

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	Crawley Town Centre Update (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Representative on the Crawley Growth Programme
Councillor R A Lanzer	Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 25 November 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. It was noted that the Commission had unanimously agreed the recommendations for the Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel Final Report at the meeting.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. Safer Crawley Partnership Annual Review and Forthcoming Priorities

The Commission received an update from Acting Chief Inspector Steve Turner, Inspector Adam McCaig, Alex O’Keeffe (WSCC), together with the Head of Community Services, Public Protection & Enforcement Manager, and Councillor Y Khan on the annual performance of the Safer Crawley Partnership along with the future priorities. (Presentation attached as Appendix A to the minutes).

During the item Commission members raised a number of queries. The issues raised and key responses included:

- There was overall support for the work undertaken within schools and the individual events/workshops being delivered.
- Confirmation sought and provided on response rates by various categories. It was confirmed there were different ways of reporting (online, 101 and 999) depending on the nature and severity of the incident.
- Information was provided with regards to the CCTV systems currently operating within the town. This included the mobile units in operation, together with those operated and monitored by the Council.
- An update was provided on the Junior Citizen event, with a focus to keeping children safe particularly whilst taking part in online gaming.
- Clarification was sought and obtained on use of the statistical data collected, particularly in relation to ASB and as it was noted that changes in patterns and hotspots along with comparable data was analysed to establish any major causes and issues. Relating to this, it was confirmed that partnership meetings occurred fortnightly to share intelligence as a means of disrupting shoplifting and communicating hotspot locations.

- Confirmation was provided regarding the contact information for Safeguarding (CBC and WSCC) and then also how to raise concerns of an immediate nature (Police). It was queried if the website could be amended to provide further information.
- There was overall support for operational partnership groups and the co-ordinated partnership activity, particularly as a result of the Langley Green Group being disbanded in December 2024 following the successful safeguarding of 5 children.
- Acknowledgement of the strong collaborative partnership working with multiple and wide ranging community groups and the engagement that had continued, particularly following Operation Skylark.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted, with the views and actions expressed being acknowledged by officers. The Commission's gratitude was relayed to all those for their attendance at the Commission.

5. Cabinet Member Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Public Protection

The Commission noted the update given by Councillor Y Khan and questioned her on a variety of issues relating to the portfolio. The following topics were discussed:

- Following the revised Community Protection Team it was noted that the change had been successful and as agreed, the OSC would receive an update on the newly formed service in 2025-2026.
- The Junior Citizen event had proven to be successful for young people to gain experience and advice, particularly on ASB and increasing awareness on how to keep themselves safe on the streets and online.
- It was acknowledged that the "myCrawley" service provided an ideal option to report fly tipping as well as other issues and concerns.
- Clarification was sought and obtained as to parking enforcement throughout the town, particularly on shopping parades and whether data was obtained on specific hotspot areas. It was confirmed that officers patrolled parades where there were disabled bays as well as resident permit zones. They would also patrol based on hotspot areas, however this was always reliant on information obtained from the public.
- A change in recruitment to Parking Enforcement Officers had resulted in a full staff complement to the service to manage resident permit schemes ensuring residents had safe and appropriate parking, whilst covering more areas where poor parking or road safety issues were a risk to public safety, particularly schools and places of worship.
- Further information was provided regarding the 'Ask for Angela' scheme. The Commission was informed that licensed premises were encouraged to participate and work was underway to strengthen this approach further. Linked to this, the "have fun, stay safe" campaign provided educational materials and anti-spiking devices to pubs and clubs across the town. Work continued with the private hire operators to ensure that drivers and staff were trained in safeguarding to ensure safe transit home for those using the nighttime economy.
- There was recognition of the strong and positive partnership working throughout the town.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission thanked Councillor Y Khan for attending and for the informative discussion that had ensued.

