

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Full Council

Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 7.30 pm

Councillors Present:

S Sivaramiah (Mayor)

J Hart (Deputy Mayor)

O Adeniyi, M L Ayling, E Barrott, T G Belben, T Bidwell, C M Burke, B J Burgess, S Bushnell, J Charatan, D Crow, H Hellier, N Hilton, I T Irvine, G S Jhans, M G Jones, I Khan, K Khan, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, C J Mullins, S Mullins, M Mwagale, A Nawaz, B Noyce, D Patel, S Pritchard, D Ramsay, T Rana, J Russell and B Yianni

Also in Attendance:

Mr Russell Brown and Mr Peter Nicolson

Officers Present:

Siraj Choudhury Head of Governance, People & Performance

Ian Duke Chief Executive

Mez Matthews Democratic Services Officer

Chris Pedlow Democracy & Data Manager

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor I Ashraf, K L Jaggard, Y Khan and P K Lamb

1. Minute's Silence

The Mayor held a moment of silence in memory of former Mayor and Councillor Bill Ward, former Chairman of the Council and Councillor Barbara Anderson, former Councillor Ken Trussell, former Councillor Carole Murdoch, and Sir Peter Hordern former Crawley and Horsham MP who have sadly passed since our last ordinary Full Council meeting.

The Mayor then invited representatives from each party to pay tribute. Councillors Chris Mullins and Crow paid their respects to Bill Ward, Councillor Ian Irvine paid his respects to Barbara Anderson, Councillors Crow and Jones paid their respects to Ken Trussell, Councillors Hilton and Lanzer paid their respects to Carole Murdoch, and finally Councillor Lanzer paid his respect to Sir Peter Hordern.

2. Disclosures of Interest

The disclosures of interests made by Councillors are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 24 May 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor, subject to the following amendment that the word ‘Deputy’, be removed from the first line of Minute 2 on page 5.

4. Communications

The Mayor provided the Full Council with a brief update on the Mayoral events attended including special celebratory events for the 80th D-Day anniversary, Windrush day, and Armed Forces Day. The Mayor also provided details over attending the Community Awards at the Hawth, amongst many other events.

Councillor S Mullins Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Culture provided two items of communications to the Full Council, the first related to news from the Crawley’s Military Partnership, where the Council have recently been awarded a Silver award. The national precious award relates to how the Council treats and supports our veterans that interact with the Council. It was noted that to achieve an award was an accomplishment as not easily achievable.

The second Councillor S Mullins provided the Full Council with further context to their Cabinet Member announcements, as contained within the [Supplementary Agenda \(Order Paper\)](#), in respect of the success of the round the lake festival held in Tilgate Park, over the last few days and put on by Creative Crawley and funded by the Arts Council.

5. Public Question Time

Questions asked in accordance with Full Council Procedure Rule 1.2-D were as follows:

Question	Response
<p><i>Nicholas Venes – (United Cars, Gatwick Airport)</i></p> <p>Mr Venes initially provided context to his question before stating that Crawley already has stricter standards for licensed vehicles compared to neighbouring Boroughs. Now, in addition to those standards, when a licensed vehicle passes a Hackney MOT but receives an “advisory”, that advisory needs to be rectified immediately. Why is this?</p>	<p><i>Councillor Jones</i> <i>(Leader of the Council in the absence of the Chair of the Licensing Committee)</i></p> <p>Your question relates to specific cases, and therefore it is not appropriate for me to discuss them in a public meeting as they relate to individual circumstances.</p> <p>I agree that Crawley has high standards, this is something Crawley is proud of as it ensures a well-regulated trade in the Borough which is in everyone’s best interest. It is the Council’s job to regulate the trade. The points system was brought in to be open and transparent in explaining/quantifying the reason for any points incurred. Officers implement the policies adopted by the</p>

