

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 8 January 2024 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

M L Ayling (Chair)

I Ashraf, K Khan, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, S Piggott, S Raja and J Russell

Also in Attendance:

Councillor B J Burgess, I T Irvine, M G Jones, Y Khan and C J Mullins
Chief Inspector Starns

Officers Present:

Sarah Barnes	Parks and Business Development Manager
Georgina Bouette	Head of Community Services
Dan Carberry	Public Protection and Enforcement Manager
Ian Duke	Chief Executive
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Amanda Kendall	Head of Crawley Homes

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor H Hellier

Absent:

Councillor J Millar-Smith and A Pendlington

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 27 November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

4. Safer Crawley Partnership Annual Review and Forthcoming Priorities

The Commission received an update from Chief Inspector Ben Starns, together with the Public Protection & Enforcement Manager, the Head of Community Services and Councillor Y Khan on the annual performance of the Safer Crawley Partnership along with the future priorities. (Presentation is attached as Appendix A to the minutes).

Commission members raised a number of queries. The issues raised and key responses included:

- Clarification was sought and obtained on the data as it was noted that changes in legislation had an impact on identifiable crime and offences. Comparable data was analysed across Sussex and other towns to establish major causes. It was confirmed it was important to have a holistic approach focusing on desirable outcomes and better detection rates, as opposed to a wholly target driven/statistical service.
- Further information was provided on County Lines as work continued with SOC in identifying and deterring county drug lines travelling from other counties, targeting young people and the vulnerable in Crawley.
- Confirmation provided on the Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) initiative to tackle serious crime following the outcome of successful funding. Using Northgate & West Green ward as a pilot area (Memorial Gardens, Town Centre, High Street), it took an active role in shaping the community. 'Clear' meant working with partners to target activity and crime disruption, 'Hold' was stabilising the area to stop criminals moving in to fill the void, and 'Build' was the community-driven action to address the causes of criminality and prevent it from happening again. It was anticipated the initiative would reduce crime and increase safety, but it was important to monitor any displacement of issues and patrol other areas.
- Recognition of the training undertaken engaging with vulnerable persons together with gang affected individuals and risk of exploitation, particularly in schools. Strong relationships were established with both primary and secondary schools, together with all pastoral care links, resulting in positive events throughout the year including Junior Citizen, Safer Schools and Audio Active. It was important not only to engage with young people as early as appropriate to deliver key messages, but also ensure parents had the necessary information available, particularly with regards to online safety and cybercrime.
- There was overall support for the work undertaken within schools and the individual events/workshops being delivered.
- It was important to continue to report crime or possible crime, and the public required confidence in the reporting mechanisms. All reporting would aid intelligence and evidence gathering to assist in more target policing.
- Confirmation sought and obtained on the statutory function and structure of the [Community Safety Partnerships](#) (CSP) and Sussex Police, and where specific issues had been highlighted (for example via hotspots), these were identified as a priority within the local CSP – [Safer Crawley Partnership](#).

RESOLVED

That the update be noted, with the views and actions expressed being acknowledged by officers. The Commission's gratitude was relayed to Chief Inspector Starns and all officers for their attendance at the Commission.

5. Crawley Borough Council Tree Planting Strategy

The Commission considered report [HCS/069](#) of the Head of Community Services. The report sought endorsement and adoption of a strategy setting out the Council's approach for tree planting across Crawley. The proposed strategy outlined the principles and standards for tree planting, young tree maintenance and woodland sustainability for all Crawley Borough Council trees across the Borough.

During the discussion with the Leader of the Council and Head of Community Services the following comments were made:

