

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 4 February 2019 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

C A Cheshire (Chair)

T G Belben (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, R G Burgess, D Crow, F Guidera, I T Irvine, R A Lanzer, S Malik,
A Pendlington, M W Pickett, K Sudan and L Willcock

Also in Attendance:

Councillor R S Fiveash, K L Jaggard, P K Lamb, P C Smith and G Thomas

Officers Present:

Tony Baldock	Environmental Health Manager
Ian Duke	Deputy Chief Executive
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Karen Hayes	Head of Corporate Finance
Kareen Plympton	Health, Safety and Licensing Team Leader
Clem Smith	Head of Economy and Planning
Mandy Smith	Regeneration Programme Officer
Paul Windust	Chief Accountant
John Woodhouse	Senior Finance Business Partner

1. Update on the Closure of Crawley's Crown Post Office

At the Full Council meeting on 12 December 2018, the Council considered a notice of motion on the closure of Crawley's Crown Post Office. It called on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the issue. The Chair updated the Commission that a letter had been issued to representatives of the Post Office requesting their attendance at the meeting of the Commission in March. Whilst some Members felt delegates from WHSmith should also be invited to attend, the majority of the Commission felt that the consultation and decision notice was coordinated by Post Office Ltd. Consequently attendance by Post Office key stakeholders would be important and beneficial to gain an understanding of the impact of the changes and further insight into the decision. An update would be provided at the Commission's next meeting.

2. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R A Lanzer	Allocating Monies Collected Through Community Infrastructure Levy – Infrastructure Business Plan 2019/20 (Minute 8)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC
Councillor S Malik	Impact and Implementation of the Deregulation Act 2015 (Minute 10)	Personal Interest – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver
Councillor R A Lanzer	Cabinet Member Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability (Minute 11)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 7 January 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to an amendment in relation to item 4 (Update on The Hawth Management Contract). It had been confirmed that Opera North secured Arts Council funding in the past but only for specific projects not standard performances taking place in Crawley.

4. Public Question Time

No questions from the public were asked.

5. 2019/20 Budget and Council Tax

The Commission considered report FIN/462 with the Leader of the Council, Head of Corporate Finance and the Chief Accountant. The Council has a statutory responsibility to set a Council Tax and Budget in advance of the commencement of the new financial year. The Council Tax has to be set by 11 March, each year. During 2018 the Council continued to review its spending plans and considered options to amend spending to meet new priorities.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Confirmation that the report set out proposed growth elements and capital programme schemes, along with efficiencies, savings, latest investment interest projections and additional income being proposed.
- Appreciation that the Budget Strategy 2019/20-2023/24 had taken on board the Commission's recommendation that prioritisation should not preclude the initial consideration of capital projects that could deliver social value.

RESOLVED

That the Commission supported the recommendations to the Cabinet.

6. Treasury Management Strategy 2019/2020

The Commission considered report FIN/464 of the Head of Corporate Finance on the Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/2020 which the Council was required to approve before the start of the financial year in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management and the Council's financial regulations.

During the discussion with the Leader of the Council, Head of Corporate Finance and Chief Accountant, Councillors made the following comments:

- Confirmation that the policy of investing according to the principles of security, liquidity, yield and ethical remains.
- Acknowledgement that there had been a great deal of uncertainty within the economy.
- Recognition that diversifying into property can be worthwhile in terms of investment. However there was an acknowledgement that there may be a need to be more creative in the future.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support the recommendations to the Cabinet.

7. Capital Strategy 2019/2020

The Commission considered report FIN/467 of the Head of Corporate Finance on the Capital Strategy for 2019/2020, which forms part of the Council's integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning. In order to demonstrate that the Council takes capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability, the Council should have in place a capital strategy that sets out the long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made and gives due consideration to both risk and reward and impact on the achievement of priority outcomes.

During the discussion with the Leader of the Council, Head of Corporate Finance and Chief Accountant, the following points were expressed:

- CIPFA now requires all local authorities to prepare a new Capital Strategy which sets out how the council will manage the investment and financing of capital resources.
- Support for the work undertaken to compile the Capital Strategy report.
- Commission Members commended officers from the Finance Team for their continued excellent work.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support the recommendations to the Cabinet.

