

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Monday 11 January 2016 at 7.00pm

Present:

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

Also in Attendance:

Councillor C J Mullins

Ivan Horsfall-Turner, Managing Director – Freedom Leisure
Matt Hunt, Operations Director – Freedom Leisure
Nyssa Jackson, Area Manager – Freedom Leisure

Apologies for Absence: None

Officers Present:

Karen Dodds Head of Crawley Homes
Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer
Valerie Granger Housing Support Officer
Nikki Hargrave Housing Options Manager
Lee Harris Chief Executive
Nick Hobbs Housing Needs Manager
Hannah Martin Strategic Housing Performance, Policy and Project Officer
Michael Morley Scheme Manager
Becky Pearce Sheltered Housing and Telecare Manager
Nigel Sheehan Head of Partnership Services

81. Members' Disclosure of Interests and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures of interests were made by Members:-

Member	Minute Number	Subject	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R A Lanzer	86	Transformation Update - Sheltered Housing	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor B A Smith	86	Transformation Update - Sheltered Housing	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	87	Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

Councillor B A Smith		87		Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
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82. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 30 November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. The Chair welcomed back Councillor Brockwell to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

83. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

84. Performance Discussion with Freedom Leisure on K2 Crawley Management

Members received a presentation from representatives from Freedom Leisure and the Head of Partnership Services on the leisure management contract together with the performance and changes that Freedom Leisure had focused on recently, which included:

- A brief background to the contract. The key element had been that partners share the vision and there was an opportunity to work together. It was highlighted that that whilst the contracts had grown across the country and there remained a strong focus on re-investment, sports development and customer service.
- Since managing K2 Crawley there have been significant increases in attendance with over 1,350,000 visits in 2014/15 and the initial target upon concept was 1m visitors. Other attendances have also witnessed a significant increase.
- An Activities Development Officer was appointed which enabled internal projects to be initiated alongside the already successful external projects and community development work of the Community Sports Development Officer.
- Partnership work with Crawley Wellbeing had continued and been further developed with vulnerable groups to include the launch of Dementia Bowls and Dementia Swimming in 2016.
- K2 Crawley hosts many local, regional, national and international events whilst acknowledging the impact some of the events has on the local community and also working with partners and businesses to both minimise impact and maximise success.
- K2 Crawley is generally a very efficient building however further measures have been taken to reduce the carbon footprint and work is continuing ongoing.
- All customer feedback is incorporated into Freedom Leisure's Service Improvement Plan.
- In 2015 Freedom Leisure introduced a new Management Development Programme and ensures careers development opportunities are provided.

Members held a question and answer session with the representatives from Freedom Leisure and the Head of Partnership Services. The issues raised and the key responses included:

- Gym prices on the website to encourage membership. It was discussed that memberships are designed around individual needs and whilst in the past it was recommended that the venue was visited to ascertain the best package and to view the centre it is currently being reviewed whether this is appropriate. It was recognised that K2 Crawley offers a range of facilities and it would be beneficial for these to be

seen in its entirety to ensure value for money and ultimately benefit prospective members.

- Importance to maintain focus and hosting of events. It is of paramount importance that Freedom Leisure remains bespoke and local and has employed Area Managers to ensure commitment and fundamentally focus on the business.
- The advertising and marketing of events is provided through social media, partners, Sport England and events' pages and perhaps further marketing could be carried out throughout the borough (eg roundabout sponsorship). Furthermore, Freedom Leisure liaise with local schools to promote activities.
- Breakdown of attendance and waiting lists. It was queried whether there was an analysis of attendance by locality to determine what percentage of attendees were local or travelling into the town and also BME population. It was noted only some data would be available for membership usage. Confirmation would be sought on gymnastics waiting list.
- Priority Usage signs for lift. It was commented that the lift could have signs accommodated for priority users (similar to trains/buses).
- Potential future changes were discussed including a review of the current car parking arrangements. Although it was acknowledged that on event days, overflow car parking is currently in operation.

RESOLVED

That the Chair thanked the representatives from Freedom Leisure for attending and for the informative discussion that had ensued. The Commission welcomed the update and noted the strong and successful partnership working between the council and Freedom Leisure.

85. Transformation Update - Homelessness

The Commission received a presentation from the Housing Needs Manager, Housing Options Manager, together with the Strategic Housing Performance, Policy and Project Officer on the Systems Thinking Review of the Homelessness Service.

In January 2014 a review of the homelessness service was initiated as it was established that a large case load of homeless applications meant that customers were waiting long periods to receive decisions on applications, particularly negative decisions. This resulted in customers spending more time in temporary accommodation, which decreased the availability of temporary accommodation whilst increased the likelihood of having to use out of borough and/or nightly paid accommodation. Furthermore, Shelter were challenging more of the council's homeless application decisions.

The conclusions from the 'Check Phase' were:

- The majority of customers accessed the Housing Options service via the Housing Help Point (HHP).
- The staffing structure of the HHP and Housing Options team delayed customers from receiving quick decisions.
- The HHP was not resilient to changes in customer demand (in volume or complexity).
- Obtaining information from a customer or medical practitioner could be problematic and delayed a decision being made on an application.
- Legal challenges were increasing, resulting in decision letters becoming more complex and delayed the customer from receiving a decision.

