

Community Services at Crawley Borough Council

Community Services provides a diverse range of indoor and outdoor facilities for the people of Crawley, including community centres, allotments, burial grounds, sports pitches, parks and gardens. The service also keeps the town's streetscene clean, safe and well maintained, including the cutting over one million square meters of grass verges for West Sussex County Council. In addition, the service provides a community arts function, as well as a play, health & wellbeing service.

Tilgate Park & Nature Centre is the town's largest Green Flag park with over half a million visits per year. It is part way through delivering a [five year plan](#) with the aim of becoming cost-neutral by 2020. The Council has recently provided significant investment for the park's attractions and facilities, including new animal enclosures, improved toilet, catering and parking provision and a dedicated events arena. These changes, together with bringing in commercial activities such as Go Ape and Dynamic Adventures, have increased income to well over £700,000 per annum, with expenditure just over £1,000,000 per annum.

The town's four adventure playgrounds also have an ambitious [five year plan](#) to bring back more of the original ethos of these facilities in being places where children can enjoy spontaneous play. Each of the staffed playgrounds, starting with Cherry Lane in Langley Green, will receive a facelift to make them exciting, stimulating, and flexible spaces for children to enjoy, developing their physical, mental and social skills. In return for the £600,000 investment, additional attendance and income will be achieved. Crawley's children are also seeing the benefit of over one million pounds of capital investment in some of the town's 86 unsupervised playgrounds to ensure they continue to be safe and stimulating places for children and families.

Streetscene maintenance is also seeing a transformation following a systems thinking intervention. The redesign team has found that maintenance of the public realm can more efficiently and effectively deliver customers' demands by breaking the town into five separate 'patches', each having its own patch leader and dedicated maintenance team. Launched in January 2017, this way of working has already seen benefits from greater customer satisfaction and increased productivity at reduced cost to the tax payer. As well as increased efficiency and effectiveness, by working in smaller geographic areas staff are able to create stronger relationships with the communities they serve.

A previous systems thinking review in 2013/14 saw seven teams from across the council merged together into one 'community facilities' team, to handle all bookings and manage all venues, including community centres, allotments, burials, the Town Hall and Civic Hall. This not only streamlined and simplified the bookings process for customers, but also resulted in reduced costs of over £250,000 per annum.

Community Services is about to develop an ambitious arts and culture strategy for Crawley, which will aim to deliver health and wellbeing, community engagement and local economy benefits to the town. Extensive consultation with residents and stakeholders will take place during 2018, utilising funding from the Arts Council.

Our current cemetery, Snell Hatch in West Green, is reaching full capacity for some of its religious sections and following many years of searching a [new cemetery](#) has recently been built in Pease Pottage. This cemetery is being built in two phases and the first phase was complete during the summer of 2017. The site will provide for

another 50 years of burial, so the new Deputy Chief Executive can rest assured that they should not need to worry about finding a further burial ground.