

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 31 October 2022 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T G Belben (Chair)

K Khan (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, I T Irvine, Y Khan, R A Lanzer, A Pendlington, S Piggott, S Pritchard and S Sivarajah

Also in Attendance:

Councillor B J Burgess, R D Burrett, G S Jhans, M G Jones and A Nawaz

Officers Present:

Ian Duke	Deputy Chief Executive
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Louise Skipton-Carter	Sustainability Manager
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning
Hamish Walke	Principal Planning Officer
Ian Warren	Senior Planning Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor H Hellier

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 3 October 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. **Proposals to Introduce New Conservation Areas and Change Existing Conservation Area Boundaries**

The Commission considered report [PES/419](#) of the Head of Economy and Planning on Proposals to Introduce New Conservation Areas and Change Existing Conservation Area Boundaries. The report sought to implement changes in respect of the designation of Conservation Areas within Crawley, further to consultant recommendations and public consultation, including: The designation of two new Conservation Areas; Changes to the boundaries of the High Street and St Peter's Conservation Areas.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, Head of Economy and Planning, Senior Planning Officer and Principal Planning Officer, the following comments were made:

- Recognition that Conservation Area designation would enable the Council as Planning Authority to work with developers, stakeholders and planning applicants to preserve and enhance Crawley's New Town character as a real design asset to attract investment and improve the quality of the business and living environment in Crawley Town Centre.
- Acknowledgement that there were advantages to the implementation of the Conservation Areas:
 - The proposals would give additional parts of the borough nationally recognised status as heritage assets.
 - The proposals would be expected to have positive economic effects overall. There was likely to be some additional costs for developers/site owners associated with development in the Conservation Areas (e.g. planning application fees). It was, however, considered that these would be more than offset by the overall scheme and effects of a more distinctive, higher quality and carefully managed environment, which would ultimately be more attractive to residents, visitors and investors.
 - The environmental impacts were considered to be positive overall, and this was further clarified, as by encouraging the re-use and repurposing of existing elements of the built fabric, Conservation Area designation would promote the efficient use of the carbon embodied in buildings within the Conservation Areas.
- However, it was also recognised that there were some changes that would be required should the proposal be granted, including:
 - The regulations and permission required for certain types of work to a property, including cladding of the external walls of houses and works to trees, are different in conservation areas.
- Without a Conservation Area, there was a risk of inappropriate development with poor quality design, potentially as a result of permitted development rights in the Town Centre. It was noted that Conservation Areas were mainly a facilitator for protecting and enhancing historic environments, regeneration and restoring planning controls, which would ultimately enhance Crawley's identity.
- Explanation was sought on the Article 4 Direction (non-immediate) process, which can only be adopted following a consultation period, with at least 12 months' notice of it coming into force and is subject to central government agreement. It was noted that Conservation Area designation does not take away all permitted development rights. There were still legal implications to be adhered to, but the implementation of the proposals would help to secure the preservation and

enhancement of Crawley's historic environment in accordance with legislation, national planning policy and best practice.

- It was noted that as part of the consultation whilst there was endorsement for the proposal, some responses were not supportive and had raised concerns regarding heritage significance. It was queried if there was a risk that additional controls could deter investment.
- Acknowledgement that similar Conservation Areas existed within other towns and these establishments had resulted in additional opportunities to bid for significant grant funding for heritage-related regeneration and improvements.
- It was remarked that there was a small number of 20th century conservation areas in the UK and 11 were established in Crawley.

Non-Commission Members were then invited to speak. Councillors Burgess and Burrett spoke on various aspects including:

- The George Hotel in the High Street, as well as how buildings would be maintained in the future
- General support of the Conservation Areas proposals and it was pleasing to see other Conservations Areas existing in other towns.
- Acknowledgment that there had been an original objection from the Town Centre BID and it was queried if other Conservation Areas had been approved in towns without the support of the Business Improvement District.
- The proposal for Gossops Green was similar to Southgate which had previously been designated and it would be beneficial to ascertain any feedback obtained from Southgate residents following the Conservation Area status.

The Commission Chair then invited the Leader to comment on the item who highlighted that the proposal was intended to preserve, maximise, and optimise the town centre and recognise the heritage, as well as identifying opportunities for improvements. Options had been considered and consulted upon but it was deemed that a Conservation Area would enable this by providing residents and the Council the control of the planning and the development of the Town Centre.