Question	Response
<p><i>Supplementary Question:</i></p> <p>It is not fair to have a standard above those set in the policy (i.e. requiring that an advisory is rectified immediately). Would you agree?</p>	<p>Council and so any decisions they make will be based on those policies. If there are concerns regarding those policies, we are prepared to consider those points. Therefore, a meeting can be arranged with the Chair of the Licensing Committee, the Cabinet Member and officers to discuss the issues you have raised.</p> <p>This is a specific point on an individual case which I am not aware of and I do not therefore feel comfortable commenting on that case. I am prepared to refer this to the appropriate people so this can be discussed offline but, unfortunately, I cannot provide you with a satisfactory response tonight.</p>
<p><i>Richard Symonds – (Ifield)</i></p> <p>Will this Council declare an Ecological Emergency in Ifield Brook Meadows - West of Ifield - just as Bristol Council declared an Ecological Emergency in Brislington Meadows four years ago?</p>	<p><i>Councillor Nawaz (Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development)</i></p> <p>Ifield Brook Meadows is currently undergoing a biodiversity assessment which is due to be completed in the Autumn. The results will determine whether there are additional ways to both enhance biodiversity and further protect the site. The Council's Local Plan designates Ifield Brook Meadows as a local green space, local wildlife site, and Crawley Local Plan policies therefore already offer significant protection to the site against development should any future planning application be submitted within the boundary.</p>
<p><i>Mohammed Azzaoui - (Kilnwood Vale)</i></p> <p>I am one of the representatives from United Cars at Gatwick Airport.</p> <p>Since we have started a rally to try to get Uber opposed, the Council's Licensing Department have undertaken three checks of drivers at United Cars. Why are these checks being undertaken now, following the start of this rally, when we haven't received any checks for a number of years prior?</p>	<p><i>Councillor Jones (Leader of the Council) in the absence of the Chair of the Licensing Committee</i></p> <p>There will sometimes be checks on all areas of the trade and I am almost certain that those checks were not related to the rally.</p>

Question	Response
<p><u>Supplementary Question:</u></p> <p>Since we started the rally, I am unaware of Crawley’s Licensing Department approaching any driver in Crawley other than those at Gatwick. We would be happy to have a conversation outside this meeting to discuss this issue and receive clarification on the matter?</p>	<p><i>Councillor Sivarajah (Mayor)</i></p> <p>That has been noted thank you.</p>
<p>Ashley Speirs - (Langley Green)</p> <p>A letter from Licensing was sent to Gatwick with regards to Uber. Has there been any response to that letter?</p> <p><u>Supplementary Comment:</u></p> <p>I hope that the investigation is swift and thorough as, when winter approaches, the trade will suffer massively.</p>	<p>Councillor Jones <i>(Leader of the Council in the absence of the Chair of the Licensing Committee)</i></p> <p>I believe this is referring to the correspondence which the Licensing Committee agreed to send to the various organisations and Government. It would have been wrong to send that letter before the Council had all the information available. The investigation into the issues raised, relating to the private hire operations at Gatwick Airport, has only recently been completed. As a consequence of the investigation, the Council has come to a view and officers are working with the Legal Advisor to consider the Council’s options. It will not be possible to comment on the options until that legal advice is received, but I can assure you, that this is not standing still, appropriate action will be taken, and the relevant organisations and Government agencies will be written to and notified of the updated position.</p>

6. Recommendation 1 - Nominations for Appointment of Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen and Honorary Freemen/Freewomen

The Full Council considered report [LDS/213](#) of the Head of Governance, People and Performance. Councillor Lunnon as the Chair of Governance Committee introduced the report which recommended proposed changes to the Council’s Constitution’s Protocol

on the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen and Honorary Freemen/Freewomen. The proposal was to amend the protocol to reflect that an Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman, whilst serving as a Borough Councillor, would not be entitled to be addressed as Alderman/Alderwoman or attend or take part in any civic ceremonies of the Council in their capacity as an Alderman/Alderwoman.

The recommendation was seconded and supported by Councillor Burke.

