



Crawley Queens Square

Project Summary

Crawley's Queens Square lies at the heart of Crawley Town Centre however, over time had become tired and in need of regeneration. It was thought that the unappealing space meant that local people would not choose to visit and shoppers would not utilise the space. This is believed to have caused a cascading effect where retail units lay vacant and the remaining tenants and property owners were not willing to invest in refurbishment.

Crawley Borough Council, in partnership with West Sussex County Council, deemed the area a top priority for regeneration. Discussions with local businesses and property owners confirmed that transformational regeneration of the public realm was needed in order for private investment opportunities to be fully realised. Overall it was thought that regeneration would encourage new businesses to the area and the refurbishment of existing businesses and properties. This would in turn boost general use of the area by local people, shoppers and workforce who would find the area a modern, inviting and vibrant place to be.



£1,500,000 Local Growth Fund

Coast to Capital awarded £1,500,000 of Local Growth Funds to this project which was match funded by the delivery body with £1,699,196.19, bringing total project cost to £3,199,196.19.

Project Achievements

The Crawley Queens Square project completed refurbishment of 3,500 sqm of public realm in October 2017 when it was opened to the public. The refurbishment work consisted of new paving, new street furniture and planters, energy efficient lighting, updated and additional CCTV, way finding signs and a decorative water feature.



3,500 sqm public realm
13,826 sqm commercial space
171 jobs
276 homes

This initial work was a catalyst for additional outputs including 13,826 sqm of refurbished commercial space, 276 new homes and 171 jobs. In addition, 100% of the surrounding commercial units became occupied and, according to data from January 2020, the average monthly footfall was 545,000 which is an increase of 273%.

The new space has been used for 27 community events (up to December 2020) including a Seasonal Ice Rink, an outdoor cinema, continental markets and various Easter, Halloween and Christmas events. These all attract additional footfall to the area.



Project Benefits

The scheme was managed with great consideration to social value and therefore having a positive impact on the wellbeing of the local people, economy and environment. Local residents, workers and visitors now use the space to socialise during shopping trips and lunch breaks. People of all ages gather to use the new seating where they can enjoy refreshments purchased at local cafes and children often play around the water fountains in the warmer weather. Queens Square has become an important feature for Crawley where friends and families can spend their leisure time and the overall feel to the area is one of welcoming and community.

To reduce the impact of travel, the scheme ensured construction site operatives were local employees and that construction resources were reused, recycled or sourced locally. New planters benefited from a sustainable irrigation system that would recycle and reduce water usage. Energy-efficient, LED lighting installed has reduced the power required and new CCTV is thought to have contributed to halving the number of calls made to the police in relation to the area in 2019, compared with 2015.



It is understood that local businesses in the area like to employ local residents, the increase in footfall and new businesses in the area will have created new jobs for local people. New homes have also been built above the surrounding commercial units, that will provide affordable accommodation and more new homes in the immediate vicinity have been given planning permission.

It is estimated that overall private investment in the area as a direct result of this scheme is in the region of £30 million and a survey taken in February 2019 showed an 8% increase in trading performance compared with figures since 2017. Further public realm improvements along Queensway have now completed to continue the look and feel and create a seamless link between the Town Centre, the Memorial Gardens and Crawley College.



This project delivered a benefit cost ratio of 1:1.13 however, this figure doesn't take into account the huge amount of further investment that has taken place as a result of the project. The Local Growth Fund gave confidence to business owners and landlords, encouraging extensive investment and creating a community feel and buzz to the Town Centre. Additionally, Crawley Town Centre is in receipt of further Government funding that will expand the projects excellent work to support businesses and the local economy. Crawley Queens Square exemplifies the impact that can result when focus is on providing a safe and welcoming Town Centre.

Finally the scheme received a BALI National Landscape Award in 2018 in the category for Hand Landscaping Construction (over £1.5m). It was also commended at the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation Awards in the 'Creating Better Places' category, the only scheme outside of London to be commended.