



Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Monday 28 November 2016 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor B A Smith (Chair)
Councillors M L Ayling, T G Belben, Dr H S Bloom, C A Cheshire, I T Irvine,
R A Lanzer, T Rana and K Sudan

Also in Attendance:

Councillors P K Lamb and M Pickett

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors R G Burgess and L Vitler
Lee Harris Chief Executive

Officers Present:

Tony Baldock	Environmental Health Manager
Jos Berreen	Benefits Case Officer
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Karen Hayes	Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits
Paul Windust	Corporate Accounting & Treasury Services Manager

54. Death of Honorary Freeman and Alderman Jim Smith MBE

The Commission observed one minute's silence in memory of former Councillor, Mayor and Honorary Freeman and Alderman Jim Smith MBE. Jim sadly passed away on 9 November 2016.

55. Members' Disclosure of Interests and Whipping Declarations

No disclosures of interests or whipping declarations were made.

56. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on [7 November 2016](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

57. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

58. Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2016-2017

The Commission considered report [FIN/396](#) of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which provided an update on the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for the first two quarters of 2016/2017. The Council prioritises its investments as being security of capital, liquidity and yield.

During the discussion with the Leader, the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits, and the Corporate Accounting and Treasury Services Manager the following topics were discussed:

- The breach of investment limits was noted.
- Recognition that repurchase agreements were a form of low risk secure lending and loans to housing associations can provide significant yield when compared to local authorities.
- Support that Repurchase Agreements and Housing Associations investments be appended to the 2016/17 Annual Investment Strategy.

RESOLVED

That the report and recommendations to the Cabinet be noted.

59. Review of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Commission considered report [FIN/399](#) of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits. The Council introduced a local council tax reduction scheme in April 2013. The scheme is means tested and determines the amount by which a taxpayer's council tax will be reduced. Due to Government welfare reform changes it was appropriate for the Council to consider whether it wished to revise the current scheme. The report considered some possible amendments to the current scheme, which, if agreed, would come into effect from 1 April 2017.

During the discussion with the Leader, the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits and Benefits Case Officer, Members main comments included:

- Disappointment was voiced that a response had not been received during the consultation period from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Reference was made to appendix 3 in the report to the "estimated additional cost avoided to WSCC and Sussex Police" that should apply to options 1-4.
- Members sought and gained clarification on a number of matters raised including the option 4 proposal, the calculation of housing benefit allowance and the council tax reduction applied, particularly for those working non-standard hour contracts.
- Concern was expressed over the complex nature of the report and as a result there were mixed views from Members in terms of considering the options for recommendation. Whilst one Member recommended options 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5c, the majority of Members favoured the principal concept to support those options that had a less negative impact on those most vulnerable.
- The Commission took the opportunity to thank all the officers concerned for the work undertaken and commitment in the Benefits Service. Particular reference was made to Karen Hayes (Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits) and team members including Jos Berreen (Benefits Case Officer).

RESOLVED

That the Commission noted the report and supported the principal concept to support those options that had a less negative impact on those most vulnerable.

60. Review of Statement of Licensing Policy Gambling Act 2005

The Commission considered report [PES/222](#) of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services. The report documented the proposed amendments to the Council's revised Statement of Licensing Policy (Gambling Act 2005), which had been generated from responses following a 12 week public consultation exercise that concluded on 25 September 2016.

During the discussion with the Environmental Health Manager, Members expressed the following comments:

- Support that the policy achieved a balance between respecting access to premises and protecting the rights of individuals.
- Clarification sought on the terms of reference for licensing and licensing-sub committees.
- Acknowledgement that the statutory guidance now included local area profiles and operators risk assessments. The latter of which would include premises lone-working, a requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support the recommendations to the Cabinet.

61. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy 2016

The Commission was informed that this item had been deferred with prior agreement of the Chair. The amended policy required further consultation and review. It would now feature on the OSC agenda in early 2017.

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

The recent HASC meeting took place in November 2016. Key items of discussion included the Patient Transport Service contract move from Coperforma to South Central Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS). A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

63. Forward Plan – January 2017 and Provisional List of Reports for the following meetings of the Commission

The Commission considered the latest version of the Forward Plan and the provisional lists of reports for future meetings. The referrals included:

Crawley Town Hall
Future Delivery of Crawley's Building Control Service
Sheltered Housing Service Review
Local Development Scheme (LDS) – provisional referral

64. Closure of Meeting

The meeting ended at 7.57pm.

B A Smith
Chair