

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Cabinet

Wednesday, 27 November 2024 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

M G Jones (Chair)	Leader of the Council
I T Irvine	Cabinet Member for Housing
Y Khan	Cabinet Member for Public Protection
C J Mullins	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Wellbeing
S Mullins	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Culture
B Noyce	Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change
T Rana	Cabinet Member for Resources

Also in Attendance:

Councillor M L Ayling, D Crow and J Russell

Officers Present:

Siraj Choudhury	Head of Governance, People & Performance
Ian Duke	Chief Executive
Carolyn Martlew	Head of Corporate Finance
Chris Page	Deputy Chief Executive
Chris Pedlow	Democracy & Data Manager
Vicki Basley	Chief Accountant
Nigel Sheehan	Head of Major Projects and Commercial Services
Paul Baker	Partnership Services Manager
Philip Morris	Sustainability Manager
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor A Nawaz

1. Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures of interests were made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 November 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader of the Council.

3. Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

4. Further Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private and Notifications of any Representations

It was reported that no representations had been received in respect of agenda item 17, *Waste and Recycling: Changes to Collection Regime and Extension of Waste and Recycling Contract*.

5. Matters referred to the Cabinet and Report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

It was confirmed that no matters had been referred to the Cabinet for further consideration.

6. Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel Final Report

The Chair of the Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Russell, presented report [OSC/325](#). A Notice of Motion at Full Council in October 2023 proposed setting up a Scrutiny Panel to examine and seek to improve Crawley's household waste recycling rate, taking into account the differing challenges the Borough had in comparison to other areas. A Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel was subsequently established in February 2024 to look at how household waste recycling rates in Crawley could be improved. Alongside consideration of options to improve recycling performance, the National Waste and Resources Strategy, *Simpler Recycling*, was launched in October 2023 and, amongst other proposals, confirmed that waste collection authorities will be obliged to move to a separate weekly food waste collection with effect from April 2026. Within this context, a focus for the Panel was to consider the efficacy and impact of different collection regime options open to the Council in implementing the National Waste Strategy.

The Panel wished to consider how to maximise impact while recognising budget constraints, and the demographic and social economic context which typically influences recycling behaviour and performance. Within this context, the Panel sought to "find ways to understand impediments to recycling in the Borough and also consider ways to inform residents/customers of proposed changes to waste collection and incentivise to maximise levels of recycling".

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's [comments](#) on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 November 2024. The key points raised included recognising that recycling within blocks of flats presented a number of challenges and, as a result, any rollout of food waste bins/caddies should be a phased approach based on the style of properties. It was recognised that clear, strong communications regarding recycling and any proposed changes would be key in order to incentivise and encourage residents to

increase recycling and minimise food waste and there were many different communication channels. It was acknowledged that, as with any change, it would take a while to adapt.

The Commission amended recommendation 2.2b) to 'recycling and waste' in order to mirror the proposed changes in recommendation 2.2a, in which the website had been re-named 'Recycling and Waste', in order to place recycling at the forefront and thus refocus priorities.

Councillor Crow was invited to speak on the item. Matters raised included that the suggestion for a working group, which ended up being the Scrutiny Panel, came from a Notice of Motion he put forward to Full Council to investigate what could be done to address Crawley's poor recycling rates compare to the rest of the West Sussex authorities. In response to Councillor Crow's comments it was highlighted that, within sections 6.8 to 6.10, the report showed that Crawley's recycling rates were certainly comparable, if not better, than other a similar Councils with an urban make up and similar collection regimes.

Councillors Irvine, S Mullins, Rana, C Mullins, Jones and Noyce all spoke as part of the discussion on the report. The Cabinet thanked Councillor Russell and the Panel for their hard work, sensible and well justified recommendations, and they were happy to accept the proposed change raised by the Commission.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet accepts and notes the recommendations from Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel as detailed below within the context of the *Waste and Recycling: Changes to Collection Regime and Extension of Waste and Recycling Contract* exempt report (HPS/045) and:

- a) approves the rename the current Council's website link to 'Recycling and Waste'.
- b) requests that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change investigate the Junior Citizen event which covers 'waste and the environment' to consider expanding this further to cover 'recycling and waste'.
- c) recognises that, from other authorities' experience, implementing a separate food waste collection service at flats presents logistical challenges and careful consideration will need to be given to support take up and participation at these properties; and authorise officers to explore the use of different collection methods for flats, including the use of reusable bags and/or "smart clear sacks".
- d) for the majority of households, supports the continued use of a 140ltr residual waste bin and existing exceptions policy as a means of encouraging use of the separate food waste bin and recycling bins.
- e) recognises that a rollout of two or more phases may be required to take into account varying requirements of different property types, as well as balancing available resource and the lead-in time for delivery of food waste vehicles and food waste bins.

