

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Monday 12 January 2015 at 7.30p.m.

Present:

Councillor W A Ward (Chair)
Councillor K Sudan (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Dr H S Bloom, K Brockwell, R G Burgess, I T Irvine, M G Jones,
R A Lanzer and B A Smith

Also in Attendance:

Councillors S Joyce, P K Lamb, D J Shreeves, P Smith and G Thomas

Apology for Absence:

Councillor C A Cheshire

Officers Present:

Karen Dodds Head of Crawley Homes
Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer
Lee Harris Chief Executive
Sallie Lappage Forward Planning Manager
Phil Rogers Director of Community and Partnership Services

61. Members' Disclosure of Interests and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosure of interests was made

Member	Minute Number	Subject	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor K Sudan	64	Response to Airport Commission Consultation on Additional Runway Options in the South East	Personal interest - member of Gatwick Airport Conservation Society

No whipping declarations were made.

62. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on [1 December 2014](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

64 Response to Airport Commission Consultation on Additional Runway Options in the South East

The Commission considered Report [CEx/45](#) of the Chief Executive. The report summarised the findings of the Airports Commission's assessments, and set out the Borough Council's response to the Consultation.

During the discussion with the Forward Planning Manager, the following points were expressed:

- All Members felt that it was an excellent report as it clearly outlined the impacts and concerns that needed to be considered at the Extraordinary Meeting of the Full Council, whilst also highlighting the large discrepancies and number of areas that have been neglected by the Airports Commission and Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL).
- Concerns expressed over the discrepancy between the unemployment rate stated by the Airports Commission, and the actual unemployment rate, together with the contradiction between the airport providing jobs for Crawley residents where there is a "good skills match" and also providing an increase of "apprenticeships". Concern that these apprenticeships should be for local residents.
- Concerns expressed regarding the transport infrastructure, both rail and road, particularly the impacts on the local road network which had not been assessed, highlighting the north west edge of town and toward Charlwood.
- It was felt that the Airports Commission's conclusions on the likely housing numbers, with huge ranges because of the scenarios, and their deliverability were questionable, particularly as Crawley already had large unmet housing need.
- Concerns expressed about the lack of recognition of the need for new infrastructure to support increased housing growth, including schools and health facilities, and the importance of securing funding and delivery, in advance of any construction and reconfiguration.
- Concerns raised that some issues (Forge Wood, and other facilities such as The Gatwick School and St Michaels and All Angels Church) appear to have been overlooked by the Airports Commission and for example where Outreach 3Way would be re-sited.
- Concerns expressed over air quality and noise as a result of increased road traffic, particularly as no assessment of road traffic noise had been undertaken by the Airports Commission.
- Concerns raised over the significant increase in air traffic noise as a result of a second runway, particularly central and northern neighbourhoods of the town.
- Concern expressed about the loss of trees, destruction of hedgerow and the general ecological damage.

The Commission examined the recommendations. All Members felt there was now sufficient information and detail provided over the impact of a further runway on the Borough, and therefore Members should be in a position to take a specific view. The Commission believed that residents now sought a definitive statement as to the Council's intentions. As a result, all Members did not support recommendation 2.2 1a) and proposed that this recommendation be removed from the report. It was thought any decision made would not preclude the Council working closely with Gatwick Airport, the C2C LEP, the Environment Agency and other local authorities.

Members of the Commission believed that the detailed technical response to the Airports Commission should be a response from a collective group. It was strongly suggested to the Cabinet that a Working Group with wider membership be convened to agree the Council's full response to the Airports Commission, although it was acknowledged that timescales might prove problematic.

It was commented that there was a need for certainty regarding future safeguarding of land in Crawley.

The Commission proposed that all votes on the Response to the Airports Commission Consultation on Additional Runway Options in the South East should be taken without any form of Group whipping.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted and that the views of the Commission be fed back to the Cabinet via the Commission's Comments sheet.

65. Town Hall Utilisation and Refurbishment

The Commission considered report [DC&PS/010](#) of the Director of Community and Partnership Services. The report made recommendations designed to ensure the Council continues to optimise utilisation of the Town Hall complex, meeting the needs of both the Council and the residents it serves.

Discussion areas included:

- Support for the retention of the Town Hall as the Council's administrative centre.
- Recognition of the further income opportunities that could be gained through use of the Council chamber, committee rooms and other areas, whilst acknowledging that Council business would take precedence.
- Support for reconfiguration of the Town Hall, particularly the foyer, and the need to accommodate both staff and customers.
- Recognition that voluntary groups may be interested in occupying or co-location of the Town Hall. However, it was thought that any opportunities could be associated with the annual grants programme.
- Encouragement that wider, detailed consultation will take place with staff and Members.
- Acknowledgement that the external design consultant will provide a detailed feasibility study, providing expertise and add value as a result of any proposed reconfigurations/refurbishments.
- Recognition that the Town Hall is now 50 years old and as a result the Overview and Scrutiny Commission proposed that the Cabinet consider investigating the possibility of locally listing the building.

RESOLVED

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

66. Amendments to the Under Occupation Incentive Policy

The Commission considered report [CH/160](#) of the Head of Crawley Homes. Following a review of the Under Occupation Incentive Policy, the report set out some proposed changes to its operation.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Concerns raised that the financial overspend should have been more widely highlighted.
- Acknowledgement that within the current policy, the financial incentive was not having a material impact. The motivation to move might result from other reasons so the incentive payment was not required.
- Recognition that the incentive pays more to tenants releasing the larger properties where there was lower demand on the housing register and pays less for the two bedroom properties with the higher demand.
- Recognition that the proposal provided a sensible solution, reducing the possibility of overspends, whilst maintaining a need to assist residents.
- Support for a review of the amended policy in 6 months' time, to include the number of people downsizing properties together with the number of rooms released.

RESOLVED

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

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

Following the recent meeting on 5 December 2014, an update was provided on the proposed changes to the Crawley Health Centre, and possible relocation to Crawley hospital. It was acknowledged that the Crawley Health Centre serves two functions; a walk in centre and a temporary medical practice. A meeting was scheduled with Councillors Ward and BA Smith and NHS England to further discuss preparations for a response to HASC on 21 January 2015.

The temporary cessation of admissions to the acute wards of Langley Green (mental health) hospital were briefly discussed. It was noted Members were unaware of concerns prior to any incidents.

68. Scrutiny Panels

Performance Monitoring Scrutiny Panel (PMSP)

The next meeting will take place on 24 February 2015. Representatives from Parkwood Leisure will be invited to attend this meeting and the Chair requested that if Members wished to submit questions for the event to send them to the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer. There will also be transformation updates on either the Benefits or the Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour service areas.

Fairness Commission Scrutiny Panel

It was agreed that Councillor M W Pickett be appointed as Substitute Member for 2014/2015.

The next meeting will take place on 15 January 2015. Witnesses from Crawley Community Voluntary Service and Crawley Citizens Advice Bureau are due to attend this meeting. The Community Development Manager and Transformation Manager (CBC) have also been invited in order to provide additional information regarding partnership working, together with current and future data and evidence collation.

69. Forward Plan – 1 January 2015 and Provisional List of Reports for the Commission's following Meetings

The Commission considered the latest version of the Forward Plan and the provisional lists of reports for future meetings. The referrals included:

11 February 2015
Three Bridges Station Forecourt Project
Budget and Council Tax 2015-16

70. Closure of Meeting

The meeting ended at 10.05pm.

W A WARD
Chair