- Recognition that the strategy had been created to deliver a coherent approach for the Council's tree planting, clearly outlining the standards, young tree maintenance and woodland sustainability. It identified a clear approach for selecting tree species, location and a process for providing tree planting on Council land across the town.
- Confirmation that the strategy only applied to Council trees planted on Council owned land and this was funded through section 106 funds. The strategy did not apply to private developments or any other land that was not owned by the Council
- Acknowledgement that the strategy assisted in fulfilling the Council's response to tackling the climate change emergency requirement whilst also delivering other tangible benefits that would assist officers in taking an agreed and consistent strategic approach for future planting of Council trees across the Borough.
- Confirmation was sought and obtained on whether there was a reference to strategic planning policies to complement the strategy, particularly in relation to land and trees not within the Council's ownership. It was mentioned that there were many Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and the Planning and Climate Change SPD did mention consideration of such matters.
- Information was provided on the planned maintenance for existing and future trees, from sapling to maturity. The Council's tree database held valuable information on the Council-owned tree stock including existing quality, variety and quantity of canopy coverage. The database would continue to be used to capture newly planted trees and their aftercare, producing a healthier more reliable tree stock in future as essential maintenance was planned and executed.
- Recognition that it was important to maintain the existing canopy cover, and where trees were removed if they were dead, dying or dangerous. trees could be planted on a 'like for like' basis. Where that was not possible, in managing biosecurity, those planted would have the maximum chance of survival.
- It was felt important for newly planted trees to be in keeping with the urban landscape and create an aesthetic environment. In response it was added that it was anticipated the efficient management of urban tree cover would assist in increasing amenity value.
- Recognition that there was currently sufficient funding through Section 106, however it was important to be aware of long-term funding opportunities. The Woodland Trust funding could be allocated to other organisations that may wish to plant trees within their land
- It was noted that some diseases (such as Ash Die Back) had a significant detrimental effect on the canopy cover, and it was important to maintain existing canopy cover whilst also maximising the chance of survival. It was suggested that there may be options whereby some trees (oaks) could potentially be left to regenerate naturally, resulting in increased tree canopy with little or no cost.
- Clarity was sought on the figures relating to the Council's canopy cover identified within the report.
- Acknowledgement that with diminishing land it was important to aim to maintain the current percentage of tree canopy cover, with an aspiration to increase if

possible. It was commented that perhaps further detail was required with reference to the development and improvement of the urban tree cover, as it was important to recognise the extent and quality of the tree canopy coverage.

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.

6. Potential Establishment of Scrutiny Panels

The Commission considered report [OSC/316](#), which requested the OSC consider the establishment of a Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel, following the Notice of Motion at the Full Council meeting held in October 2023.

Following a vote by the Commission agreed to the establishment of a Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Panel and that Democratic Services request nominations (including Chair) from Group Leaders.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission agreed to the establishment of a Waste and Recycling Panel and that Democratic Services seek nominations (including those for Chair) from Group Leaders for a Panel in accordance with political proportionality, for approval by the Commission, to ensure a swift commencement, taking into account the timescales noted in report [OSC/316](#).

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

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

1. 2024/2025 Budget and Council Tax
2. 2023-2024 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3
3. Treasury Management Strategy 2024-2025
4. Review Of Crawley Borough Councils Statement Licensing Policy for 2024 - 2029
5. PSPO - Council Owned Multi-Storey Car Parks
6. District Heat Network Phase 2

8. Exempt Information – Exclusion of the Public

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.

9. 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 Commission considered 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. During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Head of Crawley Homes the following comments were made:

- Acknowledgement that the new structure for the repairs teams had been proposed to meet future challenges of legislation and improve future services. There was a need to take a holistic approach and build on the relationship with tenants
- It was noted that a changing approach was needed for planned maintenance and the proposed structure would ensure the teams had inbuilt resilience and could manage the increasing demands.
- Recognition that support had been proposed to assist the maintenance of the new Active H housing management system and service delivery.
- Acknowledgement that the changes would result in more capacity to build on service performance. Teams would be actively managed during the change process, when embedding new structures, to ensure performance is maintained.

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.

10. 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 Commission considered report HCS/068 of the Head of Community Services. The report explored proposals to further improve facilities available to visitors at Tilgate Park and Nature Centre over the next five years whilst maintaining the existing infrastructure and income targets. During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Wellbeing, the Head of Community Services and Parks and Business Development Manager, the following comments were made:

- Recognition that the Five-Year Business Plan would support the spend to save or spend to earn initiatives for the park to continue to be self-financing. The continuing development of the facilities and events would ensure regular visitors and income to the park throughout the year assisted the site to be self-financing and provided financial support for projects within the other parks and open spaces.
- Acknowledgement that a strategic approach to plan future opportunities and initiatives across the park allowed for inter-dependencies and prioritisation of projects. The ambitious ideas would allow the park to continue as a high-quality regional venue.
- Confirmation was sought and provided on the evaluation of the finances and analysis of income contained within the report.

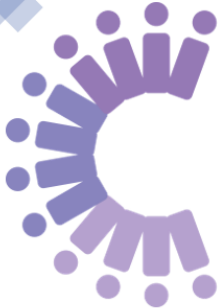
RESOLVED

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.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 10.16 pm


M L Ayling (Chair)



SAFER CRAWLEY PARTNERSHIP

Annual Review 2022/23

1 *



Purpose of the Partnership

To reduce re-offending, tackle crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance misuse and any other behaviour which has a negative effect on the local community so that people in Crawley are safer and feel safer.