- f) approves that the waste and recycling service engages with residents as part of any changes to the service roll out including agreeing where bins will be sited where different options may exist for their placement.
- g) confirms it will investigation of the options, of separate weekly food waste collection and fortnightly residual waste collection, as supported by the Scrutiny Panel, and noting the changes proposed in the National Waste Strategy and the potential for changes to the collection regime to significantly impact upon recycling performance.
- h) approves that a clear and consistent communications campaign supports the role out of the separate food waste collection and any subsequent changes in the collection regime. As part of this messaging highlight the waste hierarchy of 'reduce, reuse and recycle' whilst ensuring that communications are easy to understand and include the message about the cost, importance of recycling to incentivise and engage residents along with contact details for bulky waste collection and fly tipping; and confirms it will consider utilising the following mediums to promote communications:
- Wrap around signs on vehicles (as per standard approach)
 - Standard information bins ("bin hangers" as per standard approach)
 - myCrawley
 - Crawley Live
 - Early promotion in Christmas 2025 collection.
 - Council Tax billing in advance in April 2026.
 - All social media to feature notification of changes.

Reasons for the Recommendations

To investigate how household waste recycling rates in Crawley could be improved and in particular to ensure the implementation of revised collection arrangements under Simpler Recycling will help to provide a step change in recycling performance across the town.

7. Tenancy Strategy 2025 - 2029

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented report [SHAP/091](#) of the Head of Strategic Housing. The report sought approval of the new Tenancy Strategy.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's [comments](#) on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 November 2024, which included recognition that the Strategy incorporated the recommendations from the Housing Associations Scrutiny Panel which was conducted in 2024 and it was noted that Housing Associations were regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The Council had no regulatory powers over the activities of Housing Associations operating within Crawley.

The Commission recommended that Cabinet be requested to amend Section 3 of the Tenancy Strategy (Council Approach) to provide further clarity upon timescales ‘households may wait “many years” for an offer of suitable housing’. (Suggested amendments in bold to provide further information): ‘households may wait **several** years for an offer of **social housing (dependent on their priority and the availability of properties they are eligible for)**’.

Councillors S Mullins and Jones spoke as part of the discussion on the report and in support of the proposed Strategy. Councillor Irvine responded to the Commission’s proposal, confirming he was happy to accept their proposed amendment to the Strategy.

RESOLVED

That Full Council be recommended to approve and adopt of the Tenancy Strategy 2025 to 2029 (Appendix A of report [SHAP/091](#)) to commence from 1 January 2025, subject to that within Section 3.0 Council approach, that the final line in the penultimate paragraph be changed to read:

‘There are now over 2,500 households on the housing register, and due to the increased demand for housing and reduced supply, households may wait several years for an offer of social housing (dependent on their priority and the availability of properties they are eligible for).’.

Reasons for the Recommendations

To fulfil the Council’s legal duty to publish a Tenancy Strategy to set out matters to which registered providers are to have regard to when formulating their own tenancy policies.

8. Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy 2025 to 2029

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented report [SHAP/092](#) of the Head of Strategic Housing. The report sought approval of the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. In presenting the proposed Strategy, the Cabinet Member informed the Cabinet of the four priorities, namely, prevention and early intervention, maximising the supply of suitable accommodation, tackling rough sleeping and single homelessness, and preventing repeat homelessness.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission’s [comments](#) on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 November 2024, which included noting that the new Strategy strengthens the focus of prevention and up-streaming work to develop more early intervention strategies in order to prevent crisis and increase the resilience of residents in the Borough. Also, that the funding for the Rough Sleeping Multi-Disciplinary Team would not be known until the end of the year at the earliest. The Commission had sought clarification regarding the Renters’ Rights Bill, which could potentially bring changes such as ‘no fault’ evictions and its potential impact on homelessness.

