

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Cabinet

Wednesday, 10 January 2024 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

M G Jones (Chair)	Leader of the Council
I T Irvine	Cabinet Member for Housing
Y Khan	Cabinet Member for Public Protection
C J Mullins	Cabinet Member for Leisure and Wellbeing
A Nawaz	Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
B Noyce	Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change
T Rana	Cabinet Member for Resources

Also in Attendance:

Councillor M L Ayling and D Crow

Officers Present:

Sarah Barnes	Parks and Business Development Manager
Vicki Basley	Chief Accountant
Georgina Bouette	Head of Community Services
Siraj Choudhury	Head of Governance, People & Performance
Ian Duke	Chief Executive
Amanda Kendall	Head of Crawley Homes
Carolin Martlew	Head of Corporate Finance
Chris Pedlow	Democracy & Data Manager

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor S Mullins

1. Disclosures of Interest

No disclosures of interests were made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29 November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

3. Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

4. Further Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private and Notifications of any Representations

It was reported that no representations had been received in respect of agenda item 10 and 11: *Crawley Homes Staffing Growth* and *Five-Year Business Plan for Tilgate Park & Nature Centre* respectively.

5. Matters referred to the Cabinet and Report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission

It was confirmed that no matters had been referred to the Cabinet for further consideration.

6. Crawley Borough Council Tree Planting Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change presented report [HCS/069](#) and associated appendices of the Head of Community Services. The report requested Cabinet endorse and adopt a strategy that sets out the Council's approach for tree planting across Crawley. The proposed strategy will outline the principles and standards for tree planting, young tree maintenance and woodland sustainability for all Crawley Borough Council trees across the Borough.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's comments on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on [8 January 2024](#), which included noting that the policy applies to Council trees planted on Council owned land. It did not apply to private developments or any other land that was not owned by the Council. Also that the Commission queried whether there was a reference to strategic planning documents to match the strategy, and in response it was mentioned that the Planning and Climate Change SPD did mention trees and tree planting.

Councillor Crow was invited to speak on the item commenting that he was broadly in support of the new policy especially over concept of the right types of trees in the right locations.

Councillors Mullins, Irvine and Jones all spoke in support of the proposal as part of the discussion on the report, including how pleased they were that many of the costs for the policy would be covered by Section 106 contributions, how the plan helps with the Council's commitment to Climate Change and improving air quality for its residents. It was also mentioned from the Cabinet Members, who attended the

Overview and Scrutiny Commission, how pleased they were with the indepth debate the Commission held on the report.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet:

- a) approves the Crawley Borough Council Tree Planting Strategy as set out in Appendix A of report [HCS/069](#).
- b) delegates authority to the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, to review and make minor amendments to the Crawley Borough Council Tree Planting Strategy as further changes to legislation and statutory guidance are introduced or following any review.

(Generic Delegation 7 will be used to enact this recommendation).

Reasons for the Recommendations

The proposed Crawley Borough Council Tree Planting Strategy (Appendix A) has been created to guide and inform the Council's decisions to deliver a coherent approach for its tree planting, clearly outlining the standards for all tree planting, young tree maintenance and woodland sustainability. It identifies a clear approach for selecting tree species, location and a process for providing tree planting on council land across the town.

Crawley Borough Council declared a [climate emergency in 2019](#) and the associated action plan identified the need for a sustainable tree planting strategy to help tackle the effects of climate change. This strategy fulfils the response to this requirement whilst also delivering other tangible benefits that will assist officers in taking an agreed and consistent strategic approach for future planting of council trees across the Borough.

7. Exempt Information – Exclusion of the Public (Subject to Agenda Item 5)

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

8. Crawley Homes Staffing Growth

*Exempt Paragraphs 1& 3 –
Information Relating to an Individual; and
Information relating to financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)*

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented report CH/203 of the Head of Crawley Homes. The report outlined the rationale for growth proposals and requested approval for the proposed new structure.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's comments on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on [8 January 2024](#).

Councillor Jones spoke in support of the proposals contained within the report.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet:

- a) approves the growth, and structure for the Responsive and Planned Maintenance Teams (Appendix B of report CH/203)
- b) delegates authority to the Head of Crawley Homes to conduct the necessary consultation arrangements, fulfil the changes and decisions on all human resources matters, subject to the appropriate guidelines and procedures, as set out in the Constitution.
(Generic Delegation 11 will be used to enact this recommendation)
- c) requests that Head of Corporate Finance to reflect the above decision within the 2024-2025 Budget and Council Tax report.

Reasons for the Recommendations

A new structure for the repairs teams are proposed to reflect a change in demand arising from:

- Standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing and Housing Ombudsman
- Our residents, including in relation to legal challenge around disrepair claims
- A recognition of the age of our stock and a changing approach needed to planned maintenance

Appendix A of report CH/203 shows the existing structure in the Responsive Repairs and Asset Management Team.

Appendix B demonstrates the proposed structure for the team and is recommended in order to ensure the teams have inbuilt resilience and can manage the demands being placed on them through items listed in paragraph 3.1 of report CH/203.

In addition, and slightly separate to the to the above, it is proposed that a System Admin Support Officer is recruited on a fixed term basis to support maintenance of the Active H housing management system.

9. Five Year Business Plan for Tilgate Park & Nature Centre

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

The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Wellbeing presented report HCS/068 of the Head of Community Services. The report explored proposals to further improve facilities available to visitors at Tilgate Park & Nature Centre over the next five years whilst maintaining the existing infrastructure and income targets.

Councillor Ayling presented the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's comments on the report to the Cabinet following consideration of the matter at its meeting on [8 January 2024](#).

Councillor Crow was invited to speak on the item.

Councillors Irvine, Rana Nawaz and Jones all spoke as part of the discussion on the report.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet

- a) approves the Five-Year Business Plan for Tilgate Park and Nature Centre (Appendix A of HCS/068).
- b) approves that the current reserve together with any income over target be allocated to a Park Reserve and ring fenced to fund projects across Tilgate, the Nature Centre and other parks and open spaces.
- c) delegates authority to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Wellbeing to proceed with projects and proposals subject to budget availability and delegation limits.
(Generic Delegation 7 will be used to enact this recommendation).

Reasons for the Recommendations

A strategic approach to plan future opportunities and initiatives across the park is required to allow for inter-dependencies and prioritisation of projects.

Previous Business Plans for Tilgate Park have demonstrated the need to maintain the core infrastructure (toilets, car park, paths and access) to enable the park to retain its position as a top visitor attraction.

Continuing to develop the leisure facilities, Nature Centre and events will ensure regular visitors and income to the park throughout the year which enables the site to be self-financing and provide financial support for projects within the other parks and open spaces.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Cabinet concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.59 pm

M G JONES
Chair