6. Housing Policies: (Compensation, Short-term Alternative Accommodation, Stock Condition, CCTV)

The Commission considered report [CH/211](#) of the Head of Crawley Homes. The report requested approval for the following draft Crawley Homes policies to be adopted to comply with regulatory requirements: •Compensation •Short-term alternative accommodation •Stock Condition •CCTV

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Head of Crawley Homes, the Policy and Engagement Manager and Planned Maintenance Manager, the Commission raised the following comments:

- The Housing Ombudsman expected registered housing providers to consider compensation as part of complaint handling and the proposed Compensation policy offered appropriate remedies and compensation in a fair and justified approach. Confirmation was sought on the policy and whether benchmarking had been undertaken. It was acknowledged that benchmarking work was at its introductory stage, but comparable information had been taken from previous Housing Ombudsman judgements, along with another authority to provide valuable insight. Additional information was provided on discretionary payments such as the failure to meet repair response times and the actions taken to remedy.
- It was recognised that the CCTV policy was for the purposes of protecting the environment, property, assisting in investigating ASB and preventing crime. Covert CCTV would need to be covered under RIPA.
- It was confirmed that tenants and leaseholders were responsible for ensuring they obtained the correct permissions before installing private CCTV or any form of equipment within or in the grounds of their home and this included smart / ring doorbells. Any installation of CCTV would need to be appropriate.
- It was acknowledged that stock condition surveys were underway and it was confirmed that data came from a variety of sources (system, contractor and visits) to ensure the condition and efficiency of the council's maintenance investment programmes.
- Further discussions took place regarding the Equality Impact Assessment around the categories linked to the Compensation policy and Stock Condition policy.
- The Tenants and Leaseholders Action Panel (TLAP) had been consulted and endorsed the proposed policies.

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.

7. Crawley Town Centre Update

Commission Members considered report [PES/476](#) and associated [appendix](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought to provide the Commission with an update on the current town centre, its future along with the ongoing regeneration.

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

- Acknowledgement that the Crawley economy remained successful, attracting 1.2 million visitors every month. In terms of unit vacancy rate this was 8.6%, which was below the national average (13.8%).

- It was noted that there had been recent investments in the town, and whilst these may not have been as high profile as some of the more traditional brands, they were significant as this meant Crawley could offer something different as part of its town centre offer.
- Information was provided on the closure of the Marks and Spencer store which closed in November 2024. The reason for the closure was based on a wider, strategic decision taken by the company on commercial viability grounds to move towards larger, more sub-regional stores with larger floor space. The building was very old and costly to run. Marks & Spencer had expressed their desire to expand their presence in Crawley in the future, should a suitable site become available.
- It was acknowledged that Council officers understood that the former Marks and Spencer store may be expected to be sold in February 2025 and it may be conceivable that the new owners may wish to bring forward proposals for residential and/or commercial space redevelopment on the site. Any proposals that would be due to be submitted would be formally considered by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the recently adopted Local Plan for Crawley 2030-2040.
- The Council remained committed to securing a vibrant neighbourhood and sustainable future for the town centre via significant qualitative investment through continued partnership working and investment. The first intervention would be Station Gateway (subject to approval), which included transforming The Martlets, Friary Way, Haslett Avenue West and at the junction between Station Way and Friary Way. The second was a new regeneration plan for the east of the town centre, focusing on the former Marks and Spencer building, the former Town Hall, County Buildings, the Queensway Store (Decathlon) and the northern parcel of land at Crawley College.
- Further information was provided regarding the ex-Morrisons site, which due to the complex nature of the site made seeking alternative options challenging.
- It was recognised that the Town Centre BID had resulted a positive impact on the town centre and since its launch had delivered new services, events and initiatives, whilst also improving the sense of community safety and security on the town centre.
- It was acknowledged that the town centre had seen an increase in residential population in recent years to approximately 1,500 in recent years. Moving forward, significant new residential development was planned and it was recognised that the town centre was diversifying to become a neighbourhood in its own right.

RESOLVED

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

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

An update was provided from the most recent [HASC](#) meetings. Key items of discussion included:

27 November 2024

Sussex Winter Plan 2024-2025

This plan focused on supporting the population to stay well and maintaining patient safety and experience with the assumption that there would be no extra winter funding and thus, all decisions had been taken through the lens of quality and safety.

