

## Crawley Borough Council

### Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Agenda for the **Overview and Scrutiny Commission** which will be held in **Ashurst Main Hall - The Charis Centre**, on **Monday, 7 June 2021** at **7.00 pm**

**PLEASE NOTE THE LOCATION FOR THIS MEETING. PARK IN THE REAR CAR PARK.**

WI-FI CODE = cc378BCX

Nightline Telephone No. 07881 500 227



**Chief Executive**

\* Membership:                      \*To be determined at Annual Council on Friday 28 May 2021

#### **Safety Protocol for the Meeting**

*The safety of Councillors, council officers, the public and venue staff is paramount. Consequently social distancing measures will be in operation and face masks will be worn (unless speaking) at all times. Hand sanitising will also be required on entry to the venue. Please follow any one-way system that may be in operation.*

*Please be aware that the capacity of the venue has been decreased as a result of social distancing. As a result attendance numbers may need to be reduced.*

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The order of business may change at the Chair's discretion

## Part A Business (Open to the Public)

	Pages
<b>1. Apologies for Absence</b>	
<b>2. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations</b>	
In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, councillors are reminded that it is a requirement to declare interests where appropriate.	
Councillors must also declare if they are subject to their party group whip in relation to any items under consideration.	
<b>3. Minutes</b>	5 - 12
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 8 March 2021.	
<b>4. Public Question Time</b>	
To answer any questions from the public which are relevant to the items on this agenda. The period will end after <b>15 minutes</b> .	
<b>5. Staff Sickness Levels with Covid 19 and the Effects of Working From Home</b>	13 - 24
To consider report LDS/166 of the Head of Legal, Governance and HR.	
<b>6. Appointments and Membership of Scrutiny Panels</b>	
The Commission is asked to ratify the following appointments, which were discussed at Annual Council on 28 May 2021:	
<b>Council-owned Neighbourhood Parades Scrutiny Panel</b>	
To confirm the membership of the Scrutiny Panel.	
For information, last year's Scrutiny Panel consisted of the following members: Councillors Ayling, Lanzer, Lunnon, Mwangale and Peck, with Councillor Lanzer as Chair.	
<b>West Sussex Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC)</b>	
To confirm the HASC representative.	
For information, last year's representative was Councillor Bob Burgess.	
<b>West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group (JSSG)</b>	
To confirm the JSSG representative - Must be the OSC Chair.	

## 7. Scrutiny Workshop

To discuss arrangements for the OSC Workshop.

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

To consider any requests for [future items](#). Those highlighted items have been referred to the Commission.

	Item	Date Included	PFD
1	Treasury Management Outturn 2020 – 2021	3 Feb 2021	Yes
2	Financial Outturn 2020-2021 (Quarter 4)	3 Feb 2021	
3	Forward Programme of key Procurements July – December 2021	18 May 2021	
4	Temporary Accommodation Modular Housing Solution	9 Feb 2021	
5	Replacement Article 4 Directions (Class MA) in Main Employment Areas	21 May 2021	
6	Leisure Contract - Further Extension of Variation Order	26 May 2021	
7	Telford Place Development Opportunity (Part B)	26 May 2021	
8	Approval to Award a Contract for Professional Services (Architects) - Proposed Housing Sites (Part B)	25 May 2021	

## 9. Supplemental Agenda

Any urgent item(s) complying with Section 100(B) of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## Crawley Borough Council

### Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 8 March 2021 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, S Malik and A Pendlington

#### Also in Attendance:

Councillor B J Burgess, I T Irvine, G S Jhans, P K Lamb and P C Smith

#### Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma-Pearl	Chief Executive
Ian Duke	Deputy Chief Executive
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Diana Maughan	Head of Strategic Housing
Gill Narramore	Senior Environmental Health Officer
Chris Pedlow	Democratic Services Manager
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning
Kate Wilson	Head of Community Services

#### 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 G Burgess	Community Grants Allocations (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Council representative on Crawley Open House
Councillor R G Burgess	Community Grants Allocations (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Crawley Festival committee member
Councillor R D Burrett	Community Grants Allocations (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Trustee for Crawley Open House

