

# Crawley Borough Council



## Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 8 June 2015

### Review of Working Groups, Advisory Groups, Policy Development Forums and Seminars

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, *LDS/098*

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#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Democratic Services is currently undertaking a "Service Improvement" exercise following the Systems Thinking methodology. Throughout this "Service Improvement", the service identified current areas of work where further investigations were required into the value of continuing to use Democratic Services as a means of facilitating and supporting the decision making process.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission has requested this report in advance of the July Cabinet meeting. It is acknowledged that this draft report may be subject to change.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider the report and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

- 2.2 It is expected that the Cabinet be recommended:

- a) To approve the alternative working arrangements of all current and future Working Groups, Advisory Groups and Policy Development Forums as set out in section 4 of the report, and agree that all meetings, current and future are the responsibility of the relevant department, supported (where required) by the new Corporate Support Team, as opposed to Democratic Services.

The Working Groups, Advisory Groups and Policy Development Forums (PDFs) include (but not limited to) the following: Budget Advisory Group, Local Plan Working Group, Town Centre Working Group, Crawley Homes Advisory Group, Community and Value for Money Policy Development Forum and Environment and Prosperity Policy Development Forum.

- b) To disband the Town Centre Committee.
- c) Subject to any changes arising from the decisions under 2.2(a) above, to approve the establishment of any Policy Development Forums, Working Groups; and the Member Development Executive Support Group for the Council year 2015/2016 with the terms of reference and membership as detailed in Appendix 3.

### **3. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 3.1 The main Systems Thinking Review methodology is “*the right resource in the right place*”. It has become apparent throughout the review that service departments are the right resource to administer and support Working Groups, Advisory Groups and PDFs. The meetings require specialist knowledge and yet would not be resource intensive for officers who are experienced and knowledgeable within the relevant service department.
- 3.2 The service department would have ownership of the entire process (“*single piece of flow*”), whilst currently there is a “*hand-off*” to Democratic Services for all meetings, which results in a disjointed process for the service department and customers, who contact Democratic Services with queries (as the originators of the papers), instead of the relevant department (those with the specialist knowledge).
- 3.3 The Town Centre Committee (formally the Town Centre North Committee) has been in existence for approximately 9 years and yet this committee last met over 7 years’ ago (2007). This is the only subcommittee of the Cabinet and it is felt that should any decisions be required following a meeting of the Town Centre Working Group these could be taken by the Cabinet or the Cabinet Member.

### **4. Information and Analysis Supporting Recommendation**

- 4.1 Currently, most service departments contact Democratic Services to arrange and facilitate Working Groups, Advisory Groups and PDFs, issue agendas and take notes. It has become apparent that the necessary time taken to communicate the requirements to Democratic Services could have been used more effectively and efficiently to actually correspond directly with the recipients.
- 4.2 In some instances services departments did liaise with Members to confirm items for the Working Group. However, even in these instances Democratic Services was still required to despatch agendas and take notes. This has resulted in a piecemeal approach as the officers completing the work are interchangeable, resulting in lack of ownership for the entire process. This is in contradiction to the Systems Thinking approach and methodology the council is attempting to follow. This “flow” of work has been depicted in Appendix 1 showing the “waste” in the process.
- 4.3 Proposals had been suggested earlier in the Democratic Services Systems Thinking Review regarding possible options to look at “working in a new way” and as a result, as part of the Democratic Services “Service Improvement”, various CMT Members and officers were interviewed as part of a customer survey on Democratic Services. As with all meetings, Members should be clear about the benefits of meetings when compared to the cost of running such meetings. The role/purpose and value of Working Groups and PDFs has been questioned in their current format. It was felt that little value was obtained through PDFs, particularly as these are rarely held, although it is acknowledged that these are only actioned when required. Environment & Prosperity PDF has taken place once a year since 2012 and the Community & Value for Money PDF was last held in 2011.
- 4.4 Officers proposed that provision should be administered by the relevant service department, supported if appropriate by the Corporate Support Team as this would provide ownership, consistency and an improved service to its customers ensuring a continual service.
- 4.5 There was a strong preference from officers for all-Member seminars to ensure openness and transparency, providing these are properly managed by the relevant department. More Members could get involved and feel less excluded. It was observed throughout the recent

review of scrutiny work that there were concerns about a general reduction in the opportunity for Members' input. It was felt that all-Member seminars resulted in improved communication with Members, particularly as all Members have the opportunity to attend and speak. A "re-designed" flow is shown in Appendix 2, highlighting this streamlined approach.