As a result of the service 'Redesign' several changes were made to the system:

- The team worked with partners and local agencies to enable faster responses to medical information requests, and to better prepare for the discharge of customers who did not have settled accommodation available to them.
- A new post was trialled and front facing staff were trained to deal with more complex queries within the HHP.
- The team made more effective use of the Allocations Policy.
- Customers dealt with one officer taking their query or application from start to finish as a 'single piece of flow'.
- The team improved the ways in which customers could access the service and revised the web pages providing customers with more choice as to how to access the service.
- As a result, the HHP was better equipped to deal with complex demand, so customers were more likely to have their queries answered and customers have a dedicated case worker.
- Homeless preventions through the housing register had increased and the case load of homeless applications had reduced.

During the presentation, the following points were expressed:

- It was acknowledged that there were challenges affecting the service, including the legal challenges received. It was recognised that discussions with Shelter have taken place with suggested improvements to the service.
- With regards to the rough sleepers in the town, it was acknowledged that the numbers have increased and a multi-agency approach provides necessary help, assistance and works together to ensure individuals are fully aware of how they can access a range of support. However, some individuals already have 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. It was commented by some Members that it would be beneficial to have links to voluntary sector organisations in order to assist in responding to local needs and issues.
- The initial causes of homelessness were acknowledged and the service identified preventative measures and housing need, working with partners to assist tenancy sustainment. Debt advice was also provided, referring to Citizens Advice Bureau where appropriate.
- It was acknowledged that the use off out of borough accommodation placement was occasionally necessary. Family needs together with school and work placements were considered.

RESOLVED

That the Commission welcomed the presentation and thanked individual officers for their contribution and attendance at the Commission.

The Chief Executive left the meeting after this item.

86. Transformation Update - Sheltered Housing

The Commission received a presentation from the Head of Crawley Homes and the Systems Thinking Review Team (Sheltered Housing and Telecare Manager, Housing Support Officer and Scheme Manager) on the Check Phase of the Review.

The Head of Crawley Homes updated the Commission regarding the reduction of funding to be received from WSCC in relation to sheltered housing. As a result this would impact on the 'Redesign' of the review together with the timescales.

The majority of the presentation focused on the Sheltered Housing courtesy morning call that each tenant received via the call system.

The conclusions from the 'Check Phase' were:

- 'Value Demands' for the service included general requests, home visits, contacting family/friends/third party, completing tenants' correspondence support and responding to emergency pull-cord requests.
- Alternatively the team found that 'failure demand' included accidental calls, updating tenant information, tenant property repairs (as this was currently a straight hand off from the scheme manager to the repairs team), communal area repair requests (as these should be noticed on site) and call system equipment issues.
- 60% of tenants have a morning call and of the total 795 calls at the 10 schemes, 99.25% reported no issues throughout the call.
- The majority of tenants moving to integral schemes choose to have morning calls versus the more independent living of a dispersed scheme where the number of tenants receiving calls is significantly less.
- It was recognised that there were various 'system conditions' within the service including health and safety legislation and ICT systems. Furthermore it was recognised that the service was influenced by Social Services and the NHS.

Following the presentation, the following points were expressed:

- Concern was expressed that in some instances tenants were discharged from hospital without a care package. It was suggested that Councillor Ward could raise this matter at the next HASC meeting.
- Members recognised that the majority of tenants opted to receive a morning call. Through 'Redesign' alternative methods would be considered. However it was also commented that the morning call offered reassurance to some customers and also next of kin.
- It was acknowledged that the team had collated relevant data surrounding the service and the 'Redesign' element would investigate approaches to improving the service. It was suggested that the Commission Members receive a further update on the 'Redesign' at a later date.

RESOLVED

That the Commission welcomed the presentation and thanked individual staff members for their contribution and attendance at the meeting.

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

Councillor W A Ward provided an update on the HASC meeting held on 4 December 2015. The major items discussed were as follows:

- The Urgent Treatment Centre at Crawley Hospital held its open day in December to reveal the proposed transformation to include enhanced areas and the creation of a dementia-friendly ward.
- South East Coast Ambulance Service saw a peak in demand during 2014/2015.

- Following recent research undertaken in terms of residential care home availability, it was acknowledged that south east Crawley would be among the future pressure points. Some Members commented that there was a challenge in the current level of adult social care provision, and also around recruitment and retention.
- It was recognised that the availability and affordability of housing for potential care staff was a potential barrier to recruitment and retention. WSCC was looking at 'onsite provision' with care providers and the viability of emerging schemes.

88. Scrutiny Panels

Councillor B A Smith informed the Commission that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel was scheduled to take place on 25 January 2016. Site visits had been arranged with Reading Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in January as both these councils had undertaken reviews of their governance arrangements.

Following the 5 October 2015 OSC meeting during which there was particular support for the re-establishment of the 'Passport to Leisure' or 'Leisure Plus' scheme that previously existed, providing subsidised leisure use to Crawley residents (which was also raised at Full Council), Commission Members were informed that a Scrutiny Panel had been requested to investigate the scope, advantages and disadvantages of introducing a 'Crawley Leisure Card'.

89. Forward Plan – February 2016 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.

RESOLVED

That the following report be referred from the Forward Plan:

February 2016

Agency Staff Procurement

March 2016

Gambling Policy

Town Hall Refurbishment Proposal

90. Closure of Meeting

The meeting ended at 22.45pm.

B A SMITH
Chair