

Crawley Borough Council

**Cabinet**

**Supplementary Agenda**

**Wednesday, 7 September 2022**



Chief Executive

		Pages
5	<b>Matters referred to the Cabinet and Report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission</b>	3 - 4

Attached is a copy of the OSC Comments to Cabinet from its meeting on: Monday 5 September 2022.

*NOTE: The Leader has agreed that, although this report and information was not available for at least five clear days before the meeting, there are special circumstances justifying its urgent consideration.*



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# Agenda Item 5

**Cabinet**  
**Wednesday 7 September 2022**

**Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission**  
**at its meeting on Monday 5 September 2022**  
**OSC/304**

**1. Cabinet Agenda Item 6 – Final Report of the Council-owned Neighbourhood Parades Scrutiny Panel**

**Comments and Recommendations**

The Commission considered report [OSC/303](#) of the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel.

During the discussion with Councillor Lanzer (Chair of the Panel), the Head of Corporate Finance, Asset Manager and Democratic Services Officer (JT), the following points were expressed:

- There was general support for the report and the Panel's work. Panel members and officers were thanked for a thorough review and comprehensive report.
- The Commission considered the Panel's recommendations to be practical and offered support for actively encouraging the use of the borough's parades. It was commented that they provided a community hub for the neighbourhood and there was a need to focus on engagement and awareness going forward.
- It was felt disheartening that there had been a low response to the parade tenant section of the Panel's survey but acknowledged that tenants' attendance at the Panel's meetings and witness sessions had been positive and engaging.
- There was support for various points documented within the report including the cleanliness of the parades, safety aspects, local community engagement and the cost of living (ie affordability). It would be beneficial to look at the cost of living in parallel with the cost of services. It was acknowledged that signposting businesses was important to ensure they receive the support and assistance as and when required, particularly to providing information regarding the rent review process.
- Clarification sought and obtained on the maintenance responsibilities as outlined within each lease agreement; most of the responsibilities for building upkeep fell to the tenant.
- It was felt that there was a need to diversify the range of units on the parades as usage had changed over time. It was subjective as to what constituted a '*good range of parade shops*'. Demand for parade units was high and some may appear vacant but were already let. Traditional uses were popular with shoppers and the parades should reflect this however there was a need for balance of necessity and achieving rent rate. Additionally some use classes were more profitable than others and it was acknowledged that use classes under Planning legislation had become streamlined.
- It was recognised that legislation implemented during the pandemic had restricted the measures that the Council as landlord could take to recover owed funds. This legislation was due to fall away in September 2022 and whilst the majority of tenants worked well with the Council to manage their finances, it was noted a large portion of the substantial arrears was owed by a small number of tenants and this was unacceptable.
- Concern was raised regarding some of the Panel's recommendations given the financial pressures on the Council's General Fund and ultimately any proposals would need to be cost-effective. It was however noted that items for the Capital Programme were driven by the need for the upkeep of council assets and environmental obligations and schemes will also be considered that are spend to save or spend to earn, but that such prioritisation should not preclude the initial consideration of capital projects that could deliver "*social value*".

**RESOLVED**

That the Commission noted the report and requested that the views expressed during the debate, were fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

# Agenda Item 5

## 2. Cabinet Agenda Item 7 – Crawley Borough Council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement 2022-2026

### Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report [LDS/181](#) of the Head of Governance, People and Performance. During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Head of Governance, People and Performance, the following comments were made:

- Clarification sought as to the training to be offered for Councillors. It was acknowledged the training programme for officers and Councillors was currently being devised. It was identified that the training would need to be tailored for the range of roles which employees fulfil e.g. some roles are more public facing or work with particular vulnerable groups. Similarly, a specific course will be designed for councillors. This will be a starting point to cover the legal duty, the protected characteristics and to build awareness around this complex and developing field. It was confirmed that training would look to help employees and councillors to understand and identify unconscious biases which might potentially influence behaviour and decision making. External trainers will be considered subject to cost and considering that there is a large staff complement to train.
- Confirmation was provided that no feedback had been received from UNISON.
- Support for the work in Community Services with regards to the outreach work and identifying community champions. It was hoped this would provide better services and reduce barriers to participation, increasing access to health and wellbeing. The key was having EDI in mind when embarking on new projects or significant decisions.
- Concerns were expressed over equality and access when vehicles park on footpaths. It was noted that this was an enforcement issue and that if it was within the Council's powers, it could act. All concerns and incidents should be reported directly to the Head of Community Services.
- Clarification sought as to whether assistance dogs would be permitted within not just the new Town Hall, but also the leased offices, as currently assistance dogs were allowed in the current building. Whilst it was anticipated assistance dogs would be permitted in the Council's area, further discussion would be required for the leased offices. It was also confirmed induction loops were to be fitted in the new Town Hall.

### RESOLVED

That the Commission noted the report and requested that the views expressed during the debate, were fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

**Councillor T Belben**  
**Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission**  
**5 September 2022**