

Crawley Borough Council



Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Monday 7 November 2016 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor R G Burgess (Vice-Chair/Acting Chair)
Councillors M L Ayling, T G Belben, C A Cheshire, I T Irvine, R A Lanzer, T Rana,
K Sudan and L Vitler

Also in Attendance:

Councillors S J Joyce, C J Mullins, A C Skudder and G Thomas

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Dr H S Bloom and B A Smith

Officers Present:

Tony Baldock	Environmental Health Manager
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Chris Harris	Head of Community Services
Lee Harris	Chief Executive
Sam Pegram	Environmental Health Administrative Assistant
Iain Pocknell	Principal Environmental Health Practitioner
Karen Rham	Parks and Streetscene Manager
Nigel Sheehan	Head of Partnership Services

44. Members' Disclosure of Interests and Whipping Declarations

No disclosures of interests or whipping declarations were made.

45. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on [3 October 2016](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Acting Chair.

46. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

47. Transformation Update – Streetscene Redesign

The Commission received an update from the Head of Community Services and the Parks and Streetscene Manager on the Streetscene System Thinking Review.

The main conclusions from the 'check phase' were:

- An acknowledgement that the review covered a huge amount of services, including the Cleansing Team, Grass Cutting and Shrub/Hedge Maintenance.
- Considerable "waste" had been discovered in having specialist teams focusing on narrow areas of responsibility.
- There were differences in "thinking" and "behaviour" between the various teams.
- The new purpose was "Help me to live in a safe, clean and well maintained town".

As a result of the 'redesign' several changes had been made to the system:

- Experimentation had taken place with different types of equipment and tools.
- In order to trial different ways of working the town had been divided into 5 'patches' (areas) and primarily focused on the West Patch (Bewbush, Broadfield, Gossops Green) for the trial in order to ascertain the "best way of working" before "rolling in" town wide.
- On site staff had worked closely with residents and as a result motivation had increased, although it may potentially also raise public expectations.
- The team regularly reviewed ways of working in order to share knowledge and improve learning. There was recognition that Systems Thinking had changed the team's thinking, behaviour and as a result improved performance.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Tilgate Park was significant to be an individual patch and was identified through its 5 year business plan.
- It was anticipated that Patch Leaders would liaise with management establishments/contractors regarding private areas such as private housing and schools.
- The allocation of resources between patches was determined based on current staffing levels and facilities. It was acknowledged that this was flexible in its arrangement.
- There was support for the future preservation of shrub beds throughout the town.
- Clarity was sought and obtained on the responsibility of street sign cleansing, whilst recognising the need for joined up working with WSCC.
- The need to continually experiment throughout the changing of the seasons was of paramount importance.

RESOLVED

That the Acting Chair thanked the officers for their contribution and attendance at the Commission.

48. Transformation Update – Environmental Health Check

The Commission received an update from the Environmental Health Manager and members from the Systems Thinking Team on the Environmental Health System Thinking Review.

The main conclusions from the 'check phase' were:

Environmental Health:

- Gatwick Airport makes the council unique as an inland port health authority.
- The majority of the team's work was reactive (77%) compared to proactive (23%).

- Correspondence was being issued to customers that were not easy to understand.
 - There were multiple “hand offs” meaning that work was passed between several departments which caused delays and duplication.
 - There was confusion over the different roles between Environmental Health and the Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour Teams.
- Licensing:
- Licensing applications can result in ‘waste’ with duplicate information required to be re-entered.
 - Delays had occurred during the licensing application consultation period required from the police together with the need for identification to be provided. In addition some applications are categorised as invalid.
- Pest Control:
- There were multiple “hand offs” between team members, resulted in delays for customers.
 - There was a lack of access to technology for some officers, causing a duplication of work.
 - There was a need to prioritise customers’ needs and appointments, particularly in receipt of cancellations.
- Port Health
- Delays had occurred as a result of ICT downtime.
 - Health certification was issued in paper format as opposed to electronic.
 - Laboratory analysis turnaround times were variable.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Recognition that as an outcome of the restructure in 2012, savings have been generated and the service has been able to redesign its operation, resulting in improved performance.
- Acknowledgement that it was important that all officers dealing with the team’s enquiries had the skills and training to carry out necessary tasks.
- Appreciation that the service was both varied and complex, covering many diverse areas.

RESOLVED

That the Commission welcomed the presentation and thanked members of the project team for attending. The Acting Chair thanked individual officers for their contribution and attendance at the Commission.