The Commission Members then held further consideration, focusing on any views to be specially highlighted to the Cabinet.

- Recognition that communication with stakeholders, partners and developers was key as this would result in improved quality designs and also investment. Clarification was sought as to the original objection from the Town Centre BID and the current status. It was remarked that there was an ongoing dialogue between the two parties. It was requested that a confirmed response regarding the Town Centre BID's position be obtained for the Cabinet meeting.
- Concerns were raised about any risks associated with the proposals, (eg stakeholders, investment, public perception) should be documented. It was moved by Councillor Lanzer (seconded by Councillor T Belben) that a risk assessment document be compiled containing risks and mitigations in relation to the proposals. A vote was taken and upon being put to the Commission, the proposal was declared as carried

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, with the additional recommendation above.

5. Climate Emergency Action Plan Update

The Commission received an update on the Climate Emergency Action Plan from the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability, the Head of Economy and Planning and the Sustainability Manager. It had been agreed that following the completion of the Climate Change Scrutiny Panel, that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission would receive regular updates on the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and has since pledged to reduce carbon emissions from its workings and activities by at least 50% by 2030 and to zero by 2040 at the latest. It has been working to reduce its carbon emissions since 2009, most recently through the Carbon and Waste Reduction Strategy 2012 – 2050.

Core Principles for Action:

The Council's carbon emissions can be grouped into six key areas for action within each of which there are a number of core principles that are critical to the successful delivery of the Council's carbon reduction targets.

1. Energy Use – demand reduction & low carbon heat and cooling.
2. Renewable Energy & Storage.
3. Low Carbon Transport – demand reduction & transition to low carbon modes.
4. Waste & Water – reduction (linked to procurement), recognising the hierarchy of practice.
5. Procurement - supply chain tracing to minimise and reuse, develop 'closed loops' and sustainable sourcing for products and services.
6. Green & Blue Infrastructure – natural systems for biodiversity and carbon stores.

The core principles for carbon reduction within each key area should be considered as underpinning development of the detailed actions in the Climate Emergency Action Plan, guiding the direction and timeframe for future work.

The presentation has been attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

During the discussion Councillors made the following comments:

- Confirmation provided as to the Climate Emergency Board members.
- Clarification sought and obtained as to whether carbon usage was monitored for home working. Similarly, it was queried if when moving applications and systems to cloud whether the carbon emissions from the suppliers and partners was measured.
- Acknowledgement that under provision of electric vehicle charge points in car parks, particularly in the town centre, was a deterrent for take up of electric vehicles as only a small percentage of residents have off-street parking. It was noted the infrastructure was important and the EV charging network contract was in place in partnership with WSCC to install a network of charging points across the town which was currently being rolled out following a consultation exercise.
- Acknowledged that solar PV was being considered as part of the building energy audits and retrofit plans for Council assets.
- Query sought as to how much had been saved by the council (particularly in relation to councillors) reducing paper and operating in a paperless environment.
- Recognition that procurement played a key role reducing in carbon dioxide emissions through to the supply chain, which included construction projects,

manufacturing of goods and services. It was important to work with partners to reduce carbon emission reductions throughout the supply chain.

- Explanations sought and obtained on the car mileage reimbursement rates for staff and Councillors, together with the status ratings within the action plan.
- A review was currently taking place in Neighbourhood Services whereby they would transition machinery from fossil fuel use and operate non-power tools in some instances.
- Recognition that there was a phase out of biocides and review of the use of alternative options together with the costs to reduce glyphosate use in Neighbourhood patch areas. With regards to the green and blue infrastructure the natural land and water environment would be healthier (without contamination) by the reduction of chemical usage.
- Recognition that the Council offered various options in terms of supporting its staff with low carbon transport options (cycle to work scheme, public transport discounts) and had developed a staff travel action plan to enable a further reduction in single occupancy car journeys.
- It was noted that there was both a climate and ecological emergency, with ecological destruction likely to be just as damaging as humanity. As well as affecting the quality of life and health, nature also sequesters carbon in its trees and soils so there is a need to protect and enhance the natural environments and maximise opportunities for biodiversity net gain.
- Recognition that there was a need to encourage and influence behaviour change and the council should be leading on this. Communications and engagement would be key to engage and influence staff, councillors and externally with residents and stakeholders. It was felt that training being offered to staff was paramount as too was that to councillors to ensure a consistent approach and message.

