

## **Fairness Commission Scrutiny Panel held on 19 February 2015 at 2.00pm**



### **19. Present**

Councillors: M G Jones (Chair) (MJ), C A Cheshire (CC) and G Thomas (GT)

### **20. Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **21. Officers Present**

Heather Girling (Democratic Services Officer) (HG)

### **22. Also Present**

None

### **23. Disclosure of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

Councillor C A Cheshire      Personal Interest, Trustee – Crawley CVS  
Personal Interest, Patient Representative Crawley CCG

### **24. Notes and Matters Arising**

The notes of the meetings held on [15 January 2015](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. A discussion took place on item 16 in respect of the areas of deprivation within the town. It was observed there are repeated patterns of deprivation as individuals moving in take the place of those who move on and out from the area.

### **25. Information and Evidence**

Councillor Jones provided the panel with an update on the Southampton Fairness Commission, including its resourcing, scope, topics and perceived benefits.

### **26. General Updates and Further Meetings**

A full discussion took place between panel members regarding possible models and future delivery. The panel has encountered challenges in its investigation and whilst there have been positive ideas, at times there has been limited options for practical, focused solutions.

Areas identified by Members which a Fairness Commission for Crawley may wish to look at included issues relating to debt, food, personal finances, people living on zero hours contracts,

older people, problems for people on benefits (including the effects of sanctions) and people with learning difficulties and access to services.

Other areas which it was noted had been looked at by other Fairness Commissions included Food Banks, Job Clubs, schools, young carers' support groups and the potentially marginalised. Unemployment, income and benefits had also been considered, as had health, growing old and growing up.

The keys issues discussed included those outlined below:

- (a) There was recognition that setting up a Fairness Commission for Crawley would have some, modest, resource implications (both officer and financial).
- (b) Development of the CVS forums could be one possible alternative, working with CAB and other organisations. This work would be topic based, similar to a 'task and finish' group, analysing the issue, this would form the catalyst and identifier as to how CBC would be able to assist and add value.
- (c) The Southampton Fairness Commission provided a useful blueprint as to what could be achieved. However, the panel was interested in any feedback from implementation, recommendations, summary of proposals, report or current findings. **(Action HG)**.
- (d) It was suggested that perhaps an alternative would be to work more closely with a variety of organisations and partners, with Member attendance and improved communication. In order to aid current communication it was thought that perhaps 'The Local Picture' (issued by CVS) could be issued to Democratic Services to forward on to all Members. **(Action HG)**. It was also discussed that a meeting should be arranged with the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement to provide an update on the Panel's work and to discuss CBC's current activities in areas where a Fairness Commission may have an interest **(Action MJ)**.
- (e) Consideration was given how the status quo could work more effectively if Members obtained greater knowledge of current and future initiatives. It was considered that notwithstanding any other action proposed by the panel, the seminar option suggested at the previous meeting should be pursued in order to brief Members on the current work of the community and voluntary service and initiatives that could aid neighbourhood work **(Action HG)**.
- (f) There was a further suggestion that practical progress could be perhaps be made on a smaller scale and CBC could offer groups resources, connections and other assistance; providing a voice and support not previously experienced. It would be of paramount importance that agencies work together and CBC has a role in harnessing resources in the most effective way.
- (g) There was an agreement that the panel would devise several possible models in advance of seeking the views of both political groups, together with those of CVS and CAB. A favoured model would then be included in the final report to be submitted to the OSC and Cabinet. These models are attached as Appendix A.

The Panel agreed that:

- i) the fourth meeting be held on Thursday 9 April 2015 at 11.00am
- ii) it was felt that the fifth meeting should be booked but may not be necessary if the Panel has made sufficient progress – Thursday 14 May at 11.00am

**27. Closure of Meeting**

With the business of the Panel concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.53pm.

M G Jones  
**Chair**

**Appendix A****Potential Models for Fairness Commission****1. Formal Fairness Commission consisting of public meetings.**

- Composed of an unspecified number of councillors, together with invited individuals including external organisations and groups with proven knowledge and expertise (rather than specific interests).
- Continue to support and promote agencies, encourage and promote activity.
- To prepare a report for publication.
- Make recommendations to the Council and other key bodies about what short and long term measures are required. The priority should be to identify those actions that can be taken by the borough itself and those which require external intervention, or a combination of both.

**2. A Standing Committee**

- Formal structure (similar to the LSP/Crawley Together).
- Composed of an unspecified number of councillors, together with invited individuals from external organisations and groups with proven knowledge and expertise.
- This model would be issue led, but would be an open-ended committee going forward, with a general remit to look into measures relating to inequality, accessibility and deprivation.

**3. Enhance the current arrangements**

- Agencies work together, with CBC having a role in harnessing resources in the most effective way. This would result in added value and avoid duplication of work and effort.
- CBC to work more closely with a variety of organisations and partners, in particular CVS Forums to identify topics for further analysis (task and finish), with Member attendance and improved communication.
- CBC could offer groups resources, connections and other assistance; providing a voice and support not previously experienced.
- Enhanced Member attendance at CVS Forum meetings (subject to invitation) to improve communication.
- Improved support provision for external organisations.

**4. No change from the current arrangements**