# Agenda Item 3

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Councillor RG Burgess	Proposed Extension of Crawley Air Quality Management Area Boundary (Minute 5)	Personal Interest – Ward member for Three Bridges
Councillor R D Burrett	West Sussex Health and Care in Housing Memorandum of Understanding (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R D Burrett	West Sussex Health and Care in Housing Memorandum of Understanding (Minute 6)	Personal Interest – Trustee for Crawley Open House
Councillor R A Lanzer	"One Town" - Draft Crawley Economic Recovery Plan (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources
Councillor R A Lanzer	Crawley Town Investment Plan - Draft Heads of Terms (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member for Economy and Corporate Resources
Councillor R A Lanzer	Crawley Town Investment Plan - Draft Heads of Terms (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – Member of the Crawley Economic Recovery Task Force & Town Deal Board
Councillor R D Burrett	Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) (Minute 9)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

## 2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 1 February 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair took the opportunity to amend the agenda order following receipt of a written public question and the supplementary item 'Crawley Town Investment Plan- Draft Heads of Terms'.

## 3. Public Question Time

The Commission had received a written question from Chris Cheshire from Gossops Green on behalf of Crawley Community Action trustees, beneficiaries & supporters. In accordance with the Virtual Committee Procedure Rules, the question was read out by a Democratic Services Officer. A copy of the response would be sent to the questioner.

The question referred to agenda item 4: Community Grants Allocations, specifically for CCA:

*"When the CEO of an organisation which has deservedly retained its funding, acknowledged their debt to Crawley Community Action, he added:*

*'Should CCA not exist, it will lead to an increasing disconnect between organisations, impact the community, and leave organisations without a support mechanism.'*

*Does the Council really want to risk this?"*

In response the Head of Community Services thanked Chris Cheshire for submitting the question on behalf of the CCA trustees.

It was stated that it was not an officer's position directly to comment upon a decision that may or may not be taken by members. However, the report that was due to be considered did provide the factual information and rationale that underpinned the detailed proposals in line with the approach made by Cabinet on 3 February 2021. This should assist members with their considerations and conclusions. It was acknowledged that the question would be asked at Cabinet on 10 March 2021 and it was further confirmed that officers would continue to work closely with funding partners to reduce any identified risks and work with the sector whilst the council transitions to a more modernised grants programme.

## 4. Community Grants Allocations

The Commission considered report [HCS/27](#) of the Head of Community Services. The report sought approval for the proposed Community Grants allocations for the transitional year 2021/22.

During the discussion with the Leader of the Council and the Head of Community Services, the following comments were made:

- Confirmation provided on the allocations and criteria applied, focusing on key priorities.
- Acknowledgement that it was an unfortunate situation that the Council was having to reduce the funding, the Council was still twice as generous as any other similar type of Council in the country. The Council also provided significant property and rental support to a number of charities and third sector organisations, further to the grant funding. It was explained that the new funding proposal would be based on a commissioning approach, where the Council commissions organisations to provide clear indefinable outcomes for our community.
- Recognition that other alternative (external) funding opportunities may be available for organisations, such as Crowdfunding. There was a need to adapt to changes in funding and ways of working. However, the council would still be looking to assist in signposting.
- Acknowledgement that the majority of organisations would be receipt of the same funding level. 4 organisations had been recommended to have funding reduced or removed and the specific rationale for each of these was noted. It was remarked that the current grant awards programme was not based on any legally binding contracts, but it was referenced that organisations may apply a presumption of being funded as they were mid-way through a two year grant agreement (pre Covid and financial impact). The second year funding was provisional and there was a break-clause built in as organisations were required to provide an action plan prior to the second year. Monitoring reports were required for both year one and year two funding.
- In terms of unrestricted reserves, these were documented as surplus funds that an organisation can keep aside from their operational budget that did not have a restriction on how it was spent. In terms of CCA it was considered that the organisation could sustain itself and there was access to alternative funding.
- Recognition that it was important to ensure that the available funds were well managed.
- It was noted that the process was a new arrangement. The OSC should be satisfied over 12 months, that any subsequent action taken through Community Services had been sufficient and effective to support the voluntary sector

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organisations that were currently supported by the CCA. As a result it was requested that a review report come back to the OSC on the changes.

## RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

### 5. Proposed Extension of Crawley Air Quality Management Area Boundary

The Commission consider report [HCS/25](#) of the Head of Community Services. The report sought approval for the variation to the designated boundary area of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), together with the approval of the Order to vary the designated boundary area of the AQMA, following recent public consultation.

