

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 22 June 2020 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T Rana (Chair)

T G Belben (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, R D Burrett, R S Fiveash, J Hart, R A Lanzer, T McAleney,
A Pendlington and K Sudan

Also in Attendance:

Councillor G S Jhans

Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma-Pearl	Chief Executive
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Karen Hayes	Head of Corporate Finance
Jo Newton-Smith	Procurement Manager
Chris Pedlow	Democratic Services Manager
Louise Skipton-Carter	Sustainability Manager
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning
Paul Windust	Chief Accountant

1. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R D Burrett	EV Charging Infrastructure Network (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	EV Charging Infrastructure Network (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	EV Charging Infrastructure Network (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member Economy and Corporate Resources
Councillor K Sudan	EV Charging Infrastructure Network (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R D Burrett	EV Charging Infrastructure Network (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	EV Charging Infrastructure Network (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor R A Lanzer	EV Charging Infrastructure Network (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – WSCC Cabinet Member Economy and Corporate Resources
Councillor K Sudan	EV Charging Infrastructure Network (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 8 June 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No written questions from the public had been received.

4. Treasury Management Outturn 2019 – 2020

The Commission considered report [FIN/502](#) with the Head of Corporate Finance and the Chief Accountant. The CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management recommends that Councillors be updated on treasury management activities regularly and the report ensured the Council was implementing best practice in accordance with the Code. The report provided details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlighted compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Councillors.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Acknowledgement that all funds were managed internally.
- Clarification offered on the maturity structure together with number of detailed holdings.
- Confirmation provided that the major repairs reserve reduction had been spent throughout the year on capital spend mostly on new council dwellings.
- In terms of income generation and creative investments, it was acknowledged that investments were restricted as the Council was governed by CIFPA and the Government. The Treasury Strategy prioritises investments accordingly whilst providing an appropriate balance between security, liquidity, yield and ethical considerations.
- Explanations were sought and obtained on the details provided within appendices.
- Recognition that investment properties were evaluated annually and the parades were classed as non-operational properties, along with others with a similar description within the portfolio.

RESOLVED

That Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

5. Financial Outturn 2019/20 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 4

The Commission considered report [FIN/500](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance on the quarter 4 budget monitoring, which set out a summary of the Council's outturn for the year for both revenue and capital spending for the financial year 2019/20. It identifies the main variations from the approved spending levels and any potential impact on future budgets.

During the discussion with the Head of Corporate Finance and Chief Accountant, Councillors made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that the report documented the financial viability of the council, particularly as a result of Covid19.
- Recognition that the flood programme had been reprioritised, allowing for Tilgate Lake bank erosion works to commence ahead of schedule.
- Confirmation that the under/over spend and slippage on the HRA improvement works had been listed as a whole programme of works as opposed to being broken down on individual projects. It was commented that further breakdown would be beneficial.
- Explanation sought and obtained on the reserves for expenditure in Tilgate Park and Nature Centre as part of the 5 year investment plan.
- Acknowledgement that revenue implications needed to be taken into account for new properties to avoid overspend.
- Clarification sought and obtained on the details provided within appendices.
- General support for the report. However, it was queried whether the S106 money in 8.15 referred to the Ewhurst playing fields in Ifield (as documented in December 2013 Cabinet report) or Ewhurst Road Play Area as set out in recommendation in 2.2b (which is in West Green). It was requested Cabinet clarify the arrangement for the S106 funding given the inconsistencies.

RESOLVED

That Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet but requested Cabinet clarify the arrangements for the S106 funding.

Note from Head of Corporate Finance – it has subsequently been confirmed the site is Ewhurst Playing Fields play area, Ifield.

6. Forward Programme of Key Procurements

The Commission considered report [FIN/501](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance. The report sought approval for the current forward programme of key procurements and together with delegated authority for contract award approvals following the appropriate procurement process.

