

Cabinet
Wednesday 10 March 2021

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission
at its meeting on Monday 8 March 2020
OSC/294

1. Cabinet Agenda Item 9 – Community Grants Allocations

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report [HCS/27](#) of the Head of Community Services.

During the discussion with the Leader of the Council and the Head of Community Services, the following points were expressed:

- Confirmation provided on the allocations and criteria applied, focusing on key priorities.
- Acknowledgement that it was an unfortunate situation that the Council was having to reduce the funding, the Council was still twice as generous as any other similar type of Council in the country. The Council also provided significant property and rental support to a number of charities and third sector organisations, further to the grant funding. It was explained that the new funding proposal would be based on a commissioning approach, where the Council commissions organisations to provide clear indefinable outcomes for our community.
- Recognition that other alternative (external) funding opportunities may be available for organisations, such as Crowdfunding. There was a need to adapt to changes in funding and ways of working. However, the council would still be looking to assist in signposting.
- Acknowledgement that the majority of organisations would be receipt of the same funding level. 4 organisations had been recommended to have funding reduced or removed and the specific rationale for each of these was noted. It was remarked that the current grant awards programme was not based on any legally binding contracts, but it was referenced that organisations may apply a presumption of being funded as they were mid-way through a two year grant agreement (pre Covid and financial impact). The second year funding was provisional and there was a break-clause built in as organisations were required to provide an action plan prior to the second year. Monitoring reports were required for both year one and year two funding.
- In terms of unrestricted reserves, these were documented as surplus funds that an organisation can keep aside from their operational budget that did not have a restriction on how it was spent. In terms of CCA it was considered that the organisation could sustain itself and there was access to alternative funding.
- Recognition that it was important to ensure that the available funds were well managed.
- It was noted that the process was a new arrangement. The OSC should be satisfied over 12 months, that any subsequent action taken through Community Services had been sufficient and effective to support the voluntary sector organisations that were currently supported by the CCA. As a result it was requested that a review report come back to the OSC on the changes.

RESOLVED

That the 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.

2. Cabinet Agenda Item 8 – Proposed Extension of Crawley Air Quality Management Area Boundary

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report [HCS/25](#) of the Head of Community Services.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability, the Head of Community Services and the Senior Environmental Health Officer, Councillors made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that the nitrogen dioxide levels as specified in the Air Quality Regulations 2000 were not being achieved. The extension of the AQMA allowed for a joined up approach across all the locations within the area.

- Confirmation that the nitrogen dioxide levels readings were reported annually in arrears. Although it was noted that traffic levels and air pollution reduced during the first lockdown in early 2020, DEFRA had confirmed 2020 to be an exceptional year and figures for 2-3 years should be analysed.
- It was noted that when the Three Bridges Improvement Scheme was reviewed, the current proposed design should be analysed to establish how it may affect the AQMA, particularly given the proposed change in road layout and removal of the right-hand turn from the station. Nitrogen dioxide levels and the 2019 data should feed into this review.
- Once the AQMA was declared, an air quality action plan would be produced to target sources of pollution and produce measures for mitigating issues within the areas. It was recognised that this was a recommendation within the recent Climate Change Scrutiny Panel final report.
- It was highlighted that education was key, along with the work taking place on active travel and sustainable transport. It would be important to promote modal shift and reduce emissions and improve air quality over time. Additionally, it was felt liaison with partners or businesses would be important to encourage alternative methods.
- Minor amendments within the document were noted but it was acknowledged that the draft order did not highlight those locations where the entire road was not covered by the AQMA, which could be confusing for the public.
- The actions in the previous AQMA have been in place since 2015, and measures had been established throughout the borough to address air quality. However it was noted that the road layout around Hazelwick was particularly difficult as a major road for Manor Royal and M23. Therefore improvements had not been as rapid but traffic management schemes were being analysed to improve traffic flow.

RESOLVED

That the 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.

3. Cabinet Agenda Item 7 – West Sussex Health and Care in Housing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report [SHAP/80](#) of the Head of Strategic Housing Services.

During the discussion with Cabinet Member for Housing and the Head of Strategic Housing Services, Councillors made the following comments:

- Confirmation that the MOU would assist in links between poor housing and poor health. It would provide an opportunity to challenge rough sleeping in a sustained way and encourage agencies to provide support.
- It was noted that it would provide a platform to engage with health services and providers. It would be actioned and monitored through the West Sussex Strategic Housing Board.
- Recognition that previous challenges have related to mental health services and providing effective support, together with the long terms sustainability of some NHS projects. It was hoped that working collaboratively there would be greater assistance, liaison and effective partnership working.
- The appreciation offered to the housing teams and support provided throughout the pandemic was noted and welcomed.

RESOLVED

That the 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.

4. Cabinet Agenda Item 6 – “One Town” – Draft Crawley Economic Recovery Plan

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report [PES/385](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and the Head of Economy and Planning, Members made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that there were amendments to slides 3 and 6 of Appendix A, along with proposed additional recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 10 March 2021.

- Confirmation that the report would offer a joined up approach and aimed for one holistic plan bringing in small organisations. The changes proposed would assist in the Local Plan consultation.
- It was noted that the plan highlighted the council's position in leading the drive for economic recovery, working with an array of partners.
- Some of the flagship interventions were already being brought forward or delivered, either through the Crawley Growth Programme or Crawley Town Investment Plan.
- Clarity sought and obtained on 'green infrastructure'; which revolved around strategic, environmentally-aware activity. It was observed that the plan would assist in offering green solutions to issues, including verges and improve air quality.
- General support for the report and plan as it was innovative, ambitious and yet the aims were realistic. It was felt there was a need to raise expectations, together with promotion for strengthening the local workforce skills and this featured in the Crawley Employment and Skills Programme. Skills for the Future aimed to improve overall social mobility amongst Crawley residents and retain people within the area.
- Recognition that there were different types of recovery; traditional in terms of aviation and Manor Royal, together with the novel recovery featuring digital enterprise and green infrastructure.
- Acknowledgement that the plan provided a long term strategic overview as timescales featured within the plan extended to 2050, which coincided with the climate change emissions target. However it was acknowledged that measures, deliverables and targets should be included between 2021 and 2050, which ultimately would move beyond this recovery.
- Clarification provided that the economy grew by £5.9b GVA (gross value added) per annum, which equated to the total value of economic output in Crawley in 2018.
- With reference to the 'Limited overall available employment land supply' it was noted that there were currently vacant sites within the borough due to the existing recession (particularly Manor Royal as a consequence of Covid19). However the Local Plan forecasts the overall need for employment land until 2037 to enable Crawley's long term economic recovery and growth. There was a significant land deficit within the town, which needed highlighting.
- It was felt that the final version of the plan should return to OSC following the consultation period.

RESOLVED

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

5. Cabinet Agenda Item 15 – Crawley Town Investment Plan - Draft Heads Of Terms

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report [PES/386](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and the Head of Economy and Planning, Members made the following comments:

- Recognition that Crawley was one of 101 towns across England to have been selected to benefit from the government's Towns Fund budget. Crawley was one of 4 towns in south east England to have been selected and awarded £21.1m for the Crawley Town Investment Plan.
- It was hoped alternative funding sources could be obtained for the balance of the programme.
- General support for the report and funding. Appreciation was noted for the work undertaken by officers and partners in order to compile the submission.

RESOLVED

That the 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.

Councillor T Belben
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission
8 March 2021