

Crawley

West Sussex

'Mark One' New Town – Designated 9 January 1947

The second of the New Towns and designed to accommodate London's overspill, Crawley New Town included within its designated area the existing market town of Crawley, the villages of Three Bridges and Ifield and a few surrounding hamlets. Crawley's location has proved attractive to both industry and commerce, helped by excellent national road and rail communications and the international connections of London Gatwick Airport, which lies within Crawley Borough. By 2011, the New Town had nearly doubled its original intended population of 55,000 people, and it is currently exploring how to accommodate significant further growth.



Crawley Borough Council

Key facts:

- **Location:** 45 kilometres south of London, 29 kilometres north of Brighton and Hove, close to the M23 and on the London-Brighton railway line. The local authority boundary, which runs tightly along the urban area, includes Gatwick Airport to the north.
- **2011 Census population:** 106,597, in 42,727 households.¹
- **Local authority:** Crawley Borough Council.
- **Local Plan status:** Crawley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted 2008) plans for growth to 2016, alongside other LDF documents, including a Joint Area Action Plan for a new neighbourhood in the form of an urban extension to the town in Horsham District, plus saved policies from the Crawley Local Plan 2000. Crawley Local Plan 2015-2030 submitted for examination November 2014.

New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 9 January 1947.
- **Designated area:** 2,449 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 70,000 (population at designation: 9,500).
- **Development Corporation:** The masterplan proposed an expanded town centre and nine self-contained neighbourhood units, built largely within the pattern defined by existing roads and railway lines around Crawley. Each neighbourhood was to have its own shopping parade, primary school and playing field. Networks of parks, green spaces, allotments and footpaths and cycleways were also key. Development Corporation wound up 31 March 1962. Development extended beyond the designated boundaries in the 1970s and 1980s; these areas subsequently became part of Crawley Borough.

Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in Crawley that are owner-occupied (59.0%) is lower than that for the UK as a whole (63.5%). The proportion of socially rented households in Crawley (23.9%) is higher than both the UK New Towns average (21.5%) and that for the UK as a whole (18.2%).

- Crawley is broadly in line with English New Towns and England averages for deprivation. 42.1% of households are not deprived in any dimension and 34.6% are deprived in one dimension – less than 0.5% below and just under 2% higher, respectively, than the English New Towns and England averages. There is less than 1% difference between Crawley and the English New Towns and England averages for households deprived in two, three or four dimensions – with Crawley having fewer households in these categories.
- In the 2011 Census, residents of Crawley responded similarly to the rest of the UK regarding their health, with 47.6% declaring themselves in 'very good' health.

Employment/economic profile:

- Crawley is the largest economic centre in the North West Sussex sub-region and the largest employment destination at the heart of the Gatwick Diamond economic area.
- Employment levels are high in Crawley, with total employment in the town standing at around 94,000, of which approximately 30,000 are in-commuters. 70% of working people who live in Crawley also work in Crawley.
- Within the Coast to Capital LEP, and the Rural West Sussex Partnership and Gatwick Diamond Initiative.

Development Corporation legacy:

- A series of smaller neighbourhoods and neighbourhood centres, seen as an example of sustainable development, act as a focus for community facilities and local shopping.
- The masterplan's emphasis on landscape setting, historical features and character remains the key to good planning.

Key issues for the future:

- Crawley is forecast to require 8,100 new homes by 2030 to meet the needs of its expanded population. A key challenge is to accommodate this without putting too much pressure on those elements that define Crawley's character.
- Crawley's economy is set to grow, and there is a forecast need for a further 77.2 hectares of business land by 2030.

¹ Figure for the Crawley Borough area

Did you know?

Crawley covers 2% of the land mass of West Sussex but accounts for 35% of its economy.