

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Monday, 29 October 2018 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

T G Belben (Vice Chair in the Chair)

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

Also in Attendance:

Councillors B J Burgess, K L Jaggard, P K Lamb, B A Smith and G Thomas

Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma-Pearl	Chief Executive
Ian Duke	Deputy Chief Executive
Trish Emmans	Community Safety Officer
Heather Girling	Democratic Services Officer
Brett Hagen	Sustainability Manager
Chris Harris	Head of Community Services
Karen Hayes	Head of Corporate Finance
Nigel Sheehan	Head of Projects and Commercial Services
Victoria Wise	Community Services Manager

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors C A Cheshire and D Crow

1. Disclosures of Interest and Whipping Declarations

The following disclosures were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor R A Lanzer	District Heat Network (Minute 7)	Personal Interest – Member of WSCC

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 3 September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Vice 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 Ross, the Community Services Manager and the Head of Community Services, together with the Community Safety Officer and Chair of the Safer Crawley Partnership on the annual performance report of the Community Safer Partnership along with the future priorities.

During the discussion, the following points were expressed:

- Recognition of the good partnership working within the council together with external partners, including Police, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, Probation Service, Crawley CCG, WSCC and a range of Voluntary Groups.
- Intelligence gathering would continue to assist in the Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) approach. It was important to work with agencies to raise awareness of what serious and organised crime involves whilst encouraging the public to report observations and concerns.
- Concerns were raised regarding a perceived lack of PCSO presence. Alternative methods of reporting were clarified to assist both residents and Members.
- Recognition of the current issues within the town and the actions being taken to address these.
- Acknowledgement of key achievements, including events with hoteliers and increased flexible communication plus shared information which unlocks barriers.
- Continued joint working in relation to tackling the issue of street homelessness, begging and street drinking. Promotion around the 'diverted giving' campaign had been a sensitive but successful approach.
- Recognition that reporting was key, particularly in relation to hate crime.
- Acceptance that further challenges still remained and priorities for 2018-2019 included serious and organised crime, street community and protecting vulnerable individuals.
- Request that further information be shared and disseminated to Members.

RESOLVED

That the Vice Chair thanked officers for their contribution. Particular thanks was made to Chief Inspector Ross for her attendance at the Commission. The presentation had been very interesting and informative.

5. Budget Strategy 2019/20 - 2023/24

The Commission considered report [FIN/417](#) with the Leader of the Council and the Head of Corporate Finance. The report set out the projected financial position for 2019/20 to 2023/24 for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, capital programme and the underlying assumptions.

Councillors made the following comments:

- Acknowledgement that the local government finance system had become increasing complex.
- Clarification on whether businesses could be approached for sponsorship or revenue generating opportunities.
- Explanation sought on the capital programme and on the processes used.
- Recognition that there was a need to ensure an effective use of capital. Whilst the current strategy incorporated bids for capital based on expenditure required to maintain the Council's assets in addition to spend to save projects or spend to earn investment, many Members felt there was a need for further prioritisation and a flexible, broader approach, on a case by case basis if appropriate. It was felt that there should be a requirement for schemes to consider 'social value'. It was initially suggested that Recommendation 'e' be removed. However following further discussions, it was subsequently recommended that Recommendation 'e' remain with an explicit reference to 'social value'. It was suggested that Cabinet be requested to consider this addition and Recommendation e' would now read:

Note that items for the Capital Programme are driven by the need for the upkeep of council assets and environmental obligations and schemes will also be considered that are spend to save or spend to earn, but that such prioritisation should not preclude the initial consideration of capital projects that could deliver social value.

RESOLVED

That the Commission noted the report and requested Cabinet to consider the proposed amendment to recommendation 'e' above.

6. 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.

7. District Heat Network

Exempt Paragraph 3

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

The Commission considered report HPS/15 with the Head of Major Projects and Commercial Services, the Sustainability Team Manager and the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability. The report presented the business case and sought funding to develop a town centre heat network.

During the discussion, the following comments were made:

- Confirmation that the District Energy Centre would provide heating and electricity to the buildings included within the wider Town Hall re-development, and other developments within Crawley Town Centre.
- Policy ENV7 within the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 highlighted the site as a priority area for the delivery of District Energy Network as identified on the Local Plan Map.
- Confirmation sought and provided on the financial implications and governance arrangements.
- Planning application work was underway and whilst there were risks that needed to be monitored, it was noted that the proposal represents a form of sustainable development, providing a low-carbon form of energy, and was considered to provide environmental and financial benefits.

RESOLVED

That the Commission agreed to support, in principle the recommendations to the Cabinet.

Re-Admission of the Public

The Vice Chair declared the meeting reopen for consideration of business in public session.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme 2018-2019

The Commission reviewed report [OSC/273](#) of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. The report contained the findings from the Commission's Workshop which had been examined and discussed in depth.

The following comments were made:

- Recognition that the report documented the discussion as agreed at the OSC Workshop meeting on 3 September 2018. It was acknowledged that the work programme would remain flexible and was subject to change with the addition and movement of reports from the Forward Plan.
- Scrutiny suggestions had been received following the Workshop in September and it was queried when the Commission would review these topics. Further work was currently being undertaken with officers to gain additional information. The careful selection and prioritisation of review work is essential if the scrutiny function is to be successful, achieve added value and retain credibility. It was added that it was anticipated the suggestions would be considered shortly by the Commission.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme for 2018-2019 be agreed as set out in report OSC/273 with an acknowledgement that it would remain flexible to consider other items throughout the year.

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

An update was provided from the most recent [HASC](#) meeting. Key items of discussion included:

Housing Related Support and the Local Assistance Network –

- WSCC should be aware that this issue may affect the health and wellbeing of vulnerable adults.
- Many other councils had already made this type of budget reduction and WSCC could learn from their experience.
- All those present understood the impact and felt all service users likely to be impacted by these proposals should have the opportunity to be consulted.

Adults In-house Social Care Provision – Choices for the Future –

- It was not possible to tell from the consultation report how each group of service users felt about the changes that would affect them.
- Any changes to the day services would be brought in over six to nine months to allow users to prepare for them.
- WSCC would fully explore all possible alternatives for people at the Maidenbower Centre.
- Maidenbower Centre was a leased building that would be retained and a feasibility study was being undertaken to see how it could be used by the Council in the future.
- If the proposals were approved by the Cabinet Member, it was agreed that an update should be provided before transfer of day services at Maidenbower to provide reassurances regarding the arrangements.

10. Forward Plan - and Provisional list of Reports for the Commission's following Meetings

The Commission confirmed the following reports:

19 November 2018

- Station Gateway Programme Update
- Abandoned Trolleys – Provisional Referral

4 February 2019

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

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.40 pm

T G Belben
Vice Chair