Following discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability, the Head of Community Services and Senior Environmental Health Officer, Members had the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that the nitrogen dioxide levels as specified in the Air Quality Regulations 2000 were not being achieved. The extension of the AQMA allowed for a joined up approach across all the locations within the area.
- Confirmation that the nitrogen dioxide levels readings were reported annually in arrears. Although it was noted that traffic levels and air pollution reduced during the first lockdown in early 2020, DEFRA had confirmed 2020 to be an exceptional year and figures for 2-3 years should be analysed.
- It was noted that when the Three Bridges Improvement Scheme was reviewed, the current proposed design should be analysed to establish how it may affect the AQMA, particularly given the proposed change in road layout and removal of the right-hand turn from the station. Nitrogen dioxide levels and the 2019 data should feed into this review.
- Once the AQMA was declared, an air quality action plan would be produced to target sources of pollution and produce measures for mitigating issues within the areas. It was recognised that this was a recommendation within the recent Climate Change Scrutiny Panel final report.
- It was highlighted that education was key, along with the work taking place on active travel and sustainable transport. It would be important to promote modal shift and reduce emissions and improve air quality over time. Additionally, it was felt liaison with partners or businesses would be important to encourage alternative methods.
- Minor amendments within the document were noted but it was acknowledged that the draft order did not highlight those locations where the entire road was not covered by the AQMA, which could be confusing for the public.
- The actions in the previous AQMA have been in place since 2015, and measures had been established throughout the borough to address air quality. However it was noted that the road layout around Hazelwick was particularly difficult as a major road for Manor Royal and M23. Therefore improvements had not been as rapid but traffic management schemes were being analysed to improve traffic flow.

## RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comments sheet.



## 6. West Sussex Health and Care in Housing Memorandum of Understanding

The Commission considered report [SHAP/80](#) of the Head of Strategic Housing Services.

Building on partnership working across the county in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and in recognition of the key role that housing plays in long-term population health and well-being, a key opportunity has presented to bring greater involvement from local health partners in addressing local needs.

The report sought endorsement of the development of a local health, housing and social care Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The West Sussex Health and Care Partnership endorsed a proposal for local NHS partners to work together with West Sussex Local Authorities to develop a local agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to mirror, at a local level, the national MOU "Improving Health and Care Through the Home: A National Memorandum of Understanding". The MOU forms a statement of ambition and intent for future working and collaboration between health, housing and social care in planning for and meeting need at a local level.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Head of Strategic Housing Services, Councillors made the following comments:

- Confirmation that the MOU would assist in links between poor housing and poor health. It would provide an opportunity to challenge rough sleeping in a sustained way and encourage agencies to provide support.
- It was noted that it would provide a platform to engage with health services and providers. It would be actioned and monitored through the West Sussex Strategic Housing Board.
- Recognition that previous challenges have related to mental health services and providing effective support, together with the long terms sustainability of some NHS projects. It was hoped that working collaboratively there would be greater assistance, liaison and effective partnership working.
- The appreciation offered to the housing teams and support provided throughout the pandemic was noted and welcomed.

### RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

## 7. "One Town" - Draft Crawley Economic Recovery Plan

The Commission considered report [PES/385](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought approval on the Council's draft Economic Development recovery plan and for agreement to go out for public consultation.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and the Head of Economy and Planning, Councillors made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that there were amendments to slides 3 and 6 of Appendix A, along with proposed additional recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 10 March 2021.