Statutory Partners

- Crawley Borough Council
- WSCC
- Sussex Police
- West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
- Probation
- Sussex Health & Care

Other partners involved in the community safety partnership include:

- OSGPC
- Crawley Open House
- Crawley & Gatwick Business Watch
- CGL
- Audio Active
- Crawley Schools
- Town Centre BID

2 *



2022/23 Priorities

- Violence Against Women & Girls
- Serious & Organised Crime
- Street Community
- Protecting Vulnerable Individuals
- Business Crime

3 *



Review of 2022-23 Achievements & Challenges


4 *



Funding for 2022/23


- Projects funded in 2022-23
 - Crawley Open House Outreach & Day Centre £30,000
 - Youth Advice Centre CSE Prevention £20,387
 - Audio Active Cypher Sessions and Equipment for Crawley sessions £30,000
 - Junior Citizen £5,300
 - Bike Marking £748
 - Crime Prevention Training £6,810
 - 6 Council Officers, 7 PSCOs

5 *




Junior Citizen

- Over 1,600 children from Crawley's schools attended the two-week programme to learn key life skills for its 31st year.
- Following feedback from the event in 2022, the focus of this year's event shifted towards community safety.
- New sessions were introduced in; online safety, body image and exploitation.
- At the event, the largest youth survey ever conducted in Sussex was carried out seeking views of community safety from our young people so we can adjust and react according to their needs.
- Analysis of the feedback to conclude in Q4 of 2023/24 and will inform this year's SIA.




6 *



Safer Schools

- The event saw 1,500 secondary school students attend The Hawth over two dates and was inspired by the Crawley Schools Pastoral Network Group.
- The event included a powerful presentation by ex-gang members working with St Giles Trust followed by a marketplace of services, clubs and local groups that promote positive lifestyles and support for young people.
- Attendees included Sussex Cricket Foundation, Crawley Town Community Foundation, Sussex Police, WCA Youth Advice Centre, Audio Active, Barnardo's, West Sussex Early Help and Find it Out, Crawley Borough Council Play Service Outreach Team, Crawley Young Persons Council, Urban Dance and NHS - Let's Talk Crawley.
- The event is further supported by schools committing to assembly time and/or personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons to further support the issues raised.



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Audio Active – Cypher Sessions

- Audio Active mentors delivered 8 taster sessions/ community cyphers across July and August focussed on engaging young people who may be presenting with risk factors with limited access to opportunities.
- Issues such as lack of structured activities or safe places to go, association with older young people known to services such as YOS, probation, lack of financial stability, drug taking and impulsivity.
- 1,500 young people reached across the borough through directed outreach and encouraged to attend substantive sessions, which reduced street-based anti-social behaviour in the area and provided pro-social diversionary activity for those not engaged with youth provisions.



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Audio Active – Group Sessions



- Based at Crawley Museum, sharing Crawley Film Initiatives space. The space was ideal as it is central and easy to access. Audio Active used funding to equip the space with a suite of music recording/production equipment which enabled them to launch the summer programme.
- Audio Active use a preventative and diversionary approach, targeting young people considered to be at risk of:
 - being exploited into criminality
 - involvement in gangs and youth violence
 - causing anti-social behaviour and wider criminality
 - alcohol and substance misuse
 - school absenteeism or permanent exclusion
 - risky and dangerous behaviours through association with risky groups and individuals
- The summer programme built strong pathways for enrolment in our new Crawley Evening sessions which started in Sep 2022. Many of the young people signed up and have gone on to attend weekly sessions building skills, confidence and new opportunities and performing at other events across Sussex.
- Young people went on to perform in HMV, and at an event at Tilgate, many of whom had never performed before.

"It was the proudest moment of my life. I was so shocked to see her up there I didn't think she would do it! I was crying and laughing at the same time. Things haven't been easy for us, she has not had opportunities to succeed in this way. I told all my family and friends, we honestly couldn't believe it. It was a day I'll never forget!" – Parent

"I've had a lot of anxiety in my life. I've written about that at the sessions it helps to get my feelings out and makes me feel a lot better" – Young Person

"At the Tilgate event, you could see how proud they were, they worked together as a team, the consistency of the weeks they had together over the summer, built trust, and helped them build important skills to work together and support each other" – Audio Active Mentor

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CSE Prevention - Youth Advice Centre



- Workshops:**
- Delivery of a workshop in secondary schools to female and non-binary students aged 13-16 on healthy relationships, self-esteem, boundaries and recognition of unhealthy/exploitative relationships. Exploitation.
 - A total of 36 sessions delivered to an average of 23 young people engaged per session across six schools that signed up.
- 1:1 Sessions:**
- 6-8 weeks of 1:1 support for young people who were experiencing difficulty within their relationships or are displaying early risk indicators of CSE.
 - 2-3 sessions with young people who were identified as needing support to manage healthy relationships, including friendship difficulties and managing healthy boundaries.
 - The support was offered through a combination of emotional support and psychoeducational support, delivered through a holistic support model. By the end of the sessions an evaluation of the young person supports needs has been done to signpost to relevant services do reduce risk of CSE + CCE going forward.

