

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 3 June 2019 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T Rana (Chair)

T G Belben (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, D Crow, R S Fiveash, G S Jhans, R A Lanzer, T McAleney,
A Pendlington and K Sudan

Also in Attendance:

Councillor P C Smith

Officers Present:

Ian Duke

Deputy Chief Executive

Heather Girling

Democratic Services Officer

1. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

No disclosures or whipping of interests were made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 11 March 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. Deputy Chief Executive Discussion

The Commission received an update from the Deputy Chief Executive on his current role and responsibilities.

- Primary responsibilities included the following:
 - Deputising for the Chief Executive.
 - Working with CMT and Councillors to set the strategic direction of the organisation.
 - Lead on the Transformation Programme.
 - Lead on the Town Hall Site Redevelopment.

- Leadership role in terms of Forge Wood neighbourhood.
- Oversight of various divisions including Community Services, Crawley Homes, Digital & Transformation, Major Projects & Commercial Services and Strategic Housing.
- Key findings included: committed engaged staff, a common endeavour to make a difference, strong officer/member relationship. However it was recognised that there had been some weaknesses which were now being addressed.
- The primary challenge of the future was cultural shift and new town hall delivery.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission thanked the Deputy Chief Executive for attending and for the informative discussion that had ensued.

5. Update on the Transformation Programme

Members received an update from the Deputy Chief Executive. The Commission has within its function to review the council's transformation programme, measures, and performance information (including budgetary information) together with service reviews.

The Transformation Programme which was currently in draft form and awaiting approval provides a more holistic corporate approach focusing on 7 pillars:

1. Delivering a **New Town Hall**. It was recognised that this sets the timeframe for the transformation programme.
2. Delivering **Digital Transformation** of services. It was important to 'get the basics right' and ensuring that the infrastructure was in place was paramount, to meet customer demand but also create efficiency.
3. Developing **New Ways of Working** to meet the needs of the business whilst delivering what matters to customers, including flexible and agile working.
4. **Values and Behaviours** – Staff have produced a list of values and behaviours and these need to be embedded throughout the organisation and processes.
5. **Redesigning services** had in the past included using Systems Thinking methodology to deliver efficiency savings whilst protecting frontline services. There may be a need in future to take a more strategic view, looking holistically across services.
6. Developing a more **Commercial Approach** to how the council operates and ensuring that income generation opportunities were maximised whilst maintaining a balance with the ethos of public services.
7. **Blitz on Bureaucracy** in order to streamline the decision making process. Whilst the Constitution had been streamlined more work in scheduled focusing on FOI and complaint requests together with the balance of GDPR requirements and providing more joined up service provision.

It was highlighted that it would be important to recognise the involvement of staff in taking the organisation forward and capitalising on their creativity and innovation going forward.

Members' main comments included:

- Acknowledgement that whilst many of the projects created opportunities for success it was recognised that these also created challenge and posed element of risk.
- Options provided for streamlining and improving signposting access to information.

- It was felt that the term 'customer' was not always the most accurate term for the council's 'residents'. However it was also observed that individuals accessed services from outside the town (Tilgate Park, K2 Crawley for example) and it was acknowledged there would not be one single term but in this respect, 'customer' was a term for individuals accessing a wide range of services.
- Clarification provided on the retention and recruitment within the current IT service. It was recognised that vacancies require a targeted approach.
- Recognition that it was paramount to maintain a balance between income generation and providing a public service.
- Confirmation was provided on various aspects of the new Town Hall including work and programme undertaken to date, planning considerations and staff consultation.

RESOLVED

That the Commission welcomed the presentation and looked forward to further updates.

6. Appointments

It was moved by Councillor Jhans, seconded by Councillor Fiveash that Councillor McAleney be appointed as the representative for West Sussex Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC). There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED

That the Commission endorsed the following appointments:

West Sussex Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)
Councillor McAleney

West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group (JSSG)
Councillor Rana

7. Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2019-2020

The Commission considered report OSC/280 of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. The report requested approval of the OSC's Work Programme for 2019-2020. The Commission is required to agree an annual OSC work programme. This is to ensure the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's time is effectively and efficiently utilised. The careful selection and prioritisation of scrutiny work is essential if the scrutiny function is to be successful, achieve added value and retain credibility. The work programme should also be realistic, flexible and retain spare capacity so that additional matters raised during the year can be addressed. Items should not be identified for consideration if a Councillor's queries could easily be answered by reference to the appropriate Head of Service, relevant Cabinet Member or Service Officer. Scrutiny needs to be able to justify why it chooses the reviews it does and the Commission is accountable for the resources it uses. It is important that Members are aware of adding value and avoiding duplication. Focusing on matters that have been or are already being addressed may not necessarily add value in terms of officer and member time, resources, money and outcome.

The following comments were made:

- Commission Members considered the OSC work programme 2019-2020. Items had been added to the work programme which had already been referred such as finance items or Policy Framework Documents.
- The discussions focused on areas for scrutiny including additional reports from the Forward Plan and Cabinet Member discussions.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme for 2019-2020 be agreed as set out in report OSC/280 with an acknowledgement that it would remain flexible to consider other items throughout the year.

8. Scrutiny Workshop/ Training

The Scrutiny Workshop / Training had been strongly recommended for all new Councillors and all OSC members. It would relay some of the new [Statutory Overview and Scrutiny Guidance for Local Authorities](#) published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in May (a copy of which had been provided to all OSC members), together with any key points highlighted from the [Centre of Public Scrutiny](#). The guidance provided advice for senior members, senior council leaders, members of overview and scrutiny committees and support officers and included a number of policies and practices that authorities should adopt (or consider adopting) when carrying out scrutiny functions and how these may then impact on scrutiny operations.

9. Forward Plan - and Provisional List of Reports for the Commission's following Meetings

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

24 June

- Treasury Management Outturn 2018-2019
- Review of Statement of Licensing Policy Gambling Act 2005 (2020-2023)
- District Heat Network – Operations, Maintenance and Billing Contract
- Occupational Sick Pay for Crawley Homes' Contractor Staff
- Crawley Growth Programme – Next Phase of Projects, Update to S106 Allocations and Funding Governance (provisional referral)

23 September

- Budget Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25
- Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2024
- Tenancy Strategy 2019
- Three Bridges Improvement Scheme Final Design
- Waste and Recycling Contract (provisional referral)

25 November

- Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2019/2020
- Review of Statement of Licensing Policy Gambling Act 2005 (2020-2023)

3 February

- 2020/2021 Budget and Council Tax
- Treasury Management Strategy 2020-2021
- Capital Strategy 2020/2021

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.26 pm

T Rana
Chair