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- Confirmation that the report would offer a joined up approach and aimed for one holistic plan bringing in small organisations. The changes proposed would assist in the Local Plan consultation.
- It was noted that the plan highlighted the council's position in leading the drive for economic recovery, working with an array of partners.
- Some of the flagship interventions were already being brought forward or delivered, either through the Crawley Growth Programme or Crawley Town Investment Plan.
- Clarity sought and obtained on 'green infrastructure'; which revolved around strategic, environmentally-aware activity. It was observed that the plan would assist in offering green solutions to issues, including verges and improve air quality.
- General support for the report and plan as it was innovative, ambitious and yet the aims were realistic. It was felt there was a need to raise expectations, together with promotion for strengthening the local workforce skills and this featured in the Crawley Employment and Skills Programme. Skills for the Future aimed to improve overall social mobility amongst Crawley residents and retain people within the area.
- Recognition that there were different types of recovery; traditional in terms of aviation and Manor Royal, together with the novel recovery featuring digital enterprise and green infrastructure.
- Acknowledgement that the plan provided a long term strategic overview as timescales featured within the plan extended to 2050, which coincided with the climate change emissions target. However it was acknowledged that measures, deliverables and targets should be included between 2021 and 2050, which ultimately would move beyond this recovery.
- Clarification provided that the economy grew by £5.9b GVA (gross value added) per annum, which equated to the total value of economic output in Crawley in 2018.
- With reference to the 'Limited overall available employment land supply' it was noted that there were currently vacant sites within the borough due to the existing recession (particularly Manor Royal as a consequence of Covid19). However the Local Plan forecasts the overall need for employment land until 2037 to enable Crawley's long term economic recovery and growth. There was a significant land deficit within the town, which needed highlighting.
- It was felt that the final version of the plan should return to OSC following the consultation period.

## RESOLVED

That the Commission notes the report, including the documented changes to Appendix A, and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

## 8. Crawley Town Investment Plan - Draft Heads of Terms

The Commission considered report [PES/386](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought delegated approval for the Chief Executive to sign and return to government the Crawley Town Deal Heads of Terms document, subject to the prior approval of the Crawley Town Deal Board.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and the Head of Economy and Planning, Councillors made the following comments:

- Recognition that Crawley was one of 101 towns across England to have been selected to benefit from the government's Towns Fund budget. Crawley was one

of 4 towns in south east England to have been selected and awarded £21.1m for the Crawley Town Investment Plan.

- It was hoped alternative funding sources could be obtained for the balance of the programme.
- General support for the report and funding. Appreciation was noted for the work undertaken by officers and partners in order to compile the submission.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

## **9. Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC)**

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

- Mental health services and provision were to be incorporated into general practice.
- Work will take place to encourage young people to choose work in the health service as a positive career choice.
- A report followed on 'Improving mental health services for adults and older people in West Sussex'. Part of the work was to ensure that the voices of those in communities whose voice is often less well heard were included in any of the findings. The report featured a variety of aims.

### **1. Improve the quality of wards**

It was found that several of the wards were outdated and there was a need to provide more modern accommodation. The preferred model initially was to establish single sex wards but it was concluded to continue with mixed sex wards at new, more modern, sites. Concern was expressed about the use of mixed sex wards but it was clarified that this would apply only to communal areas in the wards. There would be separate corridors, accessed by a key system, which would be single sex for the sleeping accommodation. Also more beds have been found for use in the service.

### **2. Transport to and from wards**

Transport provision was much better in the north of the county. Those most affected as a result of having to travel further than previously would be given support in terms of travel allowances plus the provision for overnight stay facilities for families. It was noted that in some areas there were issues concerning parking and work would be undertaken in these areas to address the pressure on roads near to facilities.

### **3. Strengthen community care for people**

There was a clear preference that people should be cared for wherever possible in their own homes. Steps were being taken to improve community services by providing greater access to crisis and urgent care and also home treatment service.

### **4. Establish centres of excellence for those living with dementia**

Crisis centres (cafes) supporting mental health issues were present in some areas and these centres would provide an alternative to hospital admission. However, it was felt more were needed based on centres of population. Concern was also expressed about the need to improve support for carers.

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

The following reports have been confirmed from the Forthcoming Decision List:

### **28 June 2021**

- Treasury Management Outturn 2020 – 2021
- Financial Outturn 2020-2021 (Quarter 4)

### **27 September 2021**

- Budget Strategy 2022/23 – 2026/27

### **22 November 2021**

- Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2021-2022

### **31 January 2022**

- 2022/2023 Budget and Council Tax
- Treasury Management Strategy 2022-2023

Final report - "One Town" - Crawley Economic Recovery Plan (tbc)

The Chair requested a report to either of the June's OSC meetings on staff sickness levels with Covid19 and the effects and impacts of working from home.

### **Closure of Meeting**

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.25 pm

**T G Belben (Chair)**

# Agenda Item 5

## Crawley Borough Council

### Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 7 June 2021

#### Staff Sickness Levels with Covid 19 and the Effects of Working from Home

Report of the Head of Legal, Governance and HR, **LDS/166**

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of the Commission with information on Council staff sickness levels during the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects from homeworking. It also sets out the measures which were taken by the Council to provide direct support services and to facilitate access to external support providers.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission is requested to receive this report, note progress to date and acknowledge the ongoing approach.