49. Cabinet Member Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability

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

The following topics were discussed:

- The development of the new cemetery was progressing and it was anticipated that phase one would be completed in summer 2017. Councillor Thomas wished to thank all the officers and Members for their involvement in this important project.
- Waste management was highlighted, with particular reference to communal bins at flats within the town. It was felt that the type and capacity of the bins could be addressed, along with the need to focus on practical ways to increase recycling rates, together with reducing the actual packaging generally.

- Green waste was increasing with a current waiting list for the green bins. However it was noted that practical steps needed to be investigated to increase the percentage of recyclable material, particularly as other areas have different recycling rates.
- With reference to abandoned trolleys, a meeting had taken place with Trolleywise and a further meeting was being sought with the newly formed Patch Managers to develop future working, whilst it also relied on residents taking the initiative to report abandoned trolleys and to inform of the current 'hotspots'. The council's website and Trolleywise systems assisted in this process.
- It was recognised that fly-tipping occurred in every neighbourhood, however there were 'hotspots' within the town. There were suggestions for 'collection days' where residents bring unwanted items to temporary skip sites which could be trialled in a particular neighbourhood. There was also an idea of 'goods street-swap'/'freecycle', where streets set up areas and swap items between themselves on a particular day.
- Councillor Thomas was pleased to inform Commission members that the consultation on the Boulevard public conveniences had received over 200 responses and that the refurbishment would now take place as part of the town centre regeneration resources permitting.
- It was recognised that action to mitigate climate change and promote sustainability should feature in many different activities. For instance, the communication to relevant Crawley retailers following the recommendation of the Environmental Audit Committee to the Government that microbeads were banned in cosmetics and cleaning products, solar panels on council buildings and the proposed heat and power system in the town centre.
- Residential improvement schemes were highlighted as being able to provide additional parking spaces. Whilst it was noted that parking was still a concern within the borough, a balance needed to be struck between providing innovative working solutions and meeting the financial challenges.
- Clarity was sought and obtained as to the process for street naming, with particular reference to Forge Wood.

RESOLVED

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

50. Review of Democratic Structures Scrutiny Panel Final Report

The Commission considered report [OSC/253](#) of Councillor B A Smith as Chair of the Review of Democratic Structures Scrutiny Panel. The Panel was established to consider assessing the Council's current governance arrangements, to consider the key attributes for an effective governance system, consider the drivers for change and then consider improvements to the current system.

- Members were in favour of Recommendations 2.1a, b, c, d, e, f and g.
- It was felt that recommendation 'h' was unnecessary as this was already understood to be actioned.
- It was commented that recommendation 'i' should be removed as training should be arranged by the Members' Executive Support Group as the independent body as opposed to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.
- The Commission would seek to instigate recommendation 'e' as it was within its remit to do so.
- Support made to the important reference of the Portfolio Advisory Groups taking place only subject to sufficient items of business being available for consideration, which

- would avoid unnecessary meetings. However it was questioned who would consider when a meeting would then occur and how.
- It was felt there were areas of uncertainty covering the Portfolio Advisory Groups. In particular, greater clarity was sought as to the formalisation and operation of the Portfolio Advisory Groups, especially the membership and chairing. Some Members felt the Groups should be chaired by a Cabinet Member so the Portfolio Holder could 'advise' other Members of initial policy proposals (as in most other authorities' models). Other Members from the Scrutiny Panel agreed that having evaluated the merits and options that the Portfolio Advisory Groups should not be chaired by a Cabinet Member.
 - Recognition that the Portfolio Advisory Groups could support the development of policy, although there was also concern expressed that the Portfolio Advisory Groups may slow the decision making process.
 - Financial implications were noted.
 - It was felt that if recommendation 2.1b was approved, the need to establish a review within 12 months of operation was of paramount importance.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to endorse recommendations a, b, c, d, e, f and g in paragraph 2.1.

Members did not fully support recommendations 2.1h and i. The comments and recommendations would be submitted to the Governance Committee on 14 November 2016.

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

The next meeting of the HASC would take place on 10 November 2016. The agenda featured:

- Health and Adult Social Care Plans for Winter 2016/17
- Meals on Wheels Contract Update
- Patient Transport Service Update, with particular reference that South Central Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS) would be taking over the contract from Coperforma.

52. Forward Plan – December 2016 and Provisional List of Reports for the following meetings of the Commission

None.

53. Closure of Meeting

The meeting ended at 9.45pm.

R G Burgess
Acting Chair