

Crawley Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Agenda for the **Overview and Scrutiny Commission** which will be held in **Committee Rooms A & B - Town Hall**, on **Monday, 13 June 2022** at **8.00 pm***

* Please note the start time of this meeting.

Nightline Telephone No. 07881 500 227



Chief Executive

Membership:

Councillors

T G Belben (Chair), K Khan (Vice-Chair), M L Ayling, H Hellier,
I T Irvine, R A Lanzer, A Pendlington, S Piggott, S Pritchard, T Rana
and S Sivarajah

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

Part A Business (Open to the Public)

	Pages
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations	
<p>In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, councillors are reminded that it is a requirement to declare interests where appropriate.</p> <p>Councillors must also declare if they are subject to their party group whip in relation to any items under consideration.</p>	
3. Minutes	5 - 10
<p>To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 14 March 2022.</p>	
4. Public Question Time	
<p>To answer any questions or hear brief statements from the public which are relevant to the items on this agenda. The period will end after 15 minutes or later at the Chair's discretion.</p>	
5. Staff Sickness Levels with Covid 19 and the Effects of Working from Home Update Report	11 - 14
<p>To consider report LDS/184 of the Head of Legal, Governance and HR.</p>	
6. Appointments and Membership of Scrutiny Panels	
<p>The Commission is asked to ratify the following appointments, which were documented at Annual Council on 27 May 2022:</p> <p>Council-owned Neighbourhood Parades Scrutiny Panel. To confirm the membership of the Scrutiny Panel. Councillors Ayling, K Khan, Lanzer, Mwangale, Peck, Rana with Councillor Lanzer as Chair.</p> <p>West Sussex Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC). To confirm the HASC representative.</p> <p>West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group (JSSG). To confirm the JSSG representative – Must be the OSC Chair.</p>	

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

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

	Item	PFD
1	Treasury Management Outturn 2021 – 2022	Yes
2	Financial Outturn 2021-2022 (Quarter 4)	
3	Proposed Changes to the Essential Car User Allowance Scheme	
4	Public Spaces Protection Order - Keep your dog on a lead in Tilgate Park	
5	Whistleblowing Policy	
6	Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy	
7	Forward Programme of Key Procurements (July - December 2022)	
8	Property Acquisition to Increase the Council's Portfolio of Temporary Accommodation – PART B	
9	Online Benefits – PART B	
10	Telford Place Land Proposal – PART B	
11	Water Neutrality Retrofitting Programme – PART B	
12	Crawley Innovation Centre – PART B	

8. 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, 14 March 2022 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T G Belben (Chair)

K Khan (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, S Mullins and A Nawaz

Also in Attendance:

Councillor R D Burrett and P C Smith

Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma-Pearl Chief Executive

Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer

Nigel Sheehan Head of Projects and Commercial Services

Clem Smith Head of Economy and Planning

Nigel Tidy Towns Fund Programme Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor A Pendlington

Absent:

Councillor S Piggott

1. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R A Lanzer	Town Centre Regeneration Programme Third Edition (Minute 5)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	Town Centre Regeneration Programme Third Edition (Minute 5)	Personal Interest – Cabinet Member Crawley Growth Programme
Councillor R A Lanzer	Crawley Towns Fund Project Business Case (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

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14 March 2022

Councillor
R A Lanzer

Crawley Towns Fund Project
Business Case
(Minute 7)

Personal Interest –
Cabinet Member Crawley Growth
Programme

Councillor
R A Lanzer

HASC
(Minute 9)

Personal Interest –
Member of WSCC

Councillor
R A Lanzer

HASC
(Minute 9)

Personal Interest –
WSCC Cabinet Member for Public
Health & Wellbeing

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 31 January 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. Proposed Changes to the Essential Car User Allowance Scheme

The Commission was informed that the report on the “Proposed Changes to the Essential Car User Allowance Scheme” would no longer be considered as an item for business at the meeting. Unfortunately, a collective agreement with the Unison union could not be reached and the report had been deferred.

