

# Crawley Borough Council

## Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission



Monday 9 February 2015 at 7.00p.m.

### Present:

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

### Also in Attendance:

Councillors P K Lamb, and P Smith

### Apology for Absence:

Councillor R G Burgess

### Officers Present:

Rachel Cordery Principle Planning Officer  
Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer  
Lee Harris Chief Executive  
Karen Hayes Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits  
Paul Windust Corporate Accounting and Treasury Services Manager

## 71. Members' Disclosure of Interests and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosure of interests were made:

Member	Minute Number	Subject	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor M G Jones	74	Three Bridges Station Forecourt Project	Personal interest – member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	74	Three Bridges Station Forecourt Project	Personal interest – member of WSCC
Councillor B A Smith	74	Three Bridges Station Forecourt Project	Personal interest – member of WSCC
Councillor C A Cheshire	77	Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)	Personal interest – patient representative for Crawley CCG
Councillor M G Jones	77	Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)	Personal interest – registered patient at walk-in centre

No whipping declarations were made.

## 72. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on [12 January 2015](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. The Democratic Services Officer (HG) was thanked for a well-written and thorough minute, as was Councillor Ward for an accurate report to the Cabinet. A discussion occurred on Minute 65 on the Town Hall Utilisation

and Refurbishment report. It was confirmed that the upgrading of the toilet environment in the civic hall would be undertaken in 2015-2016.

### **73. Public Question Time**

No questions from the public were asked.

### **74. Three Bridges Station Forecourt Project**

The Commission considered Report [SHAP/43](#) of the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services. The report sought approval of a scheme for the improvement of the forecourt area at Three Bridges Station, recommending support for the use of S106 monies for the project which have been received for transport or interchange improvements at the station to fund this project.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Principle Planning officer, the following points were expressed:

- Appreciation of the detailed consultation process that had taken place and an acknowledgement that the option 1 proposal provided a good strategic scheme for Crawley. It offered the best possible configuration and would deliver the maximum benefits.
- Acknowledgement that of the participants responding to the consultation process, as to how people travelled to the station, many more people walked, cycled or used buses than used cars, particularly from the Pound Hill and Maidenbower areas. Thus the proposed improvements to safety and access, given the multiplicity of pedestrian and vehicle movements in the forecourt area, were well justified.
- Recognition that continued consultation would take place with the Hackney Carriage Association as the scheme progressed.
- Support that further traffic management solutions (chicane removal and traffic light phasing) could possibly be amalgamated (offering a 'joined up' approach) with the new eastern drop off/pick up area to minimise disruption.
- Support for additional bike storage at the new eastern drop off/pick up area.
- Concerns raised over the alternative exit routes being proposed, particularly given the loss of the right exit turn, but looked forward to the safest and best possible solutions given the practical restraints.
- While Members welcomed the proposed new drop off point and exit on the eastern side of the station, at Station Hill/ Billington Drive, there was some concern expressed about the re-opening of this access point onto the somewhat narrow Platform 5. Perhaps a more direct opening to the Subway from the east, connecting all platforms might be considered.

### **RESOLVED**

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

### **75. 2015/2016 Budget and Council Tax**

The Commission considered report [FIN/356](#) of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits, which set out the proposed Budget and Council Tax for 2015/16 taking into

account factors such savings and growth, latest investment interest projections and income estimates.

A discussion took place with The Leader and the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits. Discussion areas included:

- Support for a proposed freeze in Council Tax for 2015/16.
- Recognition of the continued work towards a balanced budget, putting back into reserves when the budget is in surplus, whilst needing to maintain as many services as possible. It was acknowledged that the challenges will become more demanding from 2016/17.
- Acknowledgement of the provision for new capital schemes, including improvement to the adventure playgrounds.
- Support for the additional increase in the Crawley Allowance for all employees from 1 April 2015.
- It was recognised that the Council has seen a 5.8% reduction in spending power. However, there was agreement that 'spending power' required further definition. Perhaps comparisons of 'spending power' in previous and future years could be documented. (Supplementary note: Further detailed information, as requested has been circulated from the Finance Team to all OSC Members on this point).
- Recognition that there was a focus on income generation, including investment acquisitions. However, it was recognised that further investigations could take place in relation to increasing income/savings, for instance recycling credits.
- Acknowledgement of the volatility of business rates income and the uncertainty over the income in future of the New Homes Bonus.
- Members commended officers from the Finance Team for their excellent work in producing the budget and report and the Chair thanked the Leader, Councillor Lamb for his full presentation.

#### **RESOLVED**

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

### **76. Treasury Management Strategy 2015/2016**

The Commission considered report [FIN/355](#) of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits on the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 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 Leader, Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits and the Corporate Accounting and Treasury Services Manager, the following points were expressed:

- Acknowledgement that the Council's policy is to remain debt free, investing accordingly whilst providing adequate liquidity, security and yield.
- Recognition that different rates of interest and returns are achieved for shorter and longer term investments and loans, yet it was important to strike a balance between risk and investment return.
- The advantages and disadvantages surrounding ethical investment.
- Given the practical dilemmas faced with the complexity of the range of investments involved and the spread needed to minimise risk.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Commission agreed to note the report to the Cabinet.

**77. Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)**

Following a recent meeting on 21 January 2015, an update was provided by Councillors Ward and Smith. The proposed changes to the Walk-in Centre at Crosskeys House, the possible reconfiguration to the Urgent Treatment Centre and potential relocation of Northgate surgery were discussed at length. It was agreed that clarification was required on a number of issues.

**78. Scrutiny Panels**

**Fairness Commission Scrutiny Panel**

The last meeting was held on 15 January 2015 and Councillor Jones provided an update. Guests from Crawley Community Voluntary Service and Crawley Citizens Advice Bureau had attended, along with the Community Development Manager and Transformation Manager to provide additional information regarding partnership working, together with current and future evidence collation. The next meeting is scheduled for 19 February 2015.

**Performance Monitoring Scrutiny Panel (PMSP)**

The next meeting will take place on 24 February 2015. Representatives from Parkwood Leisure have been invited to attend this meeting and it was 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 a transformation update on the Benefits service.

**79. Forward Plan – 1 March 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:

**18 March 2015**

- Queens Square Environmental Improvement Scheme
- Determination of Tenure Mix for Council New Build Schemes
- Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency and Property Management Work Request for Delegated Enforcement Authority – provisional referral

**80. Closure of Meeting**

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.

W A WARD  
Chair