Performance and Resources Report - Quarter 2 2024/25

The report set out the finance and performance position at the end of September 2024. In terms of Adult Social care, in receiving this report, the committee noted that of the 7 performance measures, 14% were reporting as 'green', 43% as 'amber' and 43% as 'red'. The number of red rated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had not changed since the last quarter. In terms of Public Health, of the 6 performance measures, 17% were reporting as 'green', 50% as 'amber' and 33% as 'red'. The number of red rated KPIs had not changed since the last quarter.

It was noted that the current health and wellbeing strategy was coming to the end of its term, and currently, work was ongoing with the Health and Wellbeing Board and partners to develop the new strategy for a new five-year term from 2025-2030, and that one of the draft priority areas would be food and nutrition

Update on Council Plan, Medium-Term Financial Strategy, and Preparations for 2025/26 Draft Budget

Concerns were raised about the increase in national insurance contributions and the impact this would incur on the health and adult social care budget, particularly for providers, and in the Council more generally. It was highlighted by a member that the proposed increase might well negate the projected aim of £3.3 million in savings as laid out in the report. These concerns were acknowledged and it was agreed that the impact on providers from the proposed national insurance increase would likely overshadow any savings made.

The committee noted that the department and Cabinet member had been providing them with information on this and they were aware of the transformation journey that was seeking to embed many aspects of the Council plan in order to safeguard the most vulnerable and that they were aware of the ongoing work to champion changes that will deliver savings while protecting the most vulnerable. The committee further acknowledged the work of the department in identifying these savings and the thorough nature of the work being conducted and championed by the team.

8 January 2025

Work programme 2024 - 2025

The following were highlighted for specific identification as possible items:

- End of September (Quarter 2) Performance & Resources Report
- Access to Primary Care

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

The Commission confirmed the following reports:


1. 2024-2025 Budget Monitoring – Quarter 3
2. 2025-2026 Budget and Council Tax
3. Capital Strategy 2025-2026
4. Treasury Management Strategy 2025-2026

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.17 pm.

M L Ayling (Chair)

Appendix A – Safer Crawley Partnership



SAFER CRAWLEY PARTNERSHIP

Annual Review 2024/25

Purpose of the Partnership
To reduce re-offending, tackle crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance misuse and any other behaviour which has a negative effect on the local community so that people in Crawley are safer and feel safer.

Statutory Partners

- Crawley Borough Council
- WSPCC
- Sussex Police
- West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
- Probation
- Sussex Health & Care


Other partners involved in the community safety partnership include:


- OSGCC
- Crawley Youth Centre
- Crawley Community youth Service
- Crawley & Gatwick Business Watch
- GLS
- Audio Active
- Crawley Schools
- Town Centre BID
- Crawley Town Communities Foundation

2024/25 Priorities

- Violence Against Women & Girls
- Serious & Organised Crime
- Youth Related ASB
- Protecting Vulnerable Individuals
- Drug Related Harm
- Clear Hold Build

Review of 2024-25 Achievements & Challenges






Events Held in 2024/25


Junior Citizen

- 1,667 children from Crawley's schools attended the two week programme to learn key life skills for its 33rd year.
- Following feedback from the event in 2022, the focus of the event has shifted towards community and personal safety and this continued in 2024.
- Following feedback from OSC in 2024, a new session was introduced which focused on how children can keep themselves safe whilst taking part in Online Gaming.
- New sessions also included keeping your personal information safe online, raised body image sessions, the dangers of vaping, and how to behave pro socially in Public Spaces.
- We also with staff from Manor Green Primary School to modify sessions, where possible, to ensure children with additional needs could engage in a meaningful way.




Safer Schools

- The event saw 1,500 secondary school students attend The Health over two dates and was inspired by the Crawley Schools Pastoral Network Group.
- The event is attended by students in Year 8 (aged between 12-13) from all secondary schools, including Manor Green College and the APC (Alternative Provision College).
- The event included a powerful presentation by ex-gang members working with St Giles Trust, who talked about their lived experience and how children can recognise the early signs of grooming and exploitation for themselves or their peers.
- The event is further supported by schools committing to assembly time and/or personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons to further support the issues raised.