- 4.6 Seminars are less resource intensive than the current operation within Democratic Services due to the detailed knowledge base within the relevant service departments and would require less administration or support than that provided currently in Democratic Services, particularly as these meetings are closed to the public.
- 4.7 The list below provides examples of current Working Groups, Advisory Groups and PDFs that could potentially operate as all Member Seminars with current and future meetings, with responsibility and support residing with the Service Department together with the Corporate Support Team if required. If it was then felt that supplementary meetings were required throughout the year, these could be requested via the relevant Cabinet Member through the Service Department. With this in mind, the following is recommended:
- 4.8 Budget Advisory Group (BAG)  
It is recommended that process follows the same successful format as this year; that the future meetings of BAG take place as one all Members' seminar followed by a couple of scheduled meetings later in the year. It will incorporate the HRA (Crawley Homes) capital as it is recommended that CHAG be disbanded. Administration and support of current and future meetings (BAG and seminar) would move to the relevant service department together with support provided by the Corporate Support Team (if required) and would be supported in a similar way to Portfolio Holder Briefings.
- 4.9 Local Plan Working Group  
This could be potentially operate similar to a 'task and finish group'. With the Local Plan Examination taking place spring 2015 it is anticipated that this working group will shortly cease. It is recommended that any further proposals for working groups could be undertaken as all Member seminars wherever possible and also that administration and support moves to the relevant service department, together with the Corporate Support Team (if needed).
- 4.10 Town Centre Working Group  
It is recommended that administration and support of current and future meetings moves to the relevant service department, supported if required by the Corporate Support Team. These meetings would operate in a similar way to Portfolio Holder Briefings or in a similar manner to Project Group meetings eg the Crawley Museum or Ifield West project groups. It is also recommended that all Member seminars take place whenever possible and as appropriate to ensure openness and improve communication for all Members.
- 4.11 Crawley Homes Advisory Group  
The future of CHAG has already been considered by the Crawley Homes Advisory Group on 27 January 2015 and it has recommended to Cabinet that the CHAG meetings are discontinued and replaced with an annual seminar on housing issues. This seminar would link with the work within strategic housing and also provide a tour of sites of housing interest. If there are specific policy issues then additional seminars could be run. It is hoped that this will enable all Members to have a better understanding of housing issues. Furthermore, the information compiled and considered by the CHAG could be reported through other means. This included Members' Information Bulletins (quarterly updates), through BAG, Cabinet or the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, thus improving efficiency, whilst the valued work of tenant participation through the TLAP (Tenant and Leaseholder Action Panel) would continue to aid consultation, recommendations and reporting feedback. It was agreed that TLAP would formally request further observers at their meetings and details thereof would be fed back (probably through the Members' Information Bulletin).

- 4.12 Community & Value for Money and Environment & Prosperity Policy Development Forums  
It is acknowledged that PDFs are only actioned when required. These meetings could be undertaken as all Member seminars wherever possible as this would result in improved communication and engagement. It is recommended that for these meetings (seminar and/or meeting) administration and support moves to the relevant service department, supported if required by the Corporate Support Team. These meetings could operate in a similar way to Portfolio Holder Briefings, and would be chaired by the appropriate lead officer (usually the Head of Service). Should further meetings be required these could be the responsibility of the service department.