Councillors S Mullins, Rana, C Mullins and Jones spoke as part of the discussion on the report and Strategy.

RESOLVED

That Full Council be recommended to approve and adopt of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029 (Appendix A of report [SHAP/092](#)) to commence from 1 January 2025.

Reasons for the Recommendations

To fulfil the Council's legal duty to publish a homelessness strategy upon expiry of the previous strategy.

9. Updated Climate Emergency Action Plan and Climate Emergency Declaration

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change presented report [PES/473](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought Cabinet approval for an update to the Climate Emergency Action Plan and Climate Emergency Declaration, to include consideration of a nature emergency declaration and an application to join the UK100 network. Full Council will be asked to ratify this decision.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's [comments](#) on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 November 2024, which included that they welcomed the additions of the Declaration of a Nature Emergency.

Councillors S Mullins, C Mullins and Jones spoke as part of the discussion on the report, with them expressing their support for the ambitious targets contained within the updated Action Plan and to the Climate Emergency Declaration. They also declared their support for the inclusion of the Nature Emergency Declaration.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet:

- a) approves and adopts the updated Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) structure as set out in Appendix A of report [PES/473](#), whilst noting the implications set out in section 9 of report [PES/473](#).
- b) agrees that the Council applies to be a member of the UK100 organisation, and that this be included in the updated Climate Emergency Declaration, and should the application be successful:
 - i. That the Leader of the Council signs the UK100 membership pledge,
 - ii. That the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change be nominated as the Council's representative to the UK100 organisation, and

- iii. That the above Portfolio Holder Responsibilities be amended to include this appointment within the Constitution.

That Full Council be recommended to approve and adopt the updated Climate Emergency Declaration, which is accompanied by a new declaration of a Nature Emergency (Appendix B of report [PES/473](#)) and the ambition to join UK100.

Reasons for the Recommendations

The Council is currently committed to reduce all its carbon emissions by 50% by 2030, and to net zero by 2040 at the latest. The proposed updated Declaration would accelerate the reduction of emissions that are under the Council's direct control, whilst allowing more time for reducing the Council's indirect emissions (procured goods and services, and emissions from social housing and commercial leased assets).

Declaring both a 'climate and nature emergency' acknowledges the strong links between climate change, biodiversity loss and air quality, and the Council's responsibility for halting biodiversity loss as defined in the Environment Act 2021. It also acknowledges the recently arisen opportunity for the Council to raise funding through the planning process to invest in Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) within the borough.

Halting climate change cannot be achieved in isolation, and joining the UK100 organisation will provide opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities in responding to climate change, strengthening the Council's voice in advocating to government for action on climate, and improving its ability to access the funding needed for decarbonisation.

The updated declaration acknowledges the influence that the Council has over emissions and biodiversity across the borough and will help to coordinate action, whilst also acknowledging the dependencies outside of our control.

The updated Climate Emergency Action Plan is more delivery orientated with a clearer pathway for the Council to reduce its own direct carbon emissions to net zero.

10. 2024-2025 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 2

The Leader presented report [FIN/672](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance. The report set out a summary of the Council's actual revenue and capital spending for the quarters to September 2024, together with the main variations from the approved spending levels and impact on future budgets. The Cabinet were informed that, in respect of the revenue account, there was a projected surplus of £410k which is a favourable turnaround from the previous quarter and that was mainly due to better than anticipated income from interest on investments, of £2.167m. On the HRA, the predicted overspend at the end of Quarter 2 was £976k compared to £151k at the end of the previous quarter. It was noted that was due to expenditure on responsive repairs.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's [comments](#) on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 November 2024, which included noting that the slippage of the capital programme

(mostly as a result of water neutrality) had resulted in higher balances from higher interest payments, but has impacted our ability to increase the Council's housing supply and ease temporary accommodation pressures. The Commission had sought clarification over planning income, along with the flexible housing support grant and the changes to Right to Buy and had sought additional information on the options considered with regards to Ashdown House which would balance income to be received and the works required.

Councillor Crow was invited to speak on the item. Matters raised including that there had been a significant slippage in the capital programme and that the report indicated that was a result of water neutrality issues. He questioned why that had not been picked up in the capital programme forecasting, as water neutrality was not a new issue. On Ashdown House he asked for reassurance that the proposed capital investment was seen as a good investment longer term compared to disposal.