RESOLVED

That the Full Council be approve that the Constitution's Protocol on the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen and Honorary Freemen/Freewomen be amended to include the following additional sentence:

“Where an Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman is subsequently re-elected as a Councillor, that Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman shall, whilst serving as a Borough Councillor, not be entitled to be addressed as Alderman/Alderwoman or attend or take part in any civic ceremonies of the Council as an Alderman/Alderwoman.”

7. Recommendation 2 - Appointment of Independent Person

The Full Council considered [LDS/221](#) of the Head of Governance, People & Performance which proposed that Mr Peter Nicholson be appointed as an Independent Person for a further two years, noting that the Committee of Standards in Public Life (CSPL) recommends that local authorities appoint an Independent Person(s) for a term of office of two years.

The recommendation was moved and presented by Councillor Lunnon as the Chair of Governance Committee and seconded and supported by Councillor Burke.

Councillor Jones also spoke on this item.

RESOLVED

That the Full Council approves the appointment of Mr Peter Nicholson as the Council's Independent Person for a further two years until the end of July 2026

The Mayor asked that the Council's thanks to Mr Nicholson for his long service of over 17 years as our Independent Person be recorded.

8. Results of Maidenbower Borough By-Elections - July 2024

The Council received the Returning Officer's report [CEX/069](#), on the results of the Maidenbower Borough By-Elections held on 4 July 2024.

9. Councillors' Questions Time

Name of Councillor asking Question	Name of Cabinet Member Responding
<p><i>Councillor Crow to the Cabinet Member for Housing</i></p> <p>Would you agree to investigate the viability of providing video entry intercom systems for the Council's sheltered housing properties? This would provide reassurance to those residents.</p> <p><u>Supplementary Comment:</u></p> <p>I look forward to hearing from you in due course.</p>	<p><i>Councillor Irvine (Cabinet Member for Housing)</i></p> <p>Thank you for your suggestion. I will discuss this with the relevant officers in Crawley Homes.</p>
<p><i>Councillor Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change</i></p> <p>There was a Council press release in late May regarding the new Penalties Regime which the Council introduced, following recent legislation. This relates to the monitoring of clean air and chimney emissions in the Borough. Forge Wood residents have contacted me with concerns relating to chimney emissions and industrial odours coming from the established industrial units in the vicinity. Will the new penalty regime apply to these cases?</p>	<p><i>Councillor Noyce (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change)</i></p> <p>The new civil penalty powers for emissions of smoke are only enforceable in smoke-controlled areas. Most of Crawley is covered by Smoke Control Orders (SCO), however the SCO for Three Bridges (which covers Manor Royal and Crawley Goods Yard) specifically exempts industrial units and, therefore, the new powers are not applicable to the industrial units in question. However, industrial installations, and their emission levels, are covered by other regulations. The industrial units in questions have a permit which allows visible emissions to only be steam. The Council monitors Nitrogen Dioxide levels in the Borough and there are several monitors close to Forge Wood and nearby industrial units. Those sites have measured the Nitrogen Dioxide levels to be well below the national limit for the last five years. The Council has powers to improve air quality and act where emission levels are high and cause a nuisance. Where persistent smoke causes a nuisance, the Council can issue an abatement notice to prevent further issues, ignoring an abatement notice is a criminal offence.</p>