During the discussion with the Head of Corporate Finance and Procurement Manager, Councillors made the following comments:

- Recognition that the Council's procurement is governed by the EU Public Procurement Directives and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Council's Procurement Code. Confirmation that when the UK leaves the EU, advertising may change but the EU Public Procurement Directives were enshrined in UK law.
- Acknowledgement that the process would promote greater transparency and awareness of key procurement projects. Internal stakeholders would input into the process at an earlier stage and the organisations could manage resources more effectively.
- Confirmation was provided regarding the delegation process.
- Recognition that after the award of contracts there was involvement and consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member as posed in recommendation 2.2c. It was felt that this engagement should also be included in recommendation 2.2b at the award of contract stage so as to further enhance the greater transparency and involvement. It was subsequently recommended that Recommendation 2.2b be amended to include consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member. Following an unanimous vote, it was agreed that the Cabinet be requested to consider this addition and Recommendation 2.2b would now read:

Delegate authority to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, the relevant Head of Service, and Head of Legal, Democracy and HR to approve the award of the contract following an appropriate procurement process.

RESOLVED

That Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet and requests Cabinet to consider the proposed amendment to Recommendation '2.2b' above.

7. EV Charging Infrastructure Network

The Commission considered report [PES/364](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought to approve the partnering with WSCC, along with other districts and boroughs across the county, on a scheme to develop an extensive county-wide EV

charging network, by nominating sites in the borough council's ownership to be part of this EV charging network.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability, Head of Economy and Planning and the Sustainability Manager, the following comments were made:

- Reduced emissions were welcomed but it was noted that the vehicle batteries had a finite lifetime and could not be recycled. However there were second uses for batteries like energy storage. There was a discussion about hydrogen vehicles as an alternative to EVs. It was noted that there were a small number of hydrogen vehicles on the market but they were still very expensive and the re-filling infrastructure was not yet widespread and was technically challenging.
- It was noted that throughout the programme of work the additional pressure on the existing power infrastructure should be considered.
- Recognition that the list of sites was not definitive or confirmed and was also in addition to those proposed by WSCC. There was currently an option to recommend sites on the WSCC website
- Whilst supportive of the report there was concern raised surrounding the number of spaces and potential concentration of the sites, which may overwhelm some areas. Consultation with ward Members would be welcomed in order gain an understanding of the local area during any feasibility studies.
- Clarification was provided on fast and rapid charge points together with further information on the main types of charging infrastructure.
- It was noted that the procurement would be managed by WSCC and further discussion took place surrounding the Real Living Wage.
- Acknowledgement that the issue of parking remained throughout the town and enforcement could take place through the usual channels for penalty use of EV charging points.

RESOLVED

That Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment Sheet.

8. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability, Head of Economy and Planning and the Sustainability Manager, the following comments were made:

- Officers were commended on a detailed and interesting report.
- Recognition that Crawley's cycling and walking numbers were below the county average, mainly due to safety, busy roads and connectivity.
- It was noted there was a need to instil public confidence in cycling and walking through separate space for cycling lanes, bike security and encouraging active travel.
- Acknowledgement that five sets of cycle counters were in place to evaluate cycle trips. Whilst not monitoring speed it was proposed that all newly developed cycle routes would include a plan for monitoring and evaluating their use and effectiveness.

- General support for the report, and to encourage access throughout the town however those who were not able to easily travel should not be at a disadvantage by the infrastructure established. There needed to be a balance.
- Concern was raised regarding some of the traffic management plans proposed within the appendices. It was noted these may have a detrimental effect on other users and it was therefore suggested that it would be beneficial that ward and county councillors were included in the consultation of any potential scheme.

RESOLVED

That Commission notes the report and requests that the views expressed during the debate, are fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

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

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

28 September 2020

Budget Strategy 2021/22 – 2025/26
2020/2021 Budget Monitoring Q1
Crawley Arts and Culture Proposition

23 November 2020

Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2020-2021
2020/2021 Budget Monitoring Q2
Budget Strategy Mid-Year Review

1 February 2021

2021/2022 Budget and Council Tax
Treasury Management Strategy 2021-2022

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.38 pm

T Rana (Chair)