Both the Leader and Head of Corporate Finance responded to the points raised by Councillor Crow, confirming that, in respect of Ashdown House, all avenues had been considered and the approach highlighted in the report was deemed to be the most adventurous for the Council long term. Officers were constantly keeping a track of our capital programme and the vast majority of the delays were down to the knock on effects of water neutrality issues. Also, it was confirmed that the additional investment income was not purely down to capital slippage but as a result of good long term investment, as shown in the Treasury Management report.

Councillor S Mullins spoke as part of the discussion on the report.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet:

- a) notes the projected outturn for the financial year 2024/2025 as summarised in report [FIN/672](#).
- b) approves the capital virement of £204k from the ICT Replacement Reserve to the People Systems Programme (PSP) project.
- c) approves the capital virement of £550k from the Green Tech Business Grants project to the Innovation Centre Project within the Towns Fund programme.
- d) approves the delegation to the Head of Corporate Finance, in consultation with the Leader to approve a capital virement from the property reserve to cover the costs of fit out and related work at Ashdown House, up to the limit of £1.3m (as detailed in paragraph 8.8 of report [FIN/672](#)).

Reasons for the Recommendations

To report to Members on the projected outturn for the year compared to the approved budget.

11. Budget Strategy 2025/26 – 2027/28

The Leader presented report [FIN/673](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance. The report set out future financial projections along with the policy framework for improving financial efficiency and meeting the long term investment needs of the Town, as well as proposals for the annual budget process.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's [comments](#) on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 November 2024, which included, acknowledging that some fees and charges may have to be increased by more than CPI to help close the budget gap and ensure that services were operating more closely to a cost recovery basis where possible, and noting that fees and charges would be applied proportionally as possible but were currently under review as part of the budget process. The Commission had noted there was a proposed amendment in recommendation 2.2 ciii to specify the Council Tax Banding in report [FIN/673](#), with the revised wording as follows (in bold):

*“The current budget deficit of £2.452m for 2025/26 (section 6.2 of report [FIN/673](#)) is based on a Council tax increase of 2.99% which is £6.94 **per band D dwelling**. Table 2 (section 6.6.10 of report [FIN/673](#)) highlights the budget gap modelling different assumptions”.*

The Leader confirmed that he was happy to accept the additional wording to recommendation 2.2 ciii.

RESOLVED

That the Full Council be recommended to:

- a) agrees the overall approach to the Budget Strategy 2025/26 to 2027/28 as set out in section 8 of report [FIN/673](#).
- b) approves the minimum recommended General Fund Balance remains at £3m.
- c) notes the following highlights of the Budget Strategy:
 - i. That the Budget is aligned to the Council's Corporate Priorities.
 - ii. The outline 3 year forecast as shown in table 2 paragraph 6.1 of report [FIN/673](#)., this is likely to be subject to significant change depending on the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26 and the Spending Review Phase two reforms for the period 2026/27 and beyond.
 - iii. The current budget deficit of £2.452m for 2025/26 (section 6.2 of report [FIN/673](#).) is based on a Council tax increase of 2.99% which is £6.94 per band D dwelling. Table 2 (section 6.6.10 of report [FIN/673](#).) highlights the budget gap modelling different assumptions.
 - iv. The forecast does not include any fundamental changes in service delivery as these would be too speculative in nature at this stage.

- v. That there are significant uncertainties around Government funding prior to the settlement in December 2024 and that this uncertainty increases from 2026/27 due to Spending Review Phase 2 including the anticipated reset of the business rates.

Reasons for the Recommendations

To agree the Council's Budget Strategy for 2025/26 to 2027/28 including the assumptions made which will set the budget parameters for 2025/26.

The 2025/26 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Budgets and the revised capital programme will be set by the Full Council in February 2025. The Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy will be considered at the same meeting.

To note that until the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is published in December 2024 these projections are highly likely to change.

12. Treasury Management Mid Year Review 2024-2025

The Leader presented report [FIN/674](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance. The report provided an update on the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024-2025.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's [comments](#) on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 November 2024, which included requesting that descriptive column headings be added to Detailed Holdings (Appendix 2), and that the Commission sought information, as to the Council's approach to treasury management and investment. It was noted that investment opportunities were proactively sought, whilst still acting within the Council's investment limits. The Leader confirmed that changes to the column headings would be made to future reports.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet notes the report [FIN/674](#) and the treasury activity for the first two quarters of 2024/2025.