#### **3. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 3.1 Under the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, it was requested that a report be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on Council staff sickness levels during the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects of homeworking.
- 3.2 Particularly in the early period of the pandemic (early-mid 2020), the Council was operating in a very fluid environment with an ever-changing national picture and a regular flow of government guidance around the COVID-19 safe workplace.
- 3.3 Whilst the Council kept its approach under review during the pandemic and it has sought feedback from staff through surveys and interactive Q&A sessions, it is vitally important that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission is able to consider and scrutinise the Council's approach on staff welfare. This will be of particular value because it is acknowledged that i) impacts of this pandemic on staff are likely to be long term and ii) future pandemics are possible.

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 In March 2020, the Government announced a national lockdown and advised that people should 'work from home where possible'. For a majority of the Council's staff that meant that they swiftly transitioned to working remotely from home. Some staff with underlying health conditions were required to shield. For other more operational staff, their roles could only be performed in the physical workplace e.g. depot.

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- 4.2 It was clear that whilst there were some positives for staff working from home such as flexibility and less commuting, there were negative impacts from homeworking such as feeling isolated, having less social contact and potentially there being less information sharing and collaborative working. Clearly the COVID-19 virus itself and the physical and mental consequences of being infected (or a family member or friend) were and continue to be significant.
- 4.3 The Council's challenge was to ensure the wellbeing of its staff in the areas in which it does control whilst still delivering services.

## 5. Description of Issue to be resolved

- 5.1 Establishing a clear picture of Council staff sickness levels during the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects of homeworking will help to appraise the Council's approach in supporting its staff (with suitable services) and ensuring their wellbeing. The effectiveness of these measures will affect staff productivity, absence and morale levels as well as staff retention.

## 6. Information & Analysis Supporting Recommendation

### 6.1 Impact of Covid-19 on the Council's employees

- The National picture
- Impact on sickness of Crawley Borough Council employees
- Support to our workforce
- Support to staff during the pandemic
- Recruitment and retention of staff

#### The national picture

- 6.2 National sickness levels have decreased in the last year, and there are some explanations as to the reasons being due to the government guidelines and national lockdowns, some people were shielding, some working from home, and many placed on furlough all resulting in reduced contact with others. These reasons together with people following the government's hygiene recommendations are factors believed to have contributed to less sickness absence.

- 6.3 The national picture suggests Covid absences accounted for 14% of all sickness.

#### Impact on sickness of Crawley Borough Council employees

- 6.4 The council's sickness records for Covid was recorded in two categories one being those who could not work due to a requirement to self-isolate as they may have been in contact with someone who tested Covid positive or someone displaying Covid symptoms. Due to the nature of their job role meant they could not work from home.
- 6.5 The second category was staff that had tested positive for Covid or were too ill to work from home due to their symptoms.

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6.6 The Council has also seen a reduction in sickness absence which aligns with the national picture. In particular during the winter months reductions have been recorded in people taking absence for viral infections, flu and the common cold ailments. Covid isolation absence 9% and Covid sickness absence 7%. It is important to highlight that the sickness figures recorded for 2020/21 were 939 less than the recorded figures for 2019/2020.

6.7 A number of other local authorities in our area report similar downward trends in absence cases.

## Support to the Council's workforce

6.8 Within the council, its people are its most important resource and it is recognised that it is fortunate as an organisation to have so many committed staff who care for Crawley and its residents. This has been demonstrated throughout the pandemic crisis as the workforce continually work to provide vital services to the residents of Crawley and to its business community.

6.9 As an organisation the council has made significant efforts to support staff during what has been a challenging time. When, in March 2020 the government placed the country into lockdown to reduce the spread of infection the council was aware of the stress which was likely to be caused and the impacts. The workforce would be concerned for their own welfare but also for their family and friends. Concerns would be expected from staff in relation to how and where they were going to carry out their work.

