

Cabinet
Wednesday 16 March 2022

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission
at its meeting on Monday 14 March 2022
OSC/301

1. Cabinet Agenda Item 8 – Town Centre Regeneration Programme Third Edition

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report [PES/397](#) with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Head of Economy and Planning. During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Recognition that the Town Centre Regeneration Programme included a number of partner organisations whose contributions had been significant in delivering successful outcomes of the Crawley Growth Programme and Town Centre Regeneration Programme.
- Acknowledgement that Grade A office space was important for the town, not only to attract companies from the professional services business sector but also to facilitate individuals to meet and co-work, which had been lacking throughout the pandemic. The upgrading of existing commercial space would also assist in creating space for businesses and there had been improved relations with property owners to refurbish premises. Enforcement powers could be considered where properties were of a poor quality and owners were not willing to make necessary improvements.
- It was commented that there was significant town centre growth and this should be identified within the local plan to ensure the electorate representation was monitored.
- It was felt that it would be important to include the carbon reduction targets within the Climate Emergency 'Action to Zero' section of the Town Centre Regeneration Programme.
- Confirmation provided that the updated Town Centre Regeneration Programme would be subject to consultation and that minor modifications may follow if required.
- Concern was expressed that there were still challenges facing the town with the presence of some empty shops and it was questioned whether any town branding may assist, perhaps with a link to the City bid. It was clarified that footfall had nearly returned to 2019 levels and branding had been included in a consultation exercise in 2017 (report PES/252 OSC and Cabinet).
- Recognition that in order to provide quality sustainable residential accommodation that was supported by a rich mix of community facilities, it was important to review the demand of other provision within the area such as GP surgeries or dental practices.
- It was commented that if the town centre was to encompass facilities and amenities it would be important to improve public toilet provision, (especially given the closure of some during lockdown), whilst also maintaining those currently in operation.
- Acknowledgement that the Historic High Street had maintained a different culture to the rest of the shopping area, particularly Queens Square. The Historic High Street had seen regeneration development, particularly with regards to the environmental improvements but remained mainly an eating and drinking quarter.
- Support for the newly positioned bandstand within memorial gardens, however it was commented additional seating would be beneficial and attract further visitors during performances.
- Confirmation was provided on the current status of the market together with the requirements and constraints currently in existence for establishing an indoor market.
- Recognition that there was a need to create and improve economic conditions in order to attract people to move to or work in Crawley. It would be paramount to ensure the quality and availability of public amenity, good quality employment together with availability of commercial space.

RESOLVED

That the Commission noted the report and requested that the views expressed during the debate, were fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

2. Cabinet Agenda Item 14 – Crawley Towns Fund Project Business Cases

(Exempt Paragraph 3)

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report PES/399 with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Head of Economy and Planning. During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Acknowledgement that the substantial Towns Fund monies awarded to the Council to deliver the Town Investment Plan included a number of transformative regeneration schemes, including those with a specific focus in the town that would unlock jobs as there was a need for a range of skills and technology. The business cases enabled the Council and partners to deliver on opportunities, aspirations, future investment and boost economic activity within the town.
- Acknowledgement that Council approval of the projects would enable submission of summary versions of the business cases to the government for ratification by the deadline.
- Clarity sought and obtained on the project management, cost analysis, together with the timescales. Timely updates would feature in the quarterly monitoring budget reports.

RESOLVED

That the Commission noted the report and requested that the views expressed during the debate, were fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

3. Cabinet Agenda Item 15 – Metcalf Way Depot and Workshop Redevelopment

(Exempt Paragraph 3)

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Comments and Recommendations

The Commission considered report HPS/31. During the discussion with the Head of Major Projects and Commercial Services, Councillors made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that the option proposed enabled the Council to deliver on opportunities, whilst protecting, consolidating, and enhancing the development of a key site.
- Recognition that the Metcalf Way Depot was currently under-utilised, and Neighbourhood Services intended to continue the move to a more dispersed model of smaller neighbourhood patch depots. The recommendations supported the move to more localised depots and facilitated redevelopment of the Metcalf Way site.
- There was overall support for the options which was poised to play a key and interesting role in delivering a long-term revenue stream and the future of a key site within the town.
- Confirmation that feasibility and cost analysis proposals would be carried out as part of the project and any preferred option.

RESOLVED

That the Commission noted the report and requested that the views expressed during the debate, were fed back to the Cabinet through the Commission's Comment sheet.

Councillor T Belben
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission
14 March 2022