

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 27 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

B A Smith (Chair)

T G Belben (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, C A Cheshire, I T Irvine, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, A Pendlington,
T Rana, K Sudan and L Vitler

Also in Attendance:

Councillors F Guidera, S J Joyce and P K Lamb

Officers Present:

Russell Allison	Housing Enabling and Development Manager
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Clem Smith	Head of Economic & Environmental Services
Paul Windust	Chief Accountant

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Dr H S Bloom

Natalie Brahma-Pearl Chief Executive

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 Signage and Wayfinding (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	Town Centre Regeneration Programme (Minute 9)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 6 November 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. 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 involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act by virtue of the paragraphs specified against the item.

5. Acquisition of College Car Park Scheme - An Affordable Housing Opportunity

Exempt Paragraph 3 (information relating to financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)).

The Commission considered report CH/178 of the Head of Crawley Homes. The purpose of the report was to secure financial assistance to enable the provision of affordable housing within the borough.

A discussion was held with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Housing Enabling and Development Manager.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Clarity sought and obtained over the viability and costings of the proposal.
- Recognition that there was increasing pressure to commit Right-to-Buy funds within the anticipated timescales.
- Overall support for the scheme and the opportunity to explore future tenure opportunities, whilst maximising affordable housing development.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support the report to the Cabinet.

6. Re-Admission of the Public

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

7. Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2017-2018

The Commission considered report FIN/426 of the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits which provided an update on the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for the first two quarters of 2017/2018. The Council prioritises its investments as being security of capital, liquidity and yield.

During the discussion with the Leader and the Chief Accountant the following topics were discussed:

- The 0.25% rise in Bank of England base rate to 0.5% may be small, but it marked the first rise in borrowing costs for a decade.
- Clarification sought and obtained as to whether the investment acquisition reserve could be used to benefit other areas within the town centre.
- Acknowledgement that project work with surrounding authorities was being investigated with regards to temporary housing however this needed to be viable.

- Confirmation was provided on the investment portfolio and indicators contained within the report.
- Members took the opportunity to pass on their continued thanks to the Chief Accountant.

RESOLVED

That the report and recommendations to the Cabinet be noted.

8. Town Centre Signage and Wayfinding

The Commission considered report PES/252 with the Head of Economic and Environmental Services. The report presented the findings from a town centre signage and wayfinding strategy including design proposals for new signage around the town centre. Furthermore it sought approval for Crawley Borough Council's contribution from the Town Centre Regeneration Fund to support the manufacture and installation of the new signage.

Members made the following comments:

- Support for digital signage within Queens Square, which would assist with wayfinding, advertising and events.
- Acknowledgement that the replacement of the vinyls would be uncomplicated to update.
- Concern was raised over highlighting specific stores and the possibility of exploring funding opportunities. However alternative views were expressed that these stores facilitated wayfinding by their necessary location.
- Upon considering the signage designs, Members felt that public consultation should take place to ensure consistency with the recognition and interpretation of the symbols.
- It was felt that it would be beneficial to include a 'meeting point' position within the proposed signage at a prominent location.
- Following a detailed discussion Members welcomed the proposals for the Town Centre and looked forward to the project progressing in the future.
- Whilst supportive of the report and as a result on the comprehensive discussion, the Commission felt that the following two recommendations were appropriate to refer to Cabinet:
 1. That there should be public consultation on the signage designs, particularly the symbols to ensure consistency with recognition and interpretation.
 2. That a 'meeting point' position should be included in the proposed signage at a prominent location.

RESOLVED:

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet with the proposals identified above.

9. Town Centre Regeneration Programme

The Commission considered report PES/261 with the Head of Economic and Environmental Services. The report presented a summary of the significant progress made on the Town Centre Regeneration Programme since February 2016 and sought approval for a revised version of the programme.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Recognition that the Professional Services Business Forum and the Historic High Street Forum were newly established, assisting to improve the town centre's economy and footfall.
- Confirmation was provided regarding the consultation process and those stakeholders involved. Although it was noted that the consultation would take place over the Christmas period and it was queried whether this could be extended.
- Concern was expressed regarding a lack of recognition and interpretation over the symbols contained within the Town Centre Regeneration Programme, together with a need to improve some of the readability of the printed material.
- Clarity was provided on the Crawley Growth Programme together with the Crawley Growth Board.
- Acknowledgement that it was important to enhance the night time economy with a recognition that the current Local Plan protects the retail core.
- Having considered the matter in detail, the Commission welcomed the proposals for the regeneration to the Town Centre and looked forward to the programme progressing in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

10. Establishment of and Appointments to Scrutiny Panels

Review of Outside Bodies and Organisations Scrutiny Panel

Nominations had been received for the Scrutiny Panel along with nominations for Chair for both Councillors C A Cheshire and A Pendlington.

A vote was taken.

As a result of the vote, and in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Commission confirmed the establishment of the 'Review of Outside Bodies and Organisations Scrutiny Panel', with the membership of Councillors M L Ayling, R G Burgess, C A Cheshire, R S Fiveash and A Pendlington, with Councillor C A Cheshire as Chair.

11. Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)

The HASC meeting originally scheduled for 9 November 2017 had been re-scheduled for 1 December 2017. An update would be provided at the Commission's next meeting which would feature information on Radiotherapy services and the patient transport service.

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

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

- Budget & Council Tax 2018/2019
- Treasury Management Strategy 2018/2019
- District Heat Network
- Future Delivery of Crawley's Building Control Service
- Manor Royal BID Operating Agreement 2018-2023 – prov referral

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.18pm.

B A Smith
Chair