Let's Talk Event

- The Event sought to bring together stakeholders and members of the public to talk through key issues affecting Crawley including violence against women and girls, knife crime and exploitation, hate crime, online safety, and anti-social behaviour.
- The event was attended by 50 residents, business owners, stakeholders, community leaders and representatives from service providers.
- The Youth Mayor attended and spoke about the Youth Council's growing concern about vaping and their perceived lack of action to address the issue.
- A guest speaker attended, Leon Reid, who spoke about his experience of being exploited which ended his Olympic Career, and how we used this experience to educate young people about how exploitative friends can operate.
- Performances from Audio Active, which included young people who have been supported through funding provided by the Safer Crawley Partnership.





Projects funded in 2024/25

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Projects funded in 2024/25



- Junior Citizen
- White Ribbon Campaign
- Have Fun, Stay Safe Campaign
- 'Drug Boxes' for Neighborhood Youth Police Officers
- Operational Partnership Groups
- Girls Wellbeing Schools Project
- Audio Active – Outreach and 'Kustom Vibes'
- Partnership Outreach Project
- Russel Martin Foundation – Boxing and Extra Time Placements

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Operational Partnership Groups




- This year, two SCP Operational Groups were formed to address complex ongoing issues in Southgate and Langley Green.
- Issues involved exploitation of children, drugs misuse, drug dealing, anti-social behaviour and peer-on-peer violence.
- Partnership activity included operations delivered by Sussex Police. Targeted patrols by the CPT, directed outreach funded by SCP. SCP funded environmental design interventions and close work with Children's Social Care.
- The Langley Green Group was disbanded in December 2024 following the successful safeguarding of 5 children who, through coordinated partnership activity, are no longer being exploited and activity no longer causing harm to the community.
- Southgate Playing Fields is ongoing, however a marked reduction in reports of peer-on-peer violence, drugs misuse and anti-social behaviour.

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Priorities 2025/26



- Violence Against Women & Girls**
 - Particularly related to stalking & stress-based harassment.
- Preventing the Exploitation of Young People**
 - Contextual Safeguarding and knife-related Harm Prevention
- Protecting Vulnerable Individuals**
 - Encompasses a range of issues including hate crime, cuckooing, and addiction-related offending.
- Acquisitive Crime**
 - Focus to tackle increasing levels of shoplifting
- Community Engagement**
 - Events and Awareness Campaigns

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Operation Skylark – Civil unrest



- Operation Skylark was the Sussex Police response to the Southport attack and aftermath of violent disorder. Police responded to a violent incident in which an armed individual carried out an attack on 29th July 2024.
- Extreme right groups have used this attack to promote disinformation, promote anti-migrant, anti-muslim and anti-establishment narratives.
- Some extreme-right groups called, online, for offline actions in the form of protest as witnessed in London on 31st July 2024 and more widely throughout the country over the following days, causing significant concerns and tensions within our communities.

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Operation Skylark – Civil unrest



- Identification of Tensions and vulnerabilities.
- Holding of regular Gold Groups attended by senior members representing our various affected communities.
- Ongoing scanning of media both local and national, and the collation/development of intelligence.
- High visibility patrols around high-risk locations to provide public reassurance, deter offences and built on public trust and confidence.
- Regular briefings of key partners and local faith groups.

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Protest in Crawley



- Intelligence indicated a planned protest by Right Wing Groups at a Hotel in Crawley on Friday 9th August and further development identified The Holiday Inn on Hazlett Avenue East.
- Social media platforms were used by Far-Right groups to spread anti-immigration sentiment with comments such as "Say no to illegal immigration – this hotel is next a mother and baby unit – the local mothers want an end to the constant harassment".
- This caused a significant rise in Community Tensions with comments appearing on social media indicating a counter protest was to take place and urging people to attend.
- Local Faith leaders were engaged, and plans put in place to Police the protest to ensure the safety of those attending. Staff from our Neighbourhood Policing Teams increased patrols around high profile locations and engaged with staff at local Mosques and hotels.
- Significant Police resources were deployed to deal effectively with this Critical Incident but, more noticeable, was the overwhelming public support where the communities of Crawley came together as one to attend as a counter protest and show the Far-Right that their racist and anti-immigration views were not welcome in Crawley Town.
- The event passed without issue and without violence or disorder.

