

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Monday 20 March 2017 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor B A Smith (Chair)
Councillor R G Burgess (Vice-Chair)
Councillors T G Belben, Dr H S Bloom, R A Lanzer, T Rana, K Sudan and L Vitler

Also in Attendance:

Councillors B J Burgess, S J Joyce, P K Lamb, P Smith and M A Stone

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors M L Ayling and I T Irvine

Absent:

Councillor C A Cheshire

Officers Present:

Russell Allison Housing Enabling and Development Manager
Peter Browning Acting Chief Executive
Karen Dodds Head of Crawley Homes
Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer
Clem Smith Head of Economic and Environmental Services

86. Members' Disclosure of Interests and Whipping Declarations

No disclosures of interests or whipping declarations were made.

87. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on [6 February 2017](#) were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. Councillor Sudan raised a matter on item 84 (Crawley Town Hall). It was noted that the relationship between the Council and the developer would need to be closely monitored.

88. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

89. Town Centre Regeneration Programme (Phase 2) – Queensway & The Pavement

The Commission considered report [PES/230](#) of the Head of Economic and Environmental Services on the proposal to extend the environmental improvement scheme in Queens Square along Queensway and The Pavement, as part of the next phase of the Town Centre Regeneration Programme. The report also sought delegated authority for approval of the final design, to spend up to the allocated budget for the scheme and to appoint a contractor to construct the scheme following a procurement exercise.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, and Head of Economic and Environmental Services the following comments were made:

- Recognition that proposals included improving public space, linking Queens Square, Memorial Gardens and Queensway, partial removal of hedging that obstructs views and light; and better vehicular access into Parkside car park including traffic calming measures. It was noted that memorial trees would remain in situ.
- Recognition that subject to funding streams being agreed and consultation it was anticipated construction would commence early 2018.
- Acknowledgement that lessons learned from Queens Square improvements had been applied to this scheme.
- It was noted that further proposals including maintenance would be incorporated into the detailed final design process.

RESOLVED

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

90. Sheltered Housing Service Review

The Commission considered report [CH/171](#) with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Head of Crawley Homes. The report set out proposed amendments to the service provision in sheltered housing and that provided within general needs accommodation.

The following topics were discussed:

- Acknowledgement that consultation had taken place with the majority of tenants (with accompanying relatives if appropriate). It was noted that a level of dependency wanted to be maintained.
- Clarification sought and obtained on the operation of the key safes.
- Recognition that it was proposed to de-designate some of the dispersed schemes, starting with those where there was a high opt out of the support service and neighbourhood facilities in the vicinity.
- An acknowledgement that circumstances change and it would be necessary to identify individual health needs, maintaining regular contact to ensure people were living well and healthy.
- There would be a requirement to respond as a flexible, needs based service.

RESOLVED

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

91. Cabinet Member Discussion with the Leader of the Council

The Commission noted the update given by Councillor Lamb and questioned him on a variety of issues relating to his [portfolio](#) and the leadership of the Council which included the following:

- Providing overview and general policy direction.
- Regularly meeting members of the public, other authorities, national organisations together with other private, public and voluntary sector groups, forming networks resulting in good practice that ultimately improves the general wellbeing of the town.
- The scheme of delegation for Cabinet functions was discussed as it was commented that there was provision to reform the current scheme resulting in a general set of responsibilities.
- Following the recent review of democratic structures there was recognition that there were advantages and disadvantages with the Strong Leader model. However it was felt there should be scope within the system for all Members to initiate ideas.

RESOLVED

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

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

An update was provided from the most recent HASC meeting. Key items of discussion included:

- Update provided on the Patient Transport Service in Sussex. South Central Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS) will take complete responsibility from April 2017.
- Concern expressed regarding the number of patients medically fit for discharge who remain in a hospital bed across the area, particularly in comparison to previous years.
- The Committee continues to receive updates from representatives of the Working Group regarding Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust Care Quality Commission Report Monitoring.

93. Forward Plan – April 2017 and Provisional List of Reports for the following meetings of the Commission

The Commission confirmed the following reports for its next meeting:

- Budget Strategy 2018/19 – 2021/22.
- Treasury Management Outturn 2016-2017.
- Local Development Scheme (LDS) – provisional referral.
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) – provisional referral.

94 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraphs specified against the item.

95. Council Enabled Affordable Housing

(Exempt Paragraph 3)

Exempt Paragraph 3 (information relating to financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)).

This item was requested to be on agenda by the Cabinet Member for Housing in association with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

The Commission considered report SHAPS/58 of the Head of Strategic Housing and Planning Services and the additional report SHAPS/58.5. The purpose of the report was to secure financial assistance to enable the provision of affordable housing within the borough.

A discussion was held with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Housing Enabling and Development Manager.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Clarity sought and obtained over viability of the proposal.
- Recognition that there is increasing pressure to commit Right-to-Buy funds within the anticipated timescales.
- Overall support and the opportunity to secure account reserves and Right-to-Buy 1-4-1 receipts, to maximise affordable housing development.
- Advantages and disadvantages of shared ownership were discussed in comparison to shared equity.
- Support for any future consultations and communications to be clear and concise.

RESOLVED

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

96. Closure of Meeting

The meeting ended at 8.25pm and upon closing the meeting the Chair took the opportunity to thank Members of the Commission for their attendance and contribution throughout the year.

B A Smith
Chair