5. Town Centre Regeneration Programme Third Edition

The Commission considered report [PES/397](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning. The Town Centre Regeneration Programme (TCRP) was first published in February 2016, updated in 2018 and significant progress has been made since then in terms of programme delivery. The report presented a summary of that progress and sought approval of a revised, updated version of the TCRP prior to 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:

- Recognition that the Town Centre Regeneration Programme included a number of partner organisations whose contributions had been significant in delivering successful outcomes of the Crawley Growth Programme and Town Centre Regeneration Programme.
- Acknowledgement that Grade A office space was important for the town, not only to attract companies from the professional services business sector but also to facilitate individuals to meet and co-work, which had been lacking throughout the pandemic. The upgrading of existing commercial space would also assist in creating space for businesses and there had been improved relations with property owners to refurbish premises. Enforcement powers could be considered where properties were of a poor quality and owners were not willing to make necessary improvements.

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- It was commented that there was significant town centre growth and this should be identified within the local plan to ensure the electorate representation was monitored.
- It was felt that it would be important to include the carbon reduction targets within the Climate Emergency 'Action to Zero' section of the Town Centre Regeneration Programme.
- Confirmation provided that the updated Town Centre Regeneration Programme would be subject to consultation and that minor modifications may follow if required.
- Concern was expressed that there were still challenges facing the town with the presence of some empty shops and it was questioned whether any town branding may assist, perhaps with a link to the City bid. It was clarified that footfall had nearly returned to 2019 levels and branding had been included in a consultation exercise in 2017 (report PES/252 OSC and Cabinet).
- Recognition that in order to provide quality sustainable residential accommodation that was supported by a rich mix of community facilities, it was important to review the demand of other provision within the area such as GP surgeries or dental practices.
- It was commented that if the town centre was to encompass facilities and amenities it would be important to improve public toilet provision, (especially given the closure of some during lockdown), whilst also maintaining those currently in operation.
- Acknowledgement that the Historic High Street had maintained a different culture to the rest of the shopping area, particularly Queens Square. The Historic High Street had seen regeneration development, particularly with regards to the environmental improvements but remained mainly an eating and drinking quarter.
- Support for the newly positioned bandstand within memorial gardens, however it was commented additional seating would be beneficial and attract further visitors during performances.
- Confirmation was provided on the current status of the market together with the requirements and constraints currently in existence for establishing an indoor market.
- Recognition that there was a need to create and improve economic conditions in order to attract people to move to or work in Crawley. It would be paramount to ensure the quality and availability of public amenity, good quality employment together with availability of commercial space.

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.

6. Exempt Information – 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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

PART B BUSINESS - CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

7. **Crawley Towns Fund Project Business Cases**

Exempt Paragraph 3

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The Commission considered report PES/399 of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought approval on the business cases for various Town Fund projects as set out in the Crawley Town Investment Plan Heads of Terms (confirmed by the government in July 2021).

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 the substantial Towns Fund monies awarded to the Council to deliver the Town Investment Plan included a number of transformative regeneration schemes, including those with a specific focus in the town that would unlock jobs as there was a need for a range of skills and technology. The business cases enabled the Council and partners to deliver on opportunities, aspirations, future investment and boost economic activity within the town.
- Acknowledgement that Council approval of the projects would enable submission of summary versions of the business cases to the government for ratification by the deadline.
- Clarity sought and obtained on the project management, cost analysis, together with the timescales. Timely updates would feature in the quarterly monitoring budget reports.

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.

8. **Metcalf Way Depot and Workshop - Redevelopment**

Exempt Part B - By Virtue of Paragraph 3

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The Commission considered report HPS/31 of the Head of Major Projects and Commercial Services. The report sought agreement for progressing the redevelopment of the depot and workshop at Metcalf Way, project analysis and feasibility, together with the finances required.

During the discussion with the Head of Major Projects and Commercial Services, Councillors made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that the option proposed enabled the Council to deliver on opportunities, whilst protecting, consolidating, and enhancing the development of a key site.
- Recognition that the Metcalf Way Depot was currently under-utilised, and Neighbourhood Services intended to continue the move to a more dispersed model of smaller neighbourhood patch depots. The recommendations supported the move to more localised depots and facilitated redevelopment of the Metcalf Way site.