	<p>I will send these details through to you and, if you have any further questions, we can discuss them.</p>
<p><i>Councillor Burgess to the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Culture</i></p> <p>It is great news that we have been informed by the Crawley Military Partnership that the Council have been reaccredited with a Silver Award for the treatment of our veterans. What more do we need to do to achieve a Gold Award?</p> <p><u>Supplementary Question:</u></p> <p>Do we know of any other Council in the vicinity that has achieved a Gold Award?</p>	<p><i>Councillor S Mullins (Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Culture)</i></p> <p>We have discussed this at length at the Military Partnership. Going from Bronze to Silver was a big jump and to go from Silver to Gold is a much bigger leap. We would like to try, and we will continue to see whether it is a possibility. We outshine most of our neighbouring local councils in the facilities we offer our veterans, and I am extremely proud of that. There are still veterans who are not aware of the opportunities open to them in the Borough, so the more we can broadcast that the better. I would very much like to see us achieve a Gold Award one day.</p> <p>You would have to speak to the Council's Community Development Officer but, as far as I know, no-one around here has achieved a Gold Award, it is an elusive award to achieve.</p>
<p><i>Councillor Patel to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Wellbeing</i></p> <p>Friends of Goffs Park have organised a community picnic on 4 August. We are lucky in Crawley to have such fantastic green spaces and it is important to have high standards for these recreational areas. Do you have an update on the renewal of the Green Flag Awards for our parks?</p>	<p><i>Councillor C Mullins (Cabinet Member for Leisure and Wellbeing)</i></p> <p>The Goffs Park event sounds great, and I would canvas everybody here to attend and support that event and the park itself. This year Crawley has been awarded five Green Flags, with Tilgate Park now holding this status for 22 years. The other parks which have been awarded a Green Flag are Goffs Park, the Memorial Gardens, Worth Park and Ifield Mill Pond. I would encourage people to visit these parks and note the hard work undertaken by the staff to create these beautiful spaces which gains these Green Flags. I respect these officers immensely and I pass my thanks on to them.</p>

<p><i>Councillor Lanzer to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development</i></p> <p>Included within today's King's Speech was the Planning and Infrastructure Bill which is, in part, designed to accelerate the delivery of housing and major infrastructure projects. There have been rumours about potential reduced rights for Local Authorities to determine large scale applications. Can we have your assurance that you will continue to sustain opposition to the West of Ifield Development, and that the newly elected Labour MP for Crawley will continue to represent Crawley in Parliament, rather than have the Labour Party policy represented in Crawley?</p>	<p><i>Councillor Nawaz (Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development)</i></p> <p>Until we get further details on the King's Speech and the Bill it is very difficult for me to comment at this time on what powers have been handed over to (or away from) Local Authorities. However, the Full Council's position on any development to the West of Ifield is very clear. As soon as I receive further information from officers, I will pass these along to you.</p>
<p><i>Councillor Ramsay to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection</i></p> <p>Given the decision by the Government to release prisoners early, what risks do you potentially envisage this may have for the property and people of Crawley?</p> <p><i>Supplementary Question:</i></p> <p>So, is it the view of Crawley Council's Cabinet that those offenders released will be deemed to be low risk?</p>	<p><i>Councillor Jones (Leader of the Council in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Public Protection)</i></p> <p>A lot of the issues you raise are the responsibility of the government which will be dealt with by the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office. The Council has very little influence on these matters. I understand that, although there will be some releases, these will be offenders who have been assessed to be lower risk. You may wish to attend the Sussex Police and Crime Panel and ask this question to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Crawley.</p> <p>These are issues for the Police and the Government which I am not able to answer. That being said, I do appreciate the concern regarding the nation's prison system.</p>
<p><i>Councillor I Khan to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development</i></p> <p>Residents have a serious concern regarding the number of vacant offices and retail units across Crawley, in particular the Town Centre and local</p>	<p><i>Councillor Nawaz (Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development)</i></p> <p>I have also been asked this at a Full Council meeting a few months ago. To reassure you, the vacancy rate for retail</p>

