

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 2 November 2020 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T G Belben (Chair)

T Rana (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, R D Burrett, R A Lanzer, A Pendlington and R Sharma

Also in Attendance:

Councillor B J Burgess, P K Lamb and S Malik

Officers Present:

Paula Doherty Community Services Manager

Ian Duke Deputy Chief Executive

Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer

Chris Pedlow Democratic Services Manager

Chief Inspector Baker – Sussex Police

Apologies for Absence:

Absent:

Councillor T McAleney

1. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R D Burrett	Safer Crawley Partnership Annual Update and Forthcoming Priorities (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Trustee of Crawley Open House

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 28 September 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. Safer Crawley Partnership Annual Update and Forthcoming Priorities

The Commission received an update from Chief Inspector Baker and the Community Services Manager on the annual performance report of the Safer Crawley Partnership along with the future priorities.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

The purpose of the Safer Crawley Partnership was to reduce re-offending, tackle crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance misuse and any other behaviour which had a negative effect on the local community so that people in Crawley were safer and felt safer.

Statutory partners included: WSCC, Sussex Police, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, Probation Service and Crawley Clinical Commissioning Group together with other partners including OSPCC, Crawley Community Action, Crawley Open House, Crawley & Gatwick Business Watch and CGL.

In terms of crime data, total crime data had reduced by 5.6% on the same period last year. Crimes with a domestic abuse marker were up 1.9%, however this could be attributed to better reporting of offences and dedicated campaigns. It was noted that overall burglary data was down 11%, potentially as a result of the lockdown and more people remaining at home. Crimes with a weapon marker had been increasing, however reporting methods had improved and operations had taken place to target this. Actual possession of weapons had decreased by 13.5% so whilst the threat of using a weapon may have risen, the actual physical possession of the weapon was in decline.

The make-up of the Neighbourhood Policing Team was discussed. The distribution of PCSOs was based on a number of factors: demand, geography and job allocation (job share/part time working etc) and consequently the number of officers assigned to an area was not indicative to the service that area received. The updated list could be provided within the Councillors' Information Bulletin. Additionally the Sussex Police website would be updated to list all the PCSOs and this would link to the Sussex Police HR system to automatically take into account of any relocations.

The Commission were updated that following the Government's 'Everyone-In' Initiative, 89 people were accommodated with currently 14 people in temporary accommodation, with other referrals to supported housing projects.

2019-2020 key achievements included:

- Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) - a Safer Crawley School event and presentation on the dangers of County drugs lines and the importance of reporting to relevant agencies. SOC priorities were changed during the year to ensure the work was on behalf of the whole of West Sussex. Crawley and Chichester swapped SOC priorities as Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery was more relevant to the locality.
- Street Community – Town Centre Task Force established to liaise and jointly work with partners on a regular basis to tackle street homelessness, begging and street

drinking. There had been multiple diverted giving awareness raising events and Greater Change contactless donation terminals were being introduced, but also enforcement powers were used for those that unfortunately were not willing to engage due to the complexity of their needs

- Protecting Vulnerable Individuals – There was continued awareness raising of domestic abuse and hate crime support services.

2020-2021 work included:

The Partnership Structures and Initiatives:

- West Sussex Violence Reduction Unit,
- West Sussex Contextual Safeguarding Steering Group,
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Steering Group,
- Stalking Champions,
- Modern Slavery Champions

The Four priorities:

- Serious and Organised Crime (Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking) whereby the updated Partnership priority setting saw changes to the Crawley & Mid Sussex SOC focused areas move to holding Divisional lead responsibility for Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery across West Sussex
- Street Community
- Protecting Vulnerable Individuals
- Business Crime

Current Challenges:

- Anti-Social Behaviour – this has been amplified by the current pandemic as localised behaviour was being seen.
- Car parks – impacts of rough sleepers/street community.
- Obtaining accurate data continued to be challenging. However new tools were coming online to assist with this.

Future Developments:

- Access to data analysis via West Sussex Analyst would assist in understanding data and benchmarking across other areas and obtaining a national picture.
- The Town Centre BID had been successful and a key priority was safety and security, being able to work in partnership on various issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour and work hard to create a safer Town Centre for shoppers, visitors, businesses, their employees and its growing number of residents.

Members then raised a number of queries. The issues raised and the key responses included:

- It was noted it would be beneficial to have a representation on the amount of cybercrime occurring within the town.
- Confirmation that the recent knife amnesty in Queens Square was one of a number that had taken place across West Sussex. However increasingly important was the education sessions in schools. The amnesty campaigns required a willing participant whereas educating early was a more effective approach.
- SOC resources were confirmed in that a localised approach was in place in addition to those already in place such an international, national crime agency and further agencies.
- It was noted that last year saw significant issues within the town centre, serious organised crime, county lines, modern day slavery and trafficking and these were multifaceted issues and recognition of the good partnership working being of paramount importance in addressing those issues. This continued to provide considerable achievements in order to deliver the priorities and the challenges.

- It was anticipated that crime statistics may be able to be reported more frequently and it was hopeful that potentially these would be able to be made publically.
- Confirmed that further analysis would take place regarding the increase in the street community during the autumn/winter in 2019/2020.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted with the views expressed being acknowledged by officers. The Commission's gratitude was relayed to Chief Inspector Baker and officers for their attendance at the Commission.

