

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Monday 9 November 2015 at 7.00pm

Present:

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

Also in Attendance:

Councillors P K Lamb and A C Skudder

Apology for Absence:

Councillor L Vitler

Officers Present:

Rob Channon Interim Head of Community Services (Operations)
Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer
Lee Harris Chief Executive

57. Members' Disclosure of Interests and Whipping Declarations

No disclosures of interests or whipping declarations were made.

58. Minutes and Matters Arising

Subject to the clerical correction below, the minutes of the Commission held on [5 October 2015](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair:-

Clerical Correction

With regard to Minute No 52 (Portfolio Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing) the bullet point "There was recognition that noise could potentially be attributed to poor health" be amended as follows "There was recognition that noise could potentially be a contributing factor to poor health".

59. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

60. Safer Crawley Partnership Performance Review and Future Priorities

The Commission received an update from the Chief Executive which provided the annual performance of the Safer Crawley Partnership along with the future priorities.

Discussion areas included:

- Whilst responsibility for working on Community Safety covers several services and agencies, there is a core team which includes the following: the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement, Chief Inspector Padwick, the Community Development Manager, the Partnership Support Officer, together with the Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour Team (NASB).
- The Commission has received frequent crime and disorder updates, including the Police and Crime Commissioner attendance, NASB briefing and Prevent seminar. A further briefing is scheduled for December on the new local policing model and a briefing in the New Year on the Partnership's priorities.
- The Safer Crawley Partnership is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement and undertakes a strategic assessment.
- The recent strategic assessment highlighted four emerging priorities;
 - Crime – figures for the town have increased in 2014/15 although the trend remains downwards and the council is working with Sussex Police to establish how to improve the way it tackles violent crime.
 - Sexual exploitation – investigations included historic and existing cases. The Partnership needs to improve its intelligence gathering and sharing of information.
 - Anti-social behaviour cases – partnership funding and work is of paramount importance to engage with individual cases. Successful collaborations have been undertaken with the police and mental health services to provide immediate help and support to people who may be experiencing a mental health crisis.
 - Rough sleepers in the town – numbers have increased and a multi-agency approach provides necessary help, assistance and working together to move people on while ensuring they are fully aware of how they can access a range of support. However, some individuals already have pending homelessness applications and offers of accommodation in other local authority areas and have no connection to Crawley. In this respect, partner agencies have offered necessary support wherever possible.
- With references made to CCTV within the town, there were mixed views as to the perception as to how safe people were made to feel by CCTV. It was enquired whether further sites would or could be used for CCTV given the Section 106 funds.

RESOLVED

That the update be welcomed and Members noted the Partnership's future priorities.

61. Transformation Update - Facilities

The Commission received an update from the Interim Head of Community Services (Operations) on the Facilities System Thinking Review.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- The Community Facilities Check phase commenced in May 2013, with the Town Hall Check phase beginning soon after in July. It was soon evident that there were synergies

between the two reviews and a decision was taken to combine the two reviews and undertake a joint Re-design.

- The Facilities Re-design was complex, dealing with multiple areas, teams, factual demand and data. The Re-design finished in December 2013 and trials of the new ways of working commenced. Good communication was of paramount importance, both throughout the Re-design team but also to those staff who had not been involved in the process.
- Consultation took place in April/May 2014 for recruitment to a new team.
- Areas of 'waste' were identified throughout the systems thinking process, including areas which failed to meet the customer's nominal value and resulted in multiple transactions for the customer. By eliminating the 'waste' within the process, customers can now 'book and pay' for their service in a single transaction. It was added that the few instances of damage that have taken place, those funds have been recovered.
- Within the Town Hall itself, the number of postal collections/deliveries was reduced from four to two a day. The increase in electronic communication has allowed a decrease in deliveries without a reduction in service efficiency.
- Changes in shift patterns has resulted in all staff members maintaining the same base level of knowledge and skills. This has delivered the necessary cover within the team and provided personal development. Two apprentice roles have recently been recruited.
- Concerns were voiced regarding the current security arrangements in the evening, along with operational issues regarding access for Members.
- In response to the concerns raised, the financial considerations of security and access were discussed, in comparison with officer time, morale and being risk adverse.
- It was also felt additional signage and information for Members regarding entrances, exits and contact information would be beneficial.

RESOLVED

That the Commission welcomed the update and noted the review.

62. Portfolio Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Resources

The Commission noted the brief update given by Councillor Skudder on his portfolio and questioned him on a variety of other issues relating to his [portfolio](#).

The following topics were discussed:

- With references made to moving to 'paperless' working, Councillor Skudder acknowledged it was the intention to lead by example as it was hoped to move to 'less paper' in the future. There was not a specific date but it was anticipated that there would be benefits brought about by reductions in printing costs that would off-set any ICT costs made in the interim period.
- It was acknowledged that any new ICT equipment was not meant for excessive long periods of use, however tolerance levels would be different for individuals. This had been feedback during the ICT sessions.
- It was recognised that additional training may be required to adapt to moving to 'less paper' and a new way of working. However, it was suggested that Members could form a 'best practice exchange' for sharing practical tips, which could also extend beyond ICT to other skills, such as mentoring and a 'skills audit'.
- There was recognition that the systems thinking methodology occasionally needed to be adapted in some service areas, particularly 'back office' services. However, the approach had improved efficiency and provided positive results.

- There was support for further ideas to be developed on the 'Fostering Interest in Local Government' item on the Cabinet Member's portfolio, with the option for generating ideas and possible scrutiny panel involvement.
- It was queried whether there were links to other Portfolio responsibilities within the Resources Portfolio, however it was also suggested that the Resources Portfolio provided the framework to enable other areas to function.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission thanked Councillor Skudder for attending and for the informative discussion that had ensued.

The Chief Executive left the meeting after this item.

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

There had been no meeting of the HASC since the October meeting of the Commission. The next meeting of the HASC is currently scheduled for 4 December 2015.

64. Scrutiny Panels

Review of Democratic Structures

The Panel's first meeting was held on [13 October 2015](#) and an update was provided by the Chair. The Panel planned to consider and assess the current system of governance, consider the key attributes for an effective governance system and consider drivers for change and/or improvements to the current system. As part of the Scrutiny Panel's work, it was felt important to consult with all Members and CMT Members that have experience of operating in a Leader and Cabinet Model of governance, together with those that have experience of the Committee System.

In line with Rule 8(b) of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Councillor Irvine requested to refer an item and would like additional information regarding the management of Section 106 agreements. Further information would be requested from Forward Planning in order to progress this item.

65. Forward Plan – December 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 Commission's meetings. The referrals included:

December 2015

Fairness Commission Scrutiny Panel – Recommended Operational Arrangements

66. Closure of Meeting

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.

B A SMITH
Chair