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- There was overall support for the options which was poised to play a key and interesting role in delivering a long-term revenue stream and the future of a key site within the town.
- Confirmation that feasibility and cost analysis proposals would be carried out as part of the project and any preferred option.

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.

Re-Admission of the Public

The Chair declared the meeting reopen for consideration of business in public session.

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

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

- Provision of access to dental services

Concern was expressed about the provision and this would be addressed at a future meeting of HASC.

- Changes to Neonatal Services in Western Sussex

At St Richards Hospital, Chichester about 9 babies each year were in need of some form of neonatal provision. Currently this was carried out at St Richards but the proposal was that they were transferred to a hospital in Portsmouth where better provision could be provided. Concern was expressed about existing staff retaining skills after the change of circumstances.

Concern was also raised that the report contained no reference to the rest of West Sussex but it was pointed out that the report was specifically focussing on St Richards and it was likely there would be scrutiny of issues affecting the population of wider West Sussex in the future.

- Quality Assurance Update in Adult Services

It was stressed that the safeguarding of people was based on individual circumstances. It was likely there will be an audit of adult services so that the best provision for individuals can be achieved.

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

The next scheduled meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission was currently set for Monday 4 July, where the reports below were referred:

1. Treasury Management Outturn 2021-2022
2. Financial Outturn 2021-2022 (Q4)

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The Commission was reminded to individually refer an item if appropriate, upon the publication of a forthcoming decision notice.

Scrutiny Training would take place for the Commission on Thursday 9 June.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

T G Belben (Chair)

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Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 13 June 2022

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

Report of the Head of Legal, Governance and HR, *LDS/184*

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of the Commission with a progress update following the information provided to the committee in June and November 2021. The updates are in relation to the Council staff sickness levels, the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, the effects of homeworking, staff welfare and how the workforce continues to transition back into the workplace.

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, in March 2021 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 from homeworking.
- 3.2 The report presented to Commission provided an overview of the situation and measures put in place for its workforce. At the committee's request this report is by way of an update from November and covers, staff sickness levels, the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, the effects of homeworking and how the workforce is transitioning back into the workplace and measures and support offered to colleagues.

4. Background

- 4.1 The report presented to the Commission provided an overview of the situation and measures put in place for its workforce.

5. Current situation

- 5.1 Impact on sickness of Crawley Borough Council employees
- 5.2 The Council has continued to record sickness for Covid 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. The second category was staff that had tested positive for Covid or were too

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ill to work from home due to their symptoms. The Council has seen two cases of long Covid.

- 5.3 The Council has seen an increase in absences due to Covid in the last quarter of 2021-2022 which it has attributed to Covid tests being more easily accessible to staff. Since the testing requirements have been relaxed, the Council has seen a decline in reported sickness relating to Covid.
- 5.4 Other reasons for sickness relate to musculoskeletal (not back related), stomach conditions and mental health.
- 5.5 The winter flu vaccination programme saw an increase in take up than its previous years. Despite a national shortage of vaccinations, the Council has been able to support staff through this programme and it will again run a programme towards the end of summer 2022.
- 5.6 Support to our workforce
- 5.7 The Council's offer of support to staff has been made through its learning and development programme. The offers set out in the earlier report continues to be offered with the re-introduction of some activities taking place 'in person' and others being delivered by Microsoft Teams and CBC Learning Channel on subjects such as:
- Overcoming Overwhelm
 - Men's Health and Wellbeing
 - Menopause demystified
 - Mental Health awareness
 - Mindfulness and Wellbeing
 - Aspiring / New People Manager Programme
- 5.8 For people managers, current and aspiring managers the Council has offered the sessions outlined in the previous report along with the following workshops for;
- Aspiring / New People Manager Programme
 - The essential skills of conducting an effective interview
 - How to support the team through anxiety
 - Coaching conversations for managers
 - Challenging conversations for managers
- 5.9 The launch of a revised appraisal scheme Called 'Plan Do Review' based around conversations for employees and their line manager.
- 5.10 A wide range of offers are made through the Council's Wellbeing team for example sessions offered:
- Starting the year- be kind to yourself in 2022. A guide to taking care of your mental health
 - Motivation for the year ahead-kick start 2022 with healthy eating habits
 - NHS Heart Health Check
 - Food waste- top tips to reduce food waste and how to plan weekly meals