8. Allocating Monies Collected Through Community Infrastructure Levy - Infrastructure Business Plan 2019/20

The Commission considered report PES/302 of the Head of Economy and Planning. The report sought approval for the Community Infrastructure Levy Infrastructure Business Plan 2019/20 and to further extend the Crowdfunding pilot.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, Head of Economy and Planning and the Regeneration Programme Officer, Councillors made the following comments:

- Support for the Crowdfunding platform, however it was recommended that an equivalent offline version should be made available to maximise use.

- Acknowledgement that liaison took place with Community Development together with local organisations to assist in capacity building and promotion of the scheme.
- Commission Members were pleased to hear that the Spacehive template was being reviewed in light of feedback.
- It was recommended that training took place to assist in gaining an understanding of the scheme.
- Clarity provided regarding eligibility criteria and scoring.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support the recommendations to the Cabinet.

9. Review of Statement of Licensing Policy made under the Licensing Act 2003

The Commission considered report HCS/08 of the Head of Community Services. The report sought approval for the Statement of Licensing Policy for the next five years.

During the discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability and the Environmental Health Manager, the following points were expressed:

- Confirmation that the only response received following the consultation on the proposed draft policy was from Public Health at WSCC.
- Support for a Cumulative Impact Policy to be considered next year. Confirmation that this would need to be evidence based in partnership with Public Health, where there is data that the concentration of licensed premises in an area (or town) is negatively impacting on the licensing objectives.
- Acknowledgement that the Public Space Protection Order had been successful in various areas of the town.
- Confirmation provided regarding film classification and licensing.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support the recommendations to the Cabinet.

10. Impact and implementation of the Deregulation Act 2015

The Commission considered report HCS/11 with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability and Environmental Health Manager.

Under the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, it was requested that an update report be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on the management and delivery of the Deregulation Act with regards to taxi licensing. The report outlined the information available together with the actions being undertaken at a national level plus the legislation currently being progressed through Parliament and provided reassurance that work was progressing to address concerns raised.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Confirmation provided regarding the Task and Finish Group on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing together with the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Bill 2017-19 which is currently going through Parliament.
- Other authorities who issue licences to the trade may have different standards to those in place in Crawley. This may mean that vehicles may not be up to locally adopted high standards with regards to quality or public safety controls.

- Clarification provided regarding the private hire vehicle operators at Gatwick Airport.
- Support for the current high standards adopted locally within Crawley, with particular reference to the livery. It was noted that a decline in standards could affect public safety.
- Clarification provided with regards to the current subcontracted bookings process together with the Government's proposed amendment to the legislation.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted. The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Environmental Health Manager for their contribution and attendance at the Commission.

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

The Commission noted the update given by Councillor Thomas and questioned him on a variety of issues relating to his portfolio.

The following topics were discussed:

- With references made to the membership of outside bodies and in particular the Patrol Adjudication Committee (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London), it was noted the Council had not appeared to have submitted annual reports to PATROL recently (along with many other local authorities). It may be beneficial to follow up for a later submission.
- Concerns raised regarding the amount of cigarette ends and chewing gum in Queens Square, along with the litter outside cafeterias. It was acknowledged that Community Wardens cover the town centre, along with the Central Patch Team. Confirmation would take place surrounding the requirements of the cafeterias in the Square.
- Discussions took place around the current air quality within the town. Members were reminded about the Air Quality Management Plan already in existence.
- Concerns were expressed about the collection rates of the dog bins within the borough.
- Recognition that the waste and recycling contract was due for renewal in 2021 and it would be important to consider a number of options.
- Discussion took place on how to increase Crawley's recycling rates but welcomed news that Crawley has 12th best figures in England for low waste production.
- Support for encouraging the promotion of cycling and walking. It would be beneficial to "legitimise" footpath cycling similar to those already taken place as shared footpaths in areas of the town and along coastal resort promenades.

RESOLVED

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

12. Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC)

Councillor Belben was unable to attend the [HASC](#) meeting on 16 January 2019. The agenda and minutes feature on the [HASC](#) website.

13. Forward Plan - and Provisional List of Reports for the Commission's following Meetings

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

11 March 2019

- Employment and Skills Plan Update
- Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel Final Report

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.23 pm

C A Cheshire
Chair