6.10 To support the workforce the council put practical steps into place from the very beginning. To assist those who could work from home the council advised on how to work safely at home and how to set up work equipment in a home environment. Staff were reminded about taking regular breaks, staying in touch with colleagues remotely and provided tips on healthy eating. Although most office based staff could work from home a small number of staff have worked in the office where Covid safe measures were put in place. For staff who work mainly externally (outdoors), the council proactively undertook risk assessments in respect to the work undertaken. Interaction with members of the public was limited and the council looked at how they could stay safe when working with colleagues in a team environment.

6.11 It was also acknowledged that some staff faced a challenging time when managing home schooling together with working from home. The council responded positively to this and adopted a flexible approach during this time.

6.12 In preparation for returning to the workplace (for when the current lockdown restrictions are lifted on 21 June), the council has ensured that work environments will remain Covid safe. Plans have been drawn up and communicated to staff about the amount of time they are expected to spend working from the physical workplace and how much time they might work remotely from home or another location.

## Support to staff during the pandemic

6.13 The Council introduced a wide range of measures to support employee's welfare.

The offer of support to staff has been made through the council's learning and development programme. By way of example the council has in place:

- ✓ Trained 13 Mental Health First Aiders.
- ✓ Arranged virtual workshops covering Resilience Boosters, workshops to Help Managers Support their Teams through anxiety. How to have compassionate conversations

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- ✓ Provided access to counselling service and bespoke Reflective Practice sessions introduced.
  - ✓ Mindfulness online course.
- 6.14 A wide range of offers are made through the councils wellbeing team by way of example
- ✓ Talks and presentations on Sleep, Stress Management, Happy living, Positive Psychology
  - ✓ 1:1 appointments on Weight Management, Healthy Nutrition, Wellbeing Checks.
- 6.15 Staff have been signposted to external services and the government's support programme 'Able futures'. Please see Appendix A which provides more detail around the support which has been offered to staff.
- 6.16 Employees were asked to contribute through three staff surveys about how they were feeling and whether they felt supported by the organisation. Two carried out in July and October 2020 and the most recent in February 2021. On evaluating the results of the survey last year the council was able to adapt its offer of support.
- 6.17 The results continue to be very positive but the most recent survey results have shown a small downward trend as follows:-
- Getting work done and motivation scored lower than before
  - Open and honest communication and guidance has dropped slightly
  - Putting your health and safety first when making decisions has also reduced
- 6.18 One challenge for the Council has been that, despite the continued promotion of access to a wide range of health and wellbeing services, take up remains low amongst staff. This has been raised with staff through the weekly/fortnightly Chief Executive's Questions & Answers sessions, through Team Brief and Outline.
- 6.19 Another concern raised was about the amount of time spent attending virtual meetings. The council has encouraged staff to consider meeting times, lengths and breaks when they are arranging meetings. They should avoid booking meetings over lunchtime and consider shorter meetings. The council wishes staff to make these changes for themselves and to take ownership of their own diaries and workloads. The February survey results were communicated to staff in April's Team brief.
- 6.20 The next steps for the Council will be to provide ongoing support to our workforce and to continue to encourage colleagues to take up the opportunities presented to them. Whilst there is responsibility on the Council (as employer) to ensure it exercises its duty of care to staff it is also for staff to take responsibility for themselves, take advantage of the support and reach out when they are struggling. The legacy of the Covid pandemic will remain with us for a long time to come.

## Recruitment and retention of staff

- 6.21 Through the Council's Transformation Plan one objective is the creation of the People Strategy overseen by the People Board where a comprehensive work programme is being developed. Further work on the staff survey feedback is being considered as part of that work programme. The People Board has commenced a wider strategy looking at some key areas:-



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1. Succession planning, this will help us identify our future needs and how we can develop staff.
2. The reasons why people leave, what this is telling us.
3. What is our unique selling point and what and how do we attract potential candidates.

6.22 A piece of work currently underway is to look at salary grades of profession roles this will involve a benchmarking exercise against the same and similar posts within other local authorities which will look at grades and any additional pay or benefits they attract. This is work in progress and an update can be provided to Commission members if they so wish.