RESOLVED

That the Commission noted the report, with the views expressed being acknowledged and documented by the officers. It was agreed that the Commission receives an annual update on the action plan.

6. Cabinet Member Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability

The Commission noted the update given by Councillor Jhans and questioned him on a variety of issues relating to his [portfolio](#).

The following topics were discussed:

- Clarification sought on the authorised establishment and the actual numbers of both the Community Wardens and Civil Enforcement Officers. It was acknowledged the Community Wardens had recently gained additional responsibility and whilst a small team had multiple areas to cover. There would shortly be a review underway with the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing to consider the remit and role of the Community Wardens.
- Acknowledgement that in terms of the Climate Change agenda, this was a collaborative approach which would be fundamental to tackling the issue. It was felt engagement was important in order to influence behaviour change. Each individual had a responsibility to promote a positive message.
- Clarification was sought and obtained on the Patrol Adjudication Committee. Local authorities who undertake civil parking enforcement were required by statute to make provision for independent adjudication.
- Confirmation that transport made up to 1/3 of emissions and the EV charging network was currently being rolled out across the town. There was an awareness

that the infrastructure needed to be in place in order for the EV charging to be successful.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission thanked Councillor Jhans for attending and for the informative discussion that had ensued.

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

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

21 November 2022

Budget Strategy Mid-Year Review 2022

2022/2023 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 2

Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2022-2023

Review of Statement of Licensing Policy - Gambling Act 2005 (2023 – 2025)

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Provisional Referral

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 10.04 am

T G Belben (Chair)

Climate Emergency Action Plan

Progress Update



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Our commitment

- Climate Emergency Declaration
- Scrutiny Panel report
- Climate Emergency Action Plan agreed

Aim

- at least 50% reduction by 2030
- net zero by 2040 at the latest



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Climate Emergency Action Plan

- Overarching actions
- Key areas for action across our operations
 1. Energy Use
 2. Renewable Energy & Storage
 3. Low carbon transport
 4. Waste & Water
 5. Procurement
 6. Green & Blue Infrastructure



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Progress – overarching actions

Action	Status	Progress
Climate Emergency Board	Green	Chaired by Chief Executive Meeting bi-monthly since April 2022
Monitoring Framework	Green	Annual Audit of Carbon Emissions Decision making tool being tested on live projects (CPAG)
Funding Plan	Yellow	Six monthly update to OSC Being incorporated into existing budgets for 2023/24
Staff Climate Literacy	Yellow	Proposal in development Some Staff attended WSCC/LGA carbon literacy training
Communications & Influencing	Green	LGA training offer for members Staff communications programme Residents communications plan



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Progress – Energy Use

Principles for Action

- Reduce energy demand
- low carbon/zero heat and cooling
- Cut our carbon legacy
- Support innovation tech and design

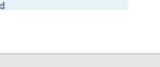


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Progress – Energy use – own estate

Action	Status	Progress
Commence development of estate wide carbon reduction plan	Green	Review of energy performance of 200 assets started. Identify priority buildings for retrofit
Link carbon reduction plan to maintenance plan	Green	Specialist member of staff to lead project (growth bid) Professional training for Building Surveyor & Built Environment Manager
Reduce energy use through transformed working practices	Yellow	Reviewing impact of behaviours in the workplace
Low carbon heat – plan switch from gas	Green	Considered as part of building energy audits
Zero carbon new build	Yellow	Will form part of brief for new build projects Financial viability will need to be considered



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Progress – Energy Use – Crawley Homes

Action	Status	Progress
Energy Efficiency Programme	Green	£889K SHDF Wave 1 funding secured to undertake external wall insulation to timber frame properties £4m for cavity wall insulation (Towns Fund) - 1151 flats over 4 years Funding application just submitted - £3m SHDF Wave 2
Net Zero Collective	Green	Completed deep retrofits for 14 properties – saving tenants money Next retrofit will be 'show home' for training and education (Southgate)
Retrofit action plan for social housing portfolio	Yellow	Underway developing plan using current principal contractors To meet zero carbon target need to retrofit 428 homes per year at £30K



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Progress – Renewable Energy & Storage

Principles for Action

- Invest in renewables on CBC estate
- Support with battery and thermal storage
- Consider investment in off-site renewables - national or community networks



