

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 3 February 2020 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T Rana (Chair)

T G Belben (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, D Crow, R S Fiveash, R A Lanzer, T McAleney and K Sudan

Also in Attendance:

Councillor R D Burrett and P K Lamb

Officers Present:

Ian Duke Deputy Chief Executive

Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer

Karen Hayes Head of Corporate Finance

Paul Windust Chief Accountant

Apologies for Absence:

Absent:

Councillor A Pendlington

1. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

| Councillor | Item and Minute | Type and Nature of Disclosure |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Councillor R S Fiveash | 2020/21 Budget and Council Tax (Minute 4) | Personal Interest – Council Tenant |

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 25 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment to minute 7 that in order to assist in delivering and accessing suitable and affordable accommodation that the use of Article 4 directives were taken into account to limit permitted development in Crawley where necessary criteria is met.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. 2020/21 Budget and Council Tax

The Commission considered report [FIN/491](#) with the Leader of the Council, Head of Corporate Finance and the Chief Accountant. The Council has a statutory responsibility to set a Council Tax and Budget in advance of the commencement of the new financial year. The Council Tax has to be set by March each year. During 2019 the Council continued to review its spending plans and considered options to amend spending to meet new priorities.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Confirmation was provided that the report set out proposed growth elements and capital programme schemes, along with efficiencies, savings, latest investment interest projections and additional income being proposed.
- Several queries were raised with regards to the Income Generation Officer growth bid. It was confirmed that the permanent post was inclusive of on-costs and would cover the wide ranging services the council offered. It was felt important to ensure a balance so as not to limit facilities or services when generating income. It was commented that it would be useful to provide discounts for those in receipt of benefit, however some offers were already provided at certain council facilities and there was a need to generate income through other means. The Commission had within its function, terms of reference and remit to scrutinise the Transformation Plan.
- It was queried whether the Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour Team reduction may affect the current service provision. However it was noted that the council did not always have the power to resolve issues so certain requests were disseminated elsewhere.
- Specialist HR provision would assist the organisation in reviewing service areas, whilst providing necessary support.
- Confirmation was provided over the reduced retained business rates, council tax increase and the analysis of risks within the report.
- Recognition that the flooding programme had been reviewed and some schemes were no longer a priority and resulted in savings. Any further works required would be undertaken within the flooding emergency work programme.
- Clarification was provided over queries within the Housing Revenue Account, with particular reference to garages and sheltered major works.
- There was acknowledgement of the forthcoming budget pressures together with recognition that consultation would take place in the future.
- Members of the Commission also commended officers from the Finance Team for their excellent work in producing the budget and report and dealing with challenging issues.
- Some Members expressed their support, with others preferring to abstain and reserve comments for the Full Council meeting later in the month. It was requested that their comments be passed to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED

That the Commission's views expressed at the meeting be conveyed to the Cabinet and that the Cabinet be advised that 5 Members expressed their support, with the

other 4 members preferring to abstain and reserve comments for the Full Council meeting later in the month.

5. Treasury Management Strategy 2020/2021

The Commission considered report [FIN/493](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance on the Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/2021 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 of the Council, Head of Corporate Finance and Chief Accountant, Councillors made the following comments:

- Confirmation that the policy of investing according to the principles of security, liquidity, yield and ethical remains.
- It was confirmed that there had not been any consideration for further additions within the Ethical Investment Policy.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet is advised that the Commission noted the report and requested the comments discussed be referred to the Cabinet.

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

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

- The take up of the flu vaccinations had been low in certain areas.
- Mental health liaison teams had been placed in various hospitals which were reporting a good response.
- A further report on SECAMB had been received and performance had improved.
- Street triage services were in operation in Crawley and had received positive feedback.

7. Forward Plan - and Provisional List of Reports for the Commission's following Meetings

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

March

- Three Bridges Improvement Scheme Final Design
- Crawley Transport Strategy – provisional referral

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.33 pm

T Rana (Chair)