## **5. Further Information**

- 5.1 In addition, all council meetings are available to view in the Outlook calendar (CTTE Cycle calendar), together with the calendar of meetings held on the Intranet and website and have recently been published in Outline. These allow service departments the ability to view council meetings and to easily book dates accordingly, without the need for Democratic Services to arrange the meetings. Seminar dates are easily bookable in advance for the forthcoming year to ensure Members are aware of any impending topics (for example Local Plan, Town Centre, Gatwick, consultation dates). These seminar dates are scheduled on the calendar of meetings which is agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services and Group Leaders, which is then included in the Members' Information Bulletin. Additionally, should a Member wish to request a topic which may benefit from a potential seminar, or a specific policy issue this could be raised with the relevant Cabinet Member in consultation with the Head of Service and additional seminars could be run.
- 5.2 The Minutes Protocol previously issued by Democratic Services states that the notes should be 'fit for purpose'. For Policy Development Forums, Advisory Groups, Working Groups and other closed/non-decision-making meetings the notes can be the form of notes/action points as these are for Members and officers only. This could be the case for all-Member seminars and it was stated throughout the customer surveys that action points had been produced for previous all-Member seminars. Therefore the notes required by the support or administrative areas should not be resource intensive to produce, particularly taking on board that the relevant departments should have 'informed, background' knowledge of the topics being discussed.
- 5.3 There are pressures and constraints affecting each council department and Democratic Services is not immune to these facts. That being said, it would be more beneficial and effective for service departments to administer such meetings as they will be better situated to determine issues as should be able to predict based on their work programmes when a particular item may become prevalent and resource accordingly.
- 5.4 It is apparent that throughout the "service improvement", the administering and support of Working Groups, Advisory Groups and PDFs is currently a "hand-off" to Democratic Services and not an integral part of the work.
- 5.5 The administration and support for each Group and/or Forum meeting should reside within its relevant responsible service department, thus avoiding the "hand off" to Democratic Services and an opportunity to strengthen a "single piece of flow" to result in the most effective outcome for service departments and its customers, as depicted in the appendices. The Corporate Support Team also offers additional provision with departmental knowledge. All-Member seminars have proven successful and are preferred in various areas of the council and it is recommended that these are considered as alternative options where appropriate.

## **6. Implications**

- 6.1 The Cabinet annually agree the terms of reference of working groups. It is recommended to Cabinet that the terms of reference for Policy Development Forums, Working Groups and Advisory Groups be amended and agreed (including support and administration) following the proposals documented in this report
- 6.2 There will be resource time saved as a result of these amendments in relation to Democratic Services, whilst service areas would have 'informed background' knowledge, as a result it would not be resource intensive and would be incorporated into their support areas. There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.
- 6.3 The staffing implications for Democratic Services will need to be explored further taking into account other current "Service Improvement" work.

## **7. Background Papers**

None.

Report author and contact officer:  
Heather Girling, Democratic Services Officer,  
01293 438697

Current Flow for Working Group Meeting depicting number of steps between Service Department and Democratic Services, “hand offs” and “waste”.