"We have been able to offer real time exploration of issues the young people are facing and give them space to explore this with their peers. By working with the young people in schools, we have enabled young people most at risk to be identified and referred the most vulnerable to our one-to-one service. Young people reported an increase in knowledge of what is healthy in relationships and how to begin to build boundaries. Young people have been able to better understand how their emotions relate to their behaviour and how these don't always match up. Young people have learnt more about themselves, their values and their aspirations and how to counter negative comments and labels." – Elinor Adie – Project Lead

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Priorities 2023/25



- Violence Against Women & Girls**
 - Existing and emerging issues, particularly related to misogyny
- Serious & Organised Crime**
 - Increase in violent crime in Crawley highlighted in the SIA
- Youth ASB**
 - Consistent issues regarding youth ASB which requires a partnership approach & strategic oversight
- Protecting Vulnerable Individuals**
 - Encompasses a range of issues including hate crime, cuckooing, and addiction-related offending.
- Cost of Living Related Crime**
 - Initial focus on business and acquisitive crime
- Drug-related Harm**
 - Drug demand survey



Review of the SCP Funding Policy

- Introduction of a matrix for bids which are scored against priorities and agreed KPIs for the duration of the project/initiative.
- Applications *must* detail key deliverables/outputs/outcomes and how they will contribute to the Partnerships priorities.
- Once minimum score has been attained, this is referred to the Partnership for consideration.
- Mandatory attendance at SCP to report back on KPIs, progress and to report on any issues in delivery.

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Projects funded in 2023/24



- CCTV memorial Gardens
- Girls and Young Women Summer Workshop
- Crawley Youth Friday Night
- Audio Active – Shift ICC (mentoring)
- SID Youth (real talk)
- Safer Schools Event 2024
- Girls and Young Women (Feb 2024)
- Audio Active
- Youth Provider referral pathway

Crawley PCSOs



- Bewbush and Gossops Green:** PCSO Vanda Lengyel
- Broadfield:** PCSO's Anna Urbanczyk and Bob Licence
- Furnace Green and Tilgate:** PCSO Steve West
- Ifield:** PCSO Dionne Watling
- Langley Green:** PCSO Natasha Denbeigh
- Maidenbower and Worth:** PCSO Riley Brown-Douglas
- Northgate and Three Bridges:** PCSO Suzanne Lydon
- Pound Hill and Forge Wood:** PCSO Dom Holland
- Southgate:** PCSO Ryan Hawker
- Town Centre, Manor Royal and West Green:** PCSO's Abs Ahmad, Jamie Chandler, George Gathern, Karen Angliss, Katie Edwards and Pieter Classens.

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Crime Data for Crawley

	01.10.22 – 30.09.23	01.10.21 – 30.09.22	01.10.20 – 30.09.21
Total Crime	12,150 (+14%) ↑	10,656 (+4.3%) ↑	10,219
Crimes with DA Flag	1,809 (-5.6%) ↓	1,916 (-2.1%) ↓	1,958
Stalking and Harassment	648 (+1.9%) ↑	636 (-50.0%) ↓	1267
Incidents with MH Flag	331 (+16.9%) ↑	283 (-8.7%) ↓	310



Current Challenges and Emerging Issues

- County Drug Lines
- Knife Crime (Increase in weapons offences and possession of weapons)
- Youth-related Crime and Disorder
- Child Criminal Exploitation

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Clear, Hold, Build
(Stronger, Safer Crawley)

Continually develop intelligence around serious and organised crime activity, within the Northgate area.

Identify and target those causing most harm through preventative and enforcement activity.

To divert offenders and those vulnerable away from being involved in crime and ensuring safeguarding is in place.

To increase the community ownership and positive activity within the locality.

To work more closely with statutory and community partners in the response to serious and organised crime.

17

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Clear, Hold, Build
(Stronger, Safer Crawley)

Additional Funding of £79,000 to support activity to combat serious and organised crime.

2 Mobile CCTV Cameras installed have made an impact both on rates of crime and safety within the Gardens

To date: 28 Stop and Searches, 27 arrests and 779 engagements at the 'Engagement Pod' to strengthen relationships and increase visibility.

2 Principal members of a significant organised crime group have been charged and remanded to court with significant custodial sentences expected.

Independent Assessment of Memorial Gardens has been carried out to identify design weaknesses that enable/support crime to exist with report expected in Q4.

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**SAFER
CRAWLEY
PARTNERSHIP**

Questions

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