<p>shopping parades. How many empty units are there in Crawley Town Centre, what is the average time they remain unoccupied, are any incentives in place for businesses to operate within them, and are there any penalties for landlords who leave units unoccupied for long periods of time which could incentivise them to rent those units out?</p> <p><i>Supplementary Question:</i></p> <p>Are there any specific incentives for businesses to take on empty units, and do you have any financial penalties for landlords who leave units unoccupied for long periods of time?</p>	<p>units in the Town Centre is below the national average. The position of the economy in the last decade has resulted in businesses struggling, as well as impacting the way people shop. This has led to businesses adopting new practices and business models. Crawley is in demand and numbers from the Town Centre Bid showed that Crawley is well ahead of neighbouring towns in both footfall and vacancy rate.</p> <p>Office space in Crawley is also in demand with Crawley being seen, in the Gatwick Diamond sector, as a prime area to provide business and office space. There is a demand in Crawley for A Grade office space which is demonstrated by the demand shown in rental space within the Create Building. Several floors of the Create Building have already been rented out with lots of discussion with other potential businesses looking to rent space too. Crawley was hit hard by the pandemic but is recovering well due to work by officers and the Council's strategy.</p> <p>The Council owns a lot of the neighbourhood parades within the Borough, and Council owned units are in demand. Where a retail unit is empty, there is interest in those units with work normally being undertaken to bring them into use. It is hoped that the new Government will bring forward legislation, which covers privately owned business premises, to help kickstart the business investment into Crawley.</p>
<p><i>Councillor Crow to the Leader of the Council</i></p> <p>Given the England Men's football team's fantastic performance in the recent European Championship and, in particular, Gareth Southgate as their Manager during that tournament, when could we look at potentially ways to recognise Gareth Southgate within</p>	<p><i>Councillor Jones (Leader of the Council)</i></p> <p>We are tremendously proud of Gareth Southgate and the England Team's achievements. Gareth grew up, attended school and learnt a lot of his football in Crawley. We are keen to recognise his achievements, but this would need to be done at a time, and in a way, which he felt</p>

<p>Crawley? There has been talk of this in the past and I feel we should recognise his achievement in a way which is long lasting and appropriate.</p> <p><i>Supplementary Comment:</i></p> <p>It would be nice if any recognition was on behalf of the entire Council and so we are keen to be involved in providing suggestions?</p>	<p>comfortable with. We will be keen to do so when the time is right. Gareth is notoriously modest and so it is important to honour him in a way which is right.</p>
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10. Receiving the Minutes of the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Other Committees including Items for Debate

Moved by Councillor Hart (as the Deputy Mayor):-

RESOLVED

That the following reports be received:

- Overview and Scrutiny Commission – 3 June 2024
- Planning Committee – 4 June 2024
- Governance Committee – 10 June 2024
- Licensing Committee – 18 June 2024

There were no items for debate.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Full Council concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.09 pm.

**S Sivarajah
(Mayor)**

Disclosures of Interest Received

Councillor	Item and Minute	Meeting	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor H Hellier	Staff Health, Morale and Sickness Updates (Minute 4)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 3 June 2024	Personal Interest – NHS Public Governor
Councillor R A Lanzer	Staff Health, Morale and Sickness Updates (Minute 4)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 3 June 2024	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	Staff Health, Morale and Sickness Updates (Minute 4)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 3 June 2024	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing
Councillor H Hellier	Appointments and Membership of Scrutiny Panels (HASC) (Minute 5)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 3 June 2024	Personal Interest – NHS Public Governor
Councillor R A Lanzer	Appointments and Membership of Scrutiny Panels (HASC) (Minute 5)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 3 June 2024	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	Appointments and Membership of Scrutiny Panels (HASC) (Minute 5)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 3 June 2024	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing
Councillor Burgess	CR/2023/0317/FUL – 23 Maiden Lane, Langley Green (Minute 4)	Planning Committee 4 June 2024	Personal interest – a West Sussex County Council Councillor.

Councillor	Item and Minute	Meeting	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor Nawaz	CR/2024/0054/FUL – 1 Woodlands, Pound Hill (Minute 5)	Planning Committee 4 June 2024	Personal interest – had seen information relating to the application in his role as Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development.
Councillor Pritchard	CR/2024/0054/FUL – 1 Woodlands, Pound Hill (Minute 5)	Planning Committee 4 June 2024	Personal interest – had engaged in communication with the applicant in relation to technical aspects of the design prior to the application being submitted.
Councillor Rana	Public Question Time (Minute 5)	Full Council 17 July 2024	Personal interest – held a Private Hire Operator licence issued by Crawley Borough Council.
Councillor Sivarajah	Public Question Time (Minute 5)	Full Council 17 July 2024	Personal interest – her husband is a taxi driver who works at Gatwick Airport.