### Working Groups Flow - Current

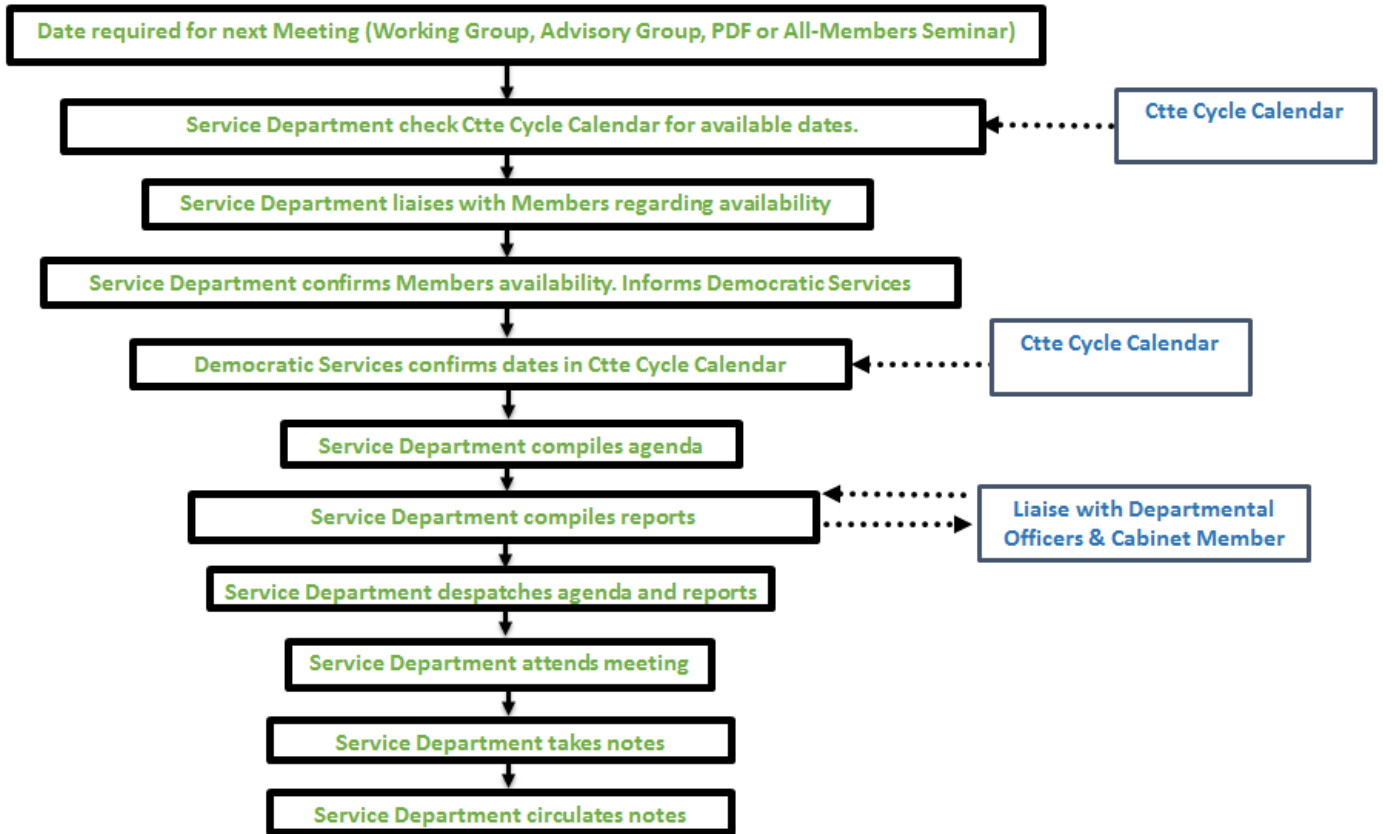


**Key – Systems Thinking**

- Green - Value
- Red – Waste

Redesigned Flow for Working Groups, Advisory Groups and PDF Meetings.

Working Groups, Advisory Groups, PDFs or Seminar Flow - Redesigned



**Key – Systems Thinking**

Green - Value

Red – Waste

**Policy Development Forums, Working Groups and Member Development Executive Support Group – Terms of Reference and Group Nominations 2015/2016**

Notes

- 1) Policy Development Forums (PDFs) to be chaired by appropriate Portfolio Holder for the matter under discussion
- 2) Lead Officers to be appointed to each Policy Development Forum and Working Group

