all it can to support businesses and stimulate activity, improve safety and security and promote the town centre as a place to visit.

NC referred to the Local Plan review and the need for flexible planning policies to facilitate new uses, over and above retail. Peter Smith confirmed that the Local Planning Authority is evolving its Local Plan to ensure the town centre is not exclusively retail and is happy to work on ideas to assist this process further.