## **7. Implications**

- 7.1 In order to continue to provide appropriate support to staff during and after the pandemic, there will be a sustained pull on the capacity of the Human Resources Team. There will also be a draw on officer time for example those who serve as Mental Health First Aiders. Where support services are taken up by staff (particularly the external ones), there will be an ongoing cost.
- 7.2 From 21 June 2021, the nationwide lockdown will hopefully be lifted in line with the Government roadmap towards the end of the pandemic. This could have consequences for the Council which may include a return to (or at least an increase) in staff absence. It has been established that the reduced physical contact with others, as imposed by the lockdown, has contributed to a reduction in COVID-19 infections but also regular illness e.g. influenza etc. It follows that sickness levels may rise following 21 June 2021 but that will depend on other factors such as weather and the roll-out and availability of winter flu jabs later in the year.
- 7.3 Any reduction in staff due to sickness is highly likely to adversely affect service delivery to residents and local businesses.

## **8. Background Papers**

None

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## Appendix A: Support and wellbeing offers to employees

Topic of support/guidance	Outline of support	Method of advising employees
Mental Health First Aiders	Initial training for 13 employees (August 2020). Second cohort of 12 colleagues completing certification course May 2021. If staff are struggling with mental health, or are concerned about someone, the council's trained mental health first aiders might be able to help. Talking could be the first step to feeling better.	Intranet, email, outline, team brief, Microsoft Teams Wellbeing Channel, First Aiders promoting verbally in own service areas plus several 'shout-outs' during Chief Executive Staff Q&A sessions.
Able Futures	Provides a wide range of first-class mental health support services delivered by qualified health care professionals. They will listen to understand any difficulties being experienced and create an individual plan of support.  The service is confidential, fast and flexible and is currently available over the phone and through email. There is no cost for this service and no waiting list. Once an individual has signed-up, they will receive a call within one working day.	Intranet, team brief, outline, email, webinars (one for managers and one for all colleagues) delivered by Able Futures and posters in areas for colleagues without regular online access at work.
Mindfulness online course 'Be Mindful'	Mindful is for anyone who would like to work at improving their mental health and enjoy the benefits of mindfulness practice. The course is suitable for beginners to mindfulness as everything is introduced and explained as the course.	Team brief, outline, email, intranet and posters in areas for colleagues without regular online access.
Essentials of managing colleagues remotely	A workshop exploring ideas to support managers to get the best from their team(s)	Team brief, outline, email and intranet

	when working remotely. It covered: how to support and maintain relationships with individual team members; maintaining communication, collaboration and relationships with the team; how to sustain the team's morale, and positivity, and productivity.	
Successful working from home	Workshop and eGuide for new colleagues exploring ideas on working effectively from home, including: how to maintain relationships with their manager, team members and colleagues; how to stay positive, productive and healthy when working remotely.	Team brief, outline, email, intranet (eGuide now attached to welcome email sent to all new colleagues whose role involves temporary home working)
Stay healthy working from home	Information about working safety at home whilst looking after your health, advice on healthy eating, taking rest breaks etc.	Email and in letters to staff furloughed
Reflective Practice	The group sessions help explore how to manage change, practice self-care and build on personal autonomy. It is a space for colleagues to use to support their resilience and wellbeing at work and share experiences. The therapists work to create a safe environment where feelings can be safely explored. This can help prevent feelings of helplessness or being overwhelmed which can ultimately lead to stress, anxiety and depression developing.	HR colleagues work closely with managers and where concerns are raised they explore whether this practice may help.
Counselling service	The team can support individuals if they are experiencing anxiety, depression, stress, bereavement, relationship difficulties.	

Bespoke bereavement counselling	Group support counselling session when a colleague has passed away.	HR Consultant speaking directly to those effected colleagues.
Bereavement Support	External support	Intranet and posters in areas for colleagues without regular online access
Personal Effectiveness Back to Basics	Managing and individual's day and being effective can sometimes feel overwhelming. There are core tools and techniques that can be used to help ensure" we get done what we need to do no matter where or when we do our work". FOR: All colleagues DELIVERED: In a 2 hour live virtual workshop via Microsoft Teams.	Email, intranet and Microsoft Teams CBC Learning Channel
Compassionate Conversations	This explores how to talk to others when they are not feeling ok Individuals can easily miss the opportunity to act when they spot others are not okay. Not because they don't care. More often than not, because they don't know what to say or they simply didn't pause and take notice. FOR: All colleagues DELIVERED: In a bite size online workshop via Microsoft Teams.	Email, intranet and Microsoft Teams CBC Learning Channel
Resilience Boosters	4 workshops in this series looking at how the different aspects of building, and maintaining resilience. WORKSHOP ONE: focuses on avoiding unnecessary stress. WORKSHOP TWO: explores adapting to things that cause stress WORKSHOP THREE: covers accept the things you can't change WORKSHOP FOUR: looks at making time for fun and relaxation	Email, intranet and Microsoft Teams CBC Learning Channel

