

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 5 February 2018 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

B A Smith (Chair)

T G Belben (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, C A Cheshire, I T Irvine, K L Jaggard, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, A Pendlington, T Rana, K Sudan and L Vitler

Also in Attendance:

Councillor P C Smith

Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma-Pearl	Chief Executive
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Karen Hayes	Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits
Clem Smith	Head of Economic & Environmental Services
Mandy Smith	Regeneration Programme Officer
Paul Windust	Chief Accountant

Apologies for Absence:

None

1. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R A Lanzer	2018/19 Budget and Council Tax (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	Allocating Monies Collected Through Community Infrastructure Levy – Infrastructure Plan and Governance (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

Councillor R A Lanzer	Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC) (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor B A Smith	Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC) (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 8 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. 2018/19 Budget and Council Tax

The Commission considered report FIN/434 with the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits and the Chief Accountant. The report set out the proposed Budget and Council Tax for 2018/19 taking into account factors such as areas of growth and capital programme schemes, along with efficiencies, savings, latest investment interest projections and additional income being proposed.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Confirmation was provided regarding the revenue support grant and retained business rates together with a further explanation as to the associated costs linked to the town hall.
- Recognition that replacement/enhancement of equipment at the Hawth and K2 Crawley as detailed in the capital programme was the council's responsibility and may assist in generating additional income.
- Clarity sought over the proposed capital programme and recognition that further schemes included the district heat network and the town hall. Should the town hall project proceed, the financial projections would be amended as these would impact on the budget.
- Recognition that the report suggested ways in which the budget could be balanced, whilst protecting frontline services.
- Acknowledgement that the ICT senior management funding proposed an additional Head of Service, required to address the increasing complex service demands and improve the current infrastructure.
- Support for the pay policy statement and the recent reviews that were undertaken. It was noted that councils were required to publicise these on their websites.
- Support for the shrub bed project which would see several renovated within the town. However clarity was sought regarding the removal of beds and whether public consultation could take place should this be proposed.
- Members commended officers from the Finance Team for their excellent work in producing the budget report.

RESOLVED

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

5. Treasury Management Strategy 2018/2019

The Commission considered report FIN/433 of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits on the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/2019 which the Council was required to approve before the start of the financial year in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management and the Council's financial regulations.

During the discussion with the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits and Chief Accountant, Members made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement of the increase in interest rates, which marked a rise in borrowing costs.
- Recognition that the Council's policy was to remain debt free, investing accordingly whilst providing an appropriate balance between security, liquidity, yield and ethical. Whilst the fourth criteria had been applied, it had not prevented any investment from being undertaken as a result of its consideration.
- Support for the amended Section 151 Officer responsibilities.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support the recommendations to the Cabinet.

6. Allocating Monies Collected Through Community Infrastructure Levy - Infrastructure Business Plan and Governance

The Commission considered report PES/264 of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services. The report sought to review and approve the final version of the Infrastructure Business Plan, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Strategic Infrastructure Strand priority schemes and Neighbourhood Improvement Strand.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Confirmation sought regarding the governance proposals in relation to the CIL Member Advisory Group. Concern was expressed that whilst this would operate through the existing Economic Regeneration Working Group it would be beneficial if the information was more transparent and accessible.
- Recognition that the Crawley Growth Board represented good partnership working, however clarity was sought on its constitution and how the CIL spend arrangements would be delivered. It was important that there was a robust governance structure in place and the proposals, allocation and spend could be reviewed annually.
- Acknowledgement that the projects allocated within the Strategic Infrastructure Strand would be reviewed annually.
- Support for the Strategic Infrastructure Strand, together with the Neighbourhood Improvement Strand and Crowdfunding platform. It was felt it would be beneficial to promote the latter town-wide.

RESOLVED

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

7. Establishment of and Appointments to Scrutiny Panels

Review of Outside Bodies and Organisations Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Cheshire as Chair of the Scrutiny Panel updated Members that the first meeting of the Panel would take place on 22 February 2018.

Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel

Commission Members held a lengthy discussion regarding the establishment of the Scrutiny Panel 'To investigate the state of social mobility within the borough'. It was noted that this potentially be an extensive and detailed scrutiny review and there were concerns raised over the timescales. However as the social mobility index assessed the education, employability and housing prospects of people within the area, it was noted that it may be possible for the review to be broken down into several subject areas to provide focus. Due to the complex nature of the review the Commission requested to increase the membership of the Panel to 7 members (4:3). Nominations would be sought and subsequently agreed at the next meeting, together with a Panel Chair.

RESOLVED

1. That nominations are sought (via Democratic Services) for the membership of the Panel (4:3), in accordance with political proportionality.
2. That a Chair for the new Scrutiny Panel be established.

8. Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)

An update was provided from the most recent HASC meeting held on 17 January. Key items of discussion included:

- The CCG was aware of a potential claim by a former subcontractor of Coperforma Ltd involving the CCG's in respect of Patient Transport Services provided up to 31 March 2017.
- Concern was raised regarding the growing gap in the care market together with the lack of capacity to meet demand.
- The increased scrutiny nationally in relation to care homes had become effective in its outcomes.
- It was important for successful care homes to have appropriate buildings together with effective "people driven" staff.

9. Forward Plan - and Provisional List of Reports for the Commission's following Meetings

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

March 2018

- Banning Orders and the Databased of Rogue Landlords and Property Agents – The Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Crawley Leisure Management Contract
- Three Bridges Improvement Scheme

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.27pm.

B A Smith
Chair