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Progress – Renewable Energy

Action	Status	Progress
Investigate Solar PV and battery storage on own estate	Yellow	Being considered as part of the building energy audits and retrofit plans
Crawley Homes – Additional PV and battery storage in communal blocks	Yellow	Battery storage trial has shown blocks can become 96% off grid power. Potential to roll out to 7 further blocks.
Manor Royal Local Energy Community	Green	Local Energy Community being formed – launch in Jan 2023
Planning Developments	Yellow	First Solar PV projects – Spring 2023 Planning Officers flagging Solar PV opportunities as part of pre-apps and planning process



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Progress - Low carbon transport

Principles for Action

- Reduce total mileage
- Necessary transport is low carbon
- Always prioritise active and shared travel
- Rationalise and decarbonise tools and machinery



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Progress – Low Carbon Transport

Action	Status	Progress
Reduce transport mileage	Green	Staff travel action plan produced Develop work travel policy Implementation with move to New Town Hall
Deliver updated Fleet Replacement Strategy	Yellow	Being considered as part of vehicle replacement strategy Infrastructure requirements being assessed
Contractor Fleets	Green	Working with delivery partners to collaborate and support the transition of fleet by 2030
Waste Fleet	Yellow	Options for waste fleet transition being considered



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Progress – Low Carbon Transport

Action	Status	Progress
Transition machinery from fossil fuel use	Yellow	Work started Options appraisal – fast roads mechanical sweeping service Sustainable plant borders to be pruned with non-power tools Autumn/Winter 22
Staff Commute	Yellow	Staff travel action has been produced Implementation to start on moving to the New Town Hall.
Planning Developments	Green	Officers continue to work with site developers to promote low / no parking and sustainable transport alternatives.



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Progress – Waste & Water

Principles for Action

- Prioritise minimising material resource use
- Reduce waste creation by following the waste hierarchy: resource reduction and reuse before recycling
- Circular economy
- Minimise water use, use waste water



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Progress – Waste & Water

Action	Status	Progress
Paper use reduction	Green	Channel Shift programme delivering automation Eg 'Report a Problem / Streetscene worklist'
Local Plan Policy – reduced water consumption	Green	agreement in principle that the Crawley Local Planning Authority should make the case for a reduced water consumption level of 85 litres per person per day.

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Progress - Procurement

Principles for Action

- Minimise carbon emissions throughout supply chain
- Support supplier and partner good practice, including financial services and investments
- Sustainable sourcing for biodiversity
- Reliable monitoring
- Avoid disposables



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Progress – Procurement

Action	Status	Progress
Mandate carbon emissions reporting from suppliers	Yellow	Project started with other partners in joint procurement service
Procurement requirements to include criteria on carbon savings	Yellow	Need to review environmental criteria in Social Value Charter Starting to incorporate new quality questions on carbon commitments in new procurements
Avoid disposable products	Red	Baseline inventory of disposable use to be undertaken after move to New Town Hall
Cloud based servers	Yellow	Continuing to move applications and systems to cloud and virtualising other hardware.

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Crawley's Principles for Action

6. Blue and green infrastructure

- Enhance our natural land and water environment
- Seek improved biodiversity
- Seek natural carbon sequestration
- Establish natural climate change mitigation and adaptation measures



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Progress – Green & Blue Infrastructure

Action	Status	Progress
Wildflower meadows	Green	Increased areas of natural meadow created on playing fields and Goffs Park Pitch & Pult course Anniversary gardens, West Green, and areas of Tilgate Park and Worth Park introduced new wildflower sites
Recycling plants and recycling green waste as mulch	Green	Autumn 2022 - work to increase our plant stock by dividing existing plants and using in new locations. Cost benefits to be confirmed. Recycled mulch used to suppress weeds and enrich soils more widely

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Progress – Green & Blue Infrastructure

Action	Status	Progress
Rapid phase out of all biocides.	Yellow	Woodchips and mulch to suppress weeds without using chemicals
Review use of any other chemicals.	Yellow	Reduced the use of glyphosate in Tilgate Park and Goffs Park by 80% in 2022, only spot treating of hogweed and knotweed Worth Park continues to use no herbicides Winter 2022/23 will focus on exploring alternative options and costs to reduce glyphosate use in Neighbourhood patch areas
Develop plan to Increase Tree Planting	Yellow	Tree planting strategy being drafted Community Woodland, Tilgate Park

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Any questions?



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