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Terms of reference</b>	<b>Group nominations 2014- 2015</b>	<b>Group nominations 2015- 2016</b>
<b>PDFs</b>			
<b>Community and Value for Money Policy Development Forum</b>	Policy development work relating to the corporate priorities of Community and Value for Money.	<p>9 Members (5:4)</p> <p><u>Councillors</u>                      M L Ayling                      I T Irvine                      M G Jones                      T Lunnon                      B A Smith                      R D Burrett                      C R Eade                      L S Marshall-Ascough                      D M Peck</p> <p>Chair: Appropriate Cabinet Member                      Lead Officer(s):- Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive or appropriate Head of Service</p>	<p><u>Update</u>                      Could be disbanded or, more likely, wherever possible all Members’ Seminars arranged instead – subject to decision of Cabinet (10 June or 8 July)</p> <p><u>Councillors (currently 9 Members = 5:4) *</u>                      M L Ayling                      T Lunnon                      B Quinn                      J Stanley                      G Thomas</p> <p>Chair: Appropriate Cabinet Member                      Lead Officer(s):- Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive or appropriate Head of Service</p>
<b>Environment and Prosperity Policy Development Forum</b>	Policy development work relating to the corporate priorities of Environment and Prosperity.	<p>9 Members (5:4)</p> <p><u>Councillors</u>                      I T Irvine                      T Lunnon                      C Moffatt                      M Jones                      G Thomas                      Dr H S Bloom</p>	<p><u>Update</u>                      Could be disbanded or, more likely, wherever possible all Members’ Seminars arranged instead - subject to decision of Cabinet (10 June or 8 July)</p> <p><u>Councillors (currently 9 Members = 5:4) *</u>                      M L Ayling                      C A Cheshire</p>



Groups	Terms of reference	Group nominations 2014- 2015	Group nominations 2015- 2016
		K Brockwell R A Lanzer K Trussell  Chair: Appropriate Cabinet Member Lead Officer(s):- Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive or appropriate Head of Service	T Lunnon J Stanley G Thomas  Chair: Appropriate Cabinet Member Lead Officer(s):- Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive or appropriate Head of Service
<b>Working Groups</b>			
<b>Budget Advisory Group</b>	To advise the Cabinet on the allocation of resources within the General Fund and Capital Programme, taking account of the Budget Strategy, Corporate Plan and other relevant information.  Chair and Vice Chair of the Cabinet to attend Budget Advisory Group, to present a strategic perspective only.	9 Members (5:4) <u>Councillors</u> C A Cheshire C A Moffatt B J Quinn G Thomas (Chair) W A Ward B K Blake S A Blake R A Lanzer L A Walker  Lead Officer:- Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits	<u>Councillors (currently 9 Members = 5:4) *</u> T Lunnon C A Moffatt B A Smith G Thomas (Chair) W A Ward  R Burrett F Guidera K Jaggard M Stone  Lead Officer:- Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits
<b>Crawley Homes Advisory Group</b>	1. To assess all aspects of service provided by Crawley Homes, including the prioritisation of funding (Including the assessment of any savings and growth proposals prior to submission to Cabinet).	9 Members (5:4) + 3 co-optees  <u>Councillors:</u> S J Joyce (Chair) I T Irvine T Lunnon C J Mullins	<u>Update</u> CHAG has recommended to Cabinet that the CHAG meetings are discontinued and replaced with an annual seminar on housing issues - subject to decision of Cabinet (10 June or 8 July)