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Effects on our Communities in Crawley.



- The tragic event on the 29th July led to widespread fear amongst the migrant, Muslim and Minority Community Groups within Crawley and this was fuelled further by Far-Right sentiment spread throughout Social Media Platforms.
- This was monitored on a local level through our SCC (Intelligence department), through feedback from partner agencies and through direct communication between our PCSOs, NPT Inspector and myself liaising with affected groups.
- By Working collaboratively and in partnership with our multiple, and wide ranging religious groups we have maintained community tensions at a manageable level of slightly raised, we have taken positive and swift action against any reported hate crimes, and through positive engagement we have maintained the trust and confidence that our communities have in Crawley Police.

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Structural changes in Sussex Police

- Following a reorganisation within Sussex Police, Crawley and Mid-Sussex now share a Superintendent which provides a higher degree of strategic oversight for Crawley.
- There have been reorganisations of teams to ensure that response and neighbourhood policing have sufficient resources to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.
- It has become even more crucial to work in a more intelligence-led manner and more closely with partners and communities.



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Crime Data for Crawley

VAWG, Serious Violence, ASB, Hate Crime, Drug Offences

	01.10.23 – 30.09.24	01.10.22 – 30.09.23	01.10.21 – 30.09.22
VAWG crimes (Public Place)	1118 (-1.8%) ↓	1138	1190
Serious Violence (Public Place)	229 (-0.4%) ↓	230	184
ASB CADs <small>*Excludes DA</small>	1815 (+14.4%) ↑	1586	1840
Hate Crime (Public Place)	291 (+14.6%) ↑	254	275
Drug Offences (Public Place)	275 (-15.1%) ↓	239	252

() Figures in brackets - difference from previous year

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Current Challenges and Emerging Issues

County Drug Lines

Knife Crime (Increase in weapons offences and possession of weapons)

Youth-related Crime and Disorder

Child Criminal Exploitation

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Clear, Hold, Build (Stronger, Safer Crawley)

Update on results on each headline from SIA

Continually develop intelligence around serious and organised crime activity, within the Northgate area.

Identify and target those causing most harm through preventative and enforcement activity.

To divert offenders and those vulnerable away from being involved in crime and ensuring safeguarding is in place.

To increase the community ownership and positive activity within the locality.

To work more closely with statutory and community partners in the response to serious and organised crime.

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Clear, Hold, Build (Stronger, Safer Crawley)

Significant reduction in County Lines operating in Crawley as a result of work spanning months which have had positive results.

Substantial disruption of organised crime, drug dealing and the exploitation of young people.

Key individuals involved in serious violence have been issued with Serious Violence Reduction Orders.

Average of 30 proactive patrols per month in Memorial Gardens to maintain capable guardianship of the space.

Regular weapon sweeps by Neighbourhood Services resulting in weapons being found, secured and taken off the streets.

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Crawley PCSOs



Bewbush and Gosops Green: PCSO Jo Hall
Broadfield: PCSO Anna Urbanczyk
Furnace Green and Tilgate: PCSO Steve West
Ifield: PCSO Dionne Watling
Langley Green: PCSO Natasha Denbeigh
Maidenbower and Worth: PCSO Bob License
Northgate and Three Bridges: PCSO Suzanne Lydon
Pound Hill and Forge Wood: PCSO Dom Holland
Southgate: PCSO Holly Maslen

Town Centre, Manor Royal and West Green: PCSO's Petronela Lazaroia, Chloe Torbin, Adam Furniss, Jamie Chandler and Ili Boyanova

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SAFER CRAWLEY PARTNERSHIP
Questions

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