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5.11 Other initiatives offered by officers within the Council:

- Raising the profile of 'Bike Week' which highlighted the cycle scheme and the valued discount platform
- Workplace Savings Scheme which enables staff to transfer money into a savings account directly from their salary
- Pension Benefits, with the recently introduced AVC scheme for participants off the local government pension scheme
- Energy at home – top tips on ways to make energy saving
- National Walk to Workday

5.12 As is widely known more people through the pandemic and coming out of the pandemic have suffered from the impacts around mental health. As the Council has previously advised the committee, it has continued to see an increase from its workforce taking up the counselling service. The offer to staff is one round comprising of 6 sessions. The Council is seeing a number of people requiring more than the 6 sessions. In part this is attributed to the difficulty in obtaining GP referrals and NHS mental health service referrals. In general, the feedback from the counselling service following the completion of sessions is positive. The prediction being more people are likely to require this service going forward.

5.13 The Council has introduced a programme of reflective practise, the aim is to develop personal awareness, resilience, skills and competence across professional, interpersonal and relational domains that enhance the workplace.

5.14 Employee surveys have been carried out and CMT has found these surveys a really useful way of tracking and monitoring how staff are feeling over an extended period of time.

5.15 The results continue to be very positive but one area which had seen a downward trend was staff finding workload levels more challenging. It is hopeful this area will be addressed with the refresh of the appraisal scheme called 'Plan Develop Review' which will encourage employees and their line managers to reflect on what has been achieved in the past 12 months, plan ahead for the coming year whilst looking to future support and development opportunities.

5.16 The Council has and will carry on providing ongoing support to its 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.

6. Staff returning to the office environment

6.1 A small number of staff due to the nature of their work activities, continued to work in the office environment on a regular basis. Once the government had lifted the main restrictions, The Council saw a gradual return where staff were encouraged to be present in the office for a minimum of two days per week for full time employees and one day a week for part time employees.

6.2 For those who may have been apprehensive about returning the transitional period gave them the opportunity to return and for staff to experience for themselves the Covid safe measures in place including an enhanced cleaning regime, directional signposting to ensure no pinch points in passing in corridors and staircases. The Council recognised that some staff might be fearful or be reluctant to return to the workplace. So it was important to ease staff back. It also gave sufficient time for

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managers to work with their teams to arrange office presence on a rota basis to manage numbers to ensure social distancing could be maintained. Staff were encouraged to pop into the office for a day, or half day, or a few hours to familiarise themselves with the work set up in advance of the return.

- 6.3 From May 2022 the Council relaxed some of the Covid 19 restrictions in our buildings, which means the wearing of face coverings is no longer mandatory, if staff wish to wear a face-covering they may choose to do so. There is no longer the requirement for the one-way systems and restrictions for accessing the stairs up and down the building, and social distancing in the meeting rooms was finally removed. The decision was made following a survey with staff. However, sanitiser will continue to be available, as will the use of hygiene screens in the public areas. Going into the warmer months staff are encouraged to ensure good ventilation is maintained in the office environment.

7. Impacts to the externally focused workforce

- 7.1 The external workforce has continued to carry out its function and has adhered to risk assessments and guidance appropriate to specific work areas. This includes outside in public areas, in depots and in work vehicles. This extended to working in bubbles, having separate rest rooms and working in vehicles with people they knew.

8 Next steps for the Council

- Continue to provide learning and development and support workshops appropriately to meet the needs of both employees and service delivery
- Continue to provide and raise the profile of the support available to staff for their wellbeing, mental health and financial health
- Actively encourage and support those who are, or who may face challenges with their mental health by suggesting the various offers in place or highlighting external agencies for them to draw upon
- Carry on providing a range of wellbeing initiatives to suit the requirements of the workforce

9. Background Papers.

[LDS/166 – Overview and Scrutiny Commission 7 June 2021](#)

[LDS/175 – Overview and Scrutiny Commission 1 November 2021](#)

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