5. Transformation Plan Update

Commission Members considered report [DCE/06](#) of the Deputy Chief Executive. The Commission has within its function to review the council's transformation programme, measures, and performance information (including budgetary information) together with service reviews.

Transformation consisted of time-limited projects to drive strategic change in order to meet corporate objectives. These are projects that generally lie outside of any single service and require impetus and additional resource/focus in order to deliver and embed that change. The aim is to create change and for that change to then to become business as usual. This means that the Council's Transformation Plan will need to be regularly reviewed over time as changes are successfully implemented.

Much progress had been made and the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic had accelerated the Transformation Plan, in particular in terms of new ways of working, values and behaviours and digital transformation (whereby the council's IT infrastructure and programme rolled out what was necessary in 3 days in order to keep council services running).

Review of Transformation Plan –

- New Town Hall – the building was taking shape, with the 8th floor nearing completion.
- Digital Transformation - this was now more about how IT can transform other services. The telephony system would be changing so phone calls would in the future be taken through council laptops for officers ensuring they become completely agile.
- New Ways of Working – there had been a lot of support for staff and managers in terms of managing organisations in a virtual context.
- Values and Behaviours – the culture was the biggest challenge. However the adaptation by officers over the last 6 months had been remarkable. Staff hold each other accountable for the behaviours that they themselves developed. There was still work to embed the values and behaviours further within the People Strategy and recruitment.
- Service Re-design – whilst there had been some successes, this had been revised due to the pandemic.
- Commercialisation – this had been affected by the pandemic and as a result the financial challenges.
- Reducing Bureaucracy – this involved identifying mandatory functions and processes that could be streamlined or completed more efficiently.

The Revised Transformation Plan 2020-2022 included:

- Channel Shift – reflected the massive shift to online work, which included how residents wished to interact with the council. There were huge advantages to the council in terms of efficiencies.
- New Ways of Working – there was still work to complete to embed agile working. There was a new intranet and website. The new intranet would be a personal landing page, operating as a virtual workspace.
- People Strategy – the focus on wellbeing and people needs to continue, together with embedding the success of the values and behaviours into all areas of the HR including management, recruitment and performance.
- Service Re-design – this and commercialisation would fit with the budget strategy and how the council would aim to meet the financial challenges of Covid, better support its communities and perform better as an organisation.
- Assets – it would be important to think how the council uses its current estate. For example, the patch teams ideally should be based within their patch, rather than travelling to and from the depot on a regular basis. There was a need to think in a futuristic way and how the assets were used.

Members then raised a number of queries. The issues raised and the key responses included:

- Confirmation that in terms of assets, it was important to look at these on an opportunity basis and evaluate accordingly. The focus currently would be on generating revenue.
- The commercial agents for the new town hall had advised that the business case was still valid and that the grade A office space was well placed regionally.
- Acknowledgement that the Review of the Out of Hours Working was to understand the data and any historic patterns to ensure consistency across the workforce.
- Confirmation that the corporate debt recovery policy, process and procedure was currently underway.
- Acknowledgement that new services tended to be set up for online transactions and consequently 'nudging customers' behaviour away from cash and cheque payments was automatic for new services. Cheques were expensive to process and cash would be taken for those that had no other option. However, throughout the pandemic, cash had been taken by appointment but those numbers had decreased.
- Acknowledgement that it was hoped the 'new norm' would not be taken too far, caution was advised and a balance needed to be sought.
- In terms of meetings it was noted that there were advantages and disadvantages and a hybrid approach would be a potential option in terms of attendance, costs, creativity and dynamics. In terms of residents, if more services could be conducted online that benefit residents it would result in working with more customers that had the greatest need.
- Confirmation that the Housing Management system was on time for completion. It encompassed assets, residents' database and repairs. It will provide a unified view of managing the property and assets in other areas.
- Recognition that the failure demand that was noted in the contact centre was determined as 'efficiencies to be improved'. The contact centre operates as a front of house service and consequently there may never be a 100% 'right first time'.
- Confirmation that the council was reliant on various streams of income, and the town has been fortunate in the past. There were ideas in place to stimulate and support the economy and there was interest from businesses wanting to be in the town. It was key that everyone involved in commercialisation should be open to

any opportunity. The Funding Officer post had not yet been appointed due to the pandemic.

- Officers were thanked for a great deal of work throughout the council during a difficult time over the last 8 months.

RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report, with the views expressed being acknowledged and documented by the officers.

6. Appointments

It was moved by Councillor Burrett, seconded by Councillor Lanzer that Councillor R G Burgess be appointed as the representative for West Sussex Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC). There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed the following appointment:

West Sussex Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)

Councillor R G Burgess

7. Forthcoming Decision List - and Provisional List of Reports for the Commission's following Meetings

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

23 November 2020

- Crawley Borough Local Plan 2021-2036
- Budget Strategy 2021/22 – 2025/26
- Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2020-2021
- 2020/2021 Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2

1 February 2021

- 2021/2022 Budget and Council Tax
- Treasury Management Strategy 2021-2022
- 2020/2021 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3
- Proposed Article 4 Directions - Change of Use from C3 (dwelling houses) to C4 (houses in multiple occupation)
- Economic Development Strategy

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.01 pm

T G Belben (Chair)