How to Support the Team Through Anxiety for Managers	Uncertainty and anxiety are possibly the most common emotional responses any of us may have been feeling during the past year and into the near future. These are very understandable feelings. DELIVERED: In a 3 hour live virtual workshop via Microsoft Teams.	Email, intranet and Microsoft Teams CBC Learning Channel
Crucial Conversations – for managers	Managing people sometimes involves having conversations where opinions vary, emotions run high and the way these are approached will have a long lasting impact. The skills and techniques in having such discussions are essential to the success as a manager. DELIVERED: In a 3 hour live virtual workshop via Microsoft Teams.	Email, intranet and Microsoft Teams CBC Learning Channel
Staff surveys	Three staff surveys have been carried out during the pandemic.	HR Consultant /manager speaking directly to those effected colleagues. Highlighted by the Chief Executive through the questions and answer sessions.
Weekly Friday morning Aerobics with Jayne.	Crawley Wellbeing offer a 20 minute weekly Aerobic sessions at 10am on Friday morning. No equipment needed and no floor work.	Weekly Staff Global email sent out with link or access via Teams wellbeing channel.
Talks and presentations on:- Menopause Sleep Stress Management Mindfulness Resilience Happier Living Positive Psychology Other Health and Wellbeing Topics	Crawley Wellbeing is a free, friendly and impartial service which is on offer to all staff who would like support with areas of their health and wellbeing. With a team full of professional advisors, Crawley Wellbeing are here to support you to make beneficial changes to everyday lives.	Intranet, email, outline, wellbeing website, and Microsoft Teams wellbeing channel.

Wellbeing Advisor 1-2-1 appointments – either via Teams or telephone. Face to Face appointments available soon.	<p>Wellbeing Advisor Session offering the opportunity to discuss any lifestyle issues to gain support including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weight management</li> <li>- Healthy nutrition</li> <li>- Physical activity</li> <li>- Smoking cessation</li> <li>- Alcohol reduction</li> <li>- Sleep and relaxation</li> <li>- Emotional wellbeing</li> <li>- Stress management</li> <li>- Wellbeing checks</li> </ul>	Intranet, email, outline, wellbeing website, and Microsoft Teams wellbeing channel.
12 week WOW course: via Teams or telephone support	<p>Support to make sustainable weight loss changes for a healthier lifestyle through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key topic discussions</li> <li>- Tracking and journaling</li> <li>- Low impact exercise sessions</li> <li>- Toolkit of resources</li> <li>- Support from leaders</li> </ul>	Intranet, email, outline, wellbeing website, and Microsoft Teams wellbeing channel.
6 week 'Mindful Living' course: via Teams or telephone support	<p>Looking at reducing stress and anxiety in every day lives through mindfulness practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key topic discussions on the pillars and principles of mindful living</li> <li>- Mindfulness meditations</li> <li>- Breath awareness techniques</li> <li>- Resources and downloads</li> </ul>	Intranet, email, outline, wellbeing website, and Microsoft Teams wellbeing channel.

Wellbeing Days (on an Ad-hoc basis where staff can book a virtual one to one) Face to Face appointments available soon. Targeted health days such as Blood Pressure Monitoring and NHS Health Checks.	Individual Wellbeing Advisor Sessions to discuss any health and wellbeing issue. Use of Body Composition Scales where appropriate and wellbeing goals and plan agreed.	Information to be sent out via Staff Global email by the Wellbeing Team. Booking details will be given.
Workplace Covid testing	Lateral flow testing for Covid-19 at the Town Hall and Metcalf Way Depot. This testing will begin with a phased introduction from Monday 29 March. Testing will be twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays at both sites.	Email and intranet
Taking Care of Your Mental Health – Support Available Guide	Comprehensive online and print (poster) guide to full range of self-care and support options with information on how to self-refer / access without the need to approach others if preferred. Categories options according to how individual is feeling, ranging from 'thriving' (and looking to stay that way) through to 'in crisis'.	2 versions: intranet version containing online and digital resources / options; poster version for colleagues without online access signposting to face-to-face and telephone-based support services / options.