Reasons for the Recommendations

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Treasury Management (the TM Code) recommends that members be updated on treasury management activities regularly (Treasury Management Strategy, annual and mid-year reports). This report, therefore, ensures this Council is implementing best practice in accordance with the Code.

13. Forward Programme of Key Procurements (January – June 2025)

The Leader presented report [FIN/670](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance. The report sought approval for the current forward programme of key procurements (over £500,000) for January-June 2025 and delegated authority for contract award approvals following the appropriate procurement process. It also provided an update on the previously identified procurements from July – December 2024.

Councillor Irvine spoke as part of the discussion on the report.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet:

- a) endorses the procurement forward programme January – June 2025 (appendix A of report [FIN/670](#)).
- b) delegates authority to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, relevant Head of Service, and Head of Governance, People & Performance to approve the award of the contract following an appropriate procurement process.
- c) delegates the negotiation, approval and completion of all relevant legal documentation, following the awarding of the contracts to the relevant Head of Service, Head of Governance, People & Performance, Head of Corporate Finance, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member.
(Generic Delegations 2 & 3 will be used to enact this recommendation)

Reasons for the Recommendations

By approving the procurement forward programme there is greater transparency of future procurement processes allowing more scope for internal stakeholders to input into how future contracts are delivered.

The approval of the forward programme provides a key decision that will enable the individual procurement processes to be awarded under delegated authority once the tender process has concluded giving the Council the ability to reduce the time required to complete a procurement process.

14. Exempt Information – Exclusion of the Public (Subject to Agenda Item 5)

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.

15. Waste and Recycling: Changes to Collection Regime and Extension of Waste and Recycling Contract

Exempt Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change presented report HPS/045 of the Head of Major Projects and Commercial Services. The report sought approval to analyse options for the waste and recycling service and to introduce the Simpler Recycling Policy mandated by Government determining waste stream to be collected and frequency of collection.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's [comments](#) on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 November 2024, which included recognition that the National Waste Strategy 'Simpler Recycling' mandated waste collection authorities to introduce separate weekly food waste collections to all households by April 2026. It was noted that the statutory guidance confirmed that, as part of the transfer to a weekly food waste collection, local authorities should provide a minimum fortnightly collection of residual waste (i.e. no less frequently than every two weeks).

Councillors Irvine and Jones spoke as part of the discussion on the report and the Leader emphasised that the changes to the waste collections was only happening because the National Waste Strategy was requiring Council's to change their collection approaches.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet:

- a) approves the introduction of a separate weekly food waste collection service and to transfer the residual waste collection from a weekly to a fortnightly service from 2026 to meet the requirement of the National Resources and Waste Strategy and implement the changes to the collection regime on a phased basis with the initial roll out from April 2026.
- b) approves a contract extension with Biffa Municipal for a period of three years from April 2026 with the option to extend for a further two years thereafter.
- c) approves a virement for £890k for food waste vehicles and caddies funded from the DEFRA grant award of £848k and the earmarked reserve of £42k.
- d) requests that the Head of Corporate Finance include additional revenue funding of up to £150k in the 2025-26 Budget and Council Tax report to support the transitional and project management costs associated with implementing the food waste collection.
- e) notes that DEFRA has indicated new burdens funding will be allocated to support the additional revenue costs associated with food waste collection and to support

the one-off transitional costs however the amount to be allocated and the basis upon which this will be calculated have yet to be confirmed.

- f) requests that the Head of Major Project and Commercial Services arranges for an All Members' Seminar prior to the introduction of the revised collection arrangements, to enable Councillors to understand the rationale, logistics and roll out programme for the proposed service changes.

Reasons for the Recommendations

The recommendations will ensure compliance with the Environment Act (2021) requirement to introduce a separate weekly food waste collection while ensuring efficient use is made of available resource with the change to a fortnightly residual waste collection.

The recommendations will support the Council's net zero ambition with a projected 35% reduction in carbon emissions from the collection and disposal of household waste and recycling and a projected 10.4% increase in the Council's recycling rate.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Cabinet concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

M G JONES
Chair