

Crawley Borough Council



Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Monday 8 February 2016 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, I T Irvine, R A Lanzer and
L Vitler

Also in Attendance:

Councillors P K Lamb, B McCrow, P C Smith and G Thomas

Apologies for Absence: K Brockwell, C A Cheshire and W A Ward

Officers Present:

Mary Gaskins Corporate Accountant
Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer
Lucasta Grayson Head of People and Technology
Lee Harris Chief Executive
Karen Hayes Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits
Suzanne Holloway Principal Planning Officer
Bethany Lester Planning Officer
Becca Williams Procurement Officer
Paul Windust Corporate Accounting & Treasury Services Manager

91. Members' Disclosure of Interests and Whipping Declarations

No disclosures of interests or whipping declarations were made.

92. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on [11 January 2016](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

93. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

94. Agency Staff Procurement

The Commission considered report [PAT/26](#) of the Head of Partnership Services and the Head of People and Technology. The report identified the new options for sourcing temporary agency staff.

The discussion items included:

- The timescales for the procurement process.
- An acknowledgement that temporary agency staff have been used for a variety of posts within the organisation.
- The continued use of temporary appointments where appropriate.
- An advantage of the proposed process being the inclusion of local SMEs.

RESOLVED

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet and was keen for the proposal to proceed.

95. 2016/17 Budget and Council Tax

The Commission considered report [FIN/380](#) with the Leader and the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits. The report set out the proposed Budget and Council Tax for 2016/17 taking into account factors such savings and growth, latest investment interest projections and income estimates.

Members' comments included:

- There were expressions of support for the proposals as some Members acknowledged the continued work towards a balanced budget, putting back into reserves when the budget was in surplus, whilst maintaining levels of service delivery.
- It was recognised that there was a focus on income generation, including investment acquisitions.
- The performance of the investment income budget was discussed, with recognition that the budget was monitored regularly and had achieved more than originally estimated.
- Members also sought clarity regarding the proposed council tax increase.

RESOLVED

That the Commission noted the report and would look forward to the discussion at Full Council on 24 February.

96. Treasury Management Strategy 2016/2017

The Commission considered report [FIN/381](#) of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits on the Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17 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 main discussion areas included:

- The Council's investment and borrowing strategies, including the credit worthiness of investing with local authorities.
- The instances where the ethical investment policy had been considered to date.
- Confirmation was obtained on the Council's investment priorities and capital expenditure plans, including individual projects.

RESOLVED

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

97. Section 106 Planning Obligations and an update on Crawley Community Infrastructure Levy

The Commission considered report [SHAP/53](#) with the Principal Planning Officer. The report outlined the process and management for the spending of Section 106 (s106) agreements together with how s106 would be positioned alongside Crawley's emerging Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

During the discussion with Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, and the Principal Planning Officer, Members' main discussion areas included:

- Clarity sought on the process and management of s106 agreements, the individual projects and the timescales involved.
- Recognition that there was specific criteria for each s106 agreement.
- Acknowledgement of the allocation of CIL receipts for spending in the area where the development is taking place (in agreement with the local community).
- Encouragement that whilst informed of the indicative timescales, wider and detailed consultation would take place with Members for the next stage of the process including the terms of establishing governance.
- Acknowledgement that the governance stage would commence shortly and Members requested an update on these arrangements prior to CIL adoption. Confirmation was sought as to the reporting route for the governance arrangements.

RESOLVED

That the Commission thanked the Principal Planning Officer for a comprehensive report and noted the information contained therein.

The Chief Executive left the meeting after this item.

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

Councillor B A Smith provided an update on the recent HASC meeting. The major items discussed were as follows:

- The Strengthening Primary Care Services in West Sussex report highlighted the challenges faced by Primary Care.
- Additional information had been requested on the ambulance handover times at A&E departments in West Sussex.
- The Healthwatch West Sussex Discharge report provided a proactive programme for monitoring operations and services.

99. Scrutiny Panels

Review of Democratic Structures

Councillor B A Smith informed Members that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel was scheduled to take place on 23 February 2016. Site visits had been undertaken with Reading Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in January as both these councils had undertaken reviews of their governance arrangements.

Joint Scrutiny Steering Group

Councillor B A Smith provided an updated on the recent meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Steering Group. It has been agreed that Housing Provision for Care Leavers would be a useful Task and Finish Group. Councillor K Sudan had previously been agreed as the representative with the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services as the Link Officer.

100. Establishment of and Appointments to Scrutiny Panels

It is the responsibility of the Commission to establish Scrutiny Panels as required, to appoint a Chair to each Panel and agree the Members to be appointed to each Panel.

Crawley Leisure Card

Nominations had been received for the Scrutiny Panel along with nominations for Chair.

In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Commission confirmed the establishment of the 'Crawley Leisure Card Scrutiny Panel', with the membership of Councillors Ayling, Guidera, McCrow, Sharma and Thomas, with Councillor Thomas as Chair.

101. Forward Plan – March 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. Clarification was sought on the 'Town Hall Refurbishment Proposal' report and its notice of intention to conduct business in private.

RESOLVED

That the following report be referred from the Forward Plan:

March 2016

West Green Neighbourhood Plan

102. Closure of Meeting

The meeting ended at 8.38pm.

B A SMITH
Chair