Groups	Terms of reference	Group nominations 2014- 2015	Group nominations 2015- 2016
	<p>2. To encourage the participation of all residents in developing Crawley Homes services.</p> <p>3. To make recommendations to the Cabinet as appropriate.</p>	<p>J Stanley Dr H S Bloom B J Burgess R G Burgess R D Burrett</p> <p><u>Co-optees:-</u> 3 nominated representatives of the 'Tenant and Leaseholder Action Panel' (TLAP) appointed by the Cabinet as non-voting co-optees. Cary Buckham, Martin Steward and Carolyn Wadley to remain as TLAP representatives pending a review of the purpose &amp; roles of TLAP and its' nominations to CHAG. Lead Officer:- Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p><u>Councillors (currently 9 Members = 5:4) *</u> M L Ayling S J Joyce (Chair) C A Moffatt B J Quinn J Stanley</p>
<p><b>Local Plan Working Group</b></p>	<p>1. To consider and make recommendations to the Cabinet on a Local Plan Scheme setting out a programme for preparation of the Local Plan and to update the Scheme as appropriate.</p> <p>2. To consider and provide guidance on the process for preparing and reviewing documents comprising the Local Plan.</p> <p>3. To consider and make recommendations to the Cabinet or Council as appropriate on Consultation or other documents forming part of the process of preparing the Local Plan Drafts of Local Plan documents prior to their adoption.</p>	<p>13 Members (7:6)</p> <p><u>Councillors</u> M L Ayling S J Joyce C A Moffatt B J Quinn R Sharma P C Smith (Chair) G Thomas</p> <p>S A Blake N J Boxall B J Burgess D Crow C R Eade R A Lanzer</p> <p>Lead Officer:- Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services</p>	<p><u>Update</u> Subject to decision of Cabinet (10 June or 8 July), with the Local Plan Examination taking place Spring 2015 it is anticipated that this working group could shortly cease and any further proposals for working groups could be undertaken as all Member seminars wherever possible.</p> <p><u>Councillors (currently 13 Members = 7:6)*</u> M L Ayling S J Joyce T Lunnon B J Quinn P C Smith (Chair) G Thomas W A Ward</p> <p>Lead Officer:- Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services</p>

Groups	Terms of reference	Group nominations 2014- 2015	Group nominations 2015- 2016
<b>Town Centre Working Group</b>	<p>To receive and consider reports on the renewal and redevelopment of the Town Centre and to make recommendations, as necessary, to the Cabinet on :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the proposed Town Centre development including negotiations with other parties</li> <li>proposals to achieve the redevelopment of sites identified in the Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document</li> <li>the review of the Local Plan in respect of policies relating to the Town Centre</li> <li>identification and promotion of other redevelopment opportunities to enhance the physical appearance and its social, economic and educational attributes</li> <li>communications with all interested parties to maintain confidence in the renewal and redevelopment of the Town Centre.</li> </ul>	<p>10 Members (6:4)</p> <p><u>Councillors:</u>  S J Joyce  M W Pickett  C A Moffatt  B A Smith  P C Smith (Chair)  G Thomas</p> <p>B J Burgess  D Crow  R A Lanzer  K J Trussell</p> <p>Lead Officer:- Interim Head of Service for the Town Centre &amp; Economic Development</p>	<p><u>Update</u>  Subject to decision of Cabinet (10 June or 8 July), wherever possible, all Member seminars could be held instead.</p> <p><u>Councillors (currently 10 Members = 6:4; could change to 6:5?) *</u>  C A Cheshire  C J Mullins  B A Smith  P C Smith (Chair)  G Thomas  W A Ward</p> <p>B J Burgess  R Lanzer  M Stone  J Tarrant  K Trussell</p> <p>Substitute: D Crow</p> <p>Lead Officer:- Head of Economic &amp; Environmental Services</p>
<b>Member Development Executive Support Group</b>	<p>1. To provide all party support for a coordinated approach to Member development across the Council.</p> <p>2.To make suggestions about Member development needs, based on priorities and agreed</p>	<p>5 Members (3:2)</p> <p><u>Councillors</u>  C C Lloyd  D J Shreeves (Chair)  G Thomas</p>	<p><u>Councillors (currently 5 Members = 3:2) *</u></p> <p>C C Lloyd  A C Skudder  G Thomas</p> <p>D Crow</p>

Groups	Terms of reference	Group nominations 2014- 2015	Group nominations 2015- 2016
	<p>criteria;</p> <p>3. To propose ideas to the Cabinet about Member development initiatives, working with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and outside agencies as appropriate</p> <p>4. To provide consistent communication about proposed and available Member development initiatives to party groups.</p> <p>5. To provide a forum for issues relating to facilities for Members to be raised and discussed.</p> <p>6. To ensure that a comprehensive induction programme is made available to all newly elected Councillors.</p>	<p>D Crow</p> <p>N J Boxall</p>	<p>D Peck</p>