

SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 March 2016 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, the Town Hall, Croydon.

This meeting was filmed for broadcast on the council's internet site at:

<http://www.croydon.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

MINUTES – PART A

Present Councillor Sean Fitzsimons
 Councillors Sara Bashford (Vice Chairman), Carole Bonner (Deputy
 Chair), Emily Benn, Sherwan Chowdhury and Mario Creatura

Also in attendance for part or all of the meeting:

Councillor Jane Avis
Councillor Richard Chatterjee
Councillor Bernadette Khan
Councillor Mark Watson

A14/16 APOLOGIES (Agenda Item 1)

None. Councillor Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Communities Safety and Justice had however sent apologies for lateness.

A15/16 MINUTES (Agenda Item 2)

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meetings held on Tuesday 16 February and Monday 7 March 2016 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

A16/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 3)

None.

A17/16 URGENT BUSINESS (Agenda Item 4)

None.

A18/16 EXEMPT ITEMS (Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED: To agree the allocation of business between Part A and Part B of the Agenda.

The Chair, Councillor Sean Fitzsimons altered the order of business as Councillor Mark Watson (due to be present for Agenda Items 6, 7 and 8) had been unexpectedly delayed.

A19/16 DRAFT SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16 (Agenda Item 9)

Present for this item:

- Solomon Agutu, Statutory Scrutiny Officer

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer introduced the report stating that it presented the work of scrutiny committees during 2015/16 year against a series of desired scrutiny outcomes in Section 2 of the report. He added that the two mini reviews currently underway were complex topics and that these would report later in the year.

The Chair thanked the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and his team for the support provided to the Croydon's scrutiny committees and for the public involvement in the process. He said that the young people's takeover meeting had been one of many highlights in the year and that the Cabinet Member Question Time sessions were valued.

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer added that he wished to draw attention to Health scrutiny and particularly items on the London Ambulance Service (CQC Report) and the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JHOSCs) with other London boroughs.

He stated further that all the Committees had added meetings to their scheduled work programmes and that the Health Sub-Committee had been particularly affected. It has been proposed as part of the review of the Constitution to move responsibility for 'housing' scrutiny from the Health, Social Care and Housing Sub-Committee to the Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the 2016/17 municipal year.

The Chair thanked the scrutiny officers for their hard work against limited resources and asked Members and the public to put forward ideas for future topics for scrutiny.

Callton Young (present for other agenda items) suggested that scrutiny consider an item on the treatment of Jamaican clubs by the police and

their intention to ban 'Bashment' music from clubs in the town as had been reported in the local press. The Chair stated that this topic would be considered later in the meeting as part of the Cabinet Member Question Time session.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- To approve the draft Scrutiny Annual report 2015/16
- To agree that the Chair be empowered to approve the final version for consideration by Council on 18 April
- To recommend to full Council that it revise the terms of reference for the Health, Social Care and Housing Sub-Committee in order to move responsibility for housing to the Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee

A20/16 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 10)

Present for this item:

- Solomon Agutu, Statutory Scrutiny Officer

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer introduced the report stating that at the next meeting Members would consider an item on the 2016/17 work programme and that all ideas for topics would be welcomed at this stage.

The Deputy Chair stated that all the scrutiny committees were keen to do more pre-decision scrutiny. The Committee agreed and the Chair added that scrutiny was reliant on senior officers within public service organisations in Croydon to put topics forward. He called on council officers present to feed this back.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- To agree the scrutiny work programme overview (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report)
- To agree the scrutiny work programme for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee 2015-16 (as set out in Appendix 2 of the report).
- To recommend to the Council Executive Leadership Team (ELT) that it produces a forward work programme to be shared with the Chair of Scrutiny in order to promote pre-decision scrutiny

A21/16 QUESTION TIME: COUNCILLOR MARK WATSON, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, SAFETY AND JUSTICE (Agenda Item 6)

Present for this item:

- Councillor Mark Watson
- Andy Opie, Director of Safety
- Sarah Ireland, Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning

Plus:

- Councillor Jane Avis
- Callton Young, CAFCO
- Mark Samuel

The Cabinet Member gave a presentation including the successes and achievements for the portfolio and challenges and priorities for the future. This has been added to the council website and can be seen [here](#). The Chair reminded Members that Digital Inclusion and Financial Inclusion would be subject to detailed scrutiny at the meeting on 12 April and that most questions on these topics should therefore be reserved until then.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Cabinet Member provided the following information:

Gateway programme

- He would like to expand the nationally commended Gateway programme (which provides people with multiple issues a single point of contact) especially in light of the challenges presented by Universal Credit

The Vice Chairman asked that it be formally recorded that the Gateway team is exceptional, really makes a difference and that she is very grateful for the work they do. She added that the team does not shy away from holding difficult conversations with people about difficult issues and that this is to be commended.

Digital inclusion

- There are a number of barriers to expanding free Wi-Fi within the borough, not least competition issues from commercial providers. However providing free Wi-Fi in public spaces such as parks, the town and district centres and within social housing in the borough was an aspiration
- Surrey Street market was to be developed and free Wi-Fi could form part of this project.
- Residents displayed different levels of willingness to engage with the digital world including: those willing and able, those able but reluctant,

those able but not willing and people who we genuinely not able to engage. The council will always support people who struggle to engage or who are unable to do so.

Callton Young stated that CAFCO was committed to digital enablement, supported a Digital Zone in the north of the borough and Talk Talk had donated laptops to the project.

Croydon brand/ communications

- The Ambitions for Croydon project relates to how the council communicates with its residents including through Twitter, emails, web-casting, posters etc and how this can be achieved more effectively.
- These routes need further development so that communications are targeted effectively and residents receive information they want

Surrey Street

- The ambition is to retain the fruit and veg market and expand it with additional stalls, pop-ups, evening food and beverage events and Sunday farmers markets
- The council was talking to the traders and market manager about how best to invest the funding (£500,00) available
- It is likely that the pavements will be removed to create a wider, more open street with better accessibility, possibly with the market stalls down the middle of the street
- Better lighting and improved shop fronts are also part of the ambition

Financial inclusion

- The programme is about intervening early to improve life chances for people
- It is very much about helping people with their money

Eyes and Ears project

- This is about bringing all the councils enforcement team together
- The roll out of mobile technology to support aspirations in this area starts in April 2016
- There is a £750,000 saving resulting from increases in fees and income from fixed penalty notices (approx. £200,000) as well as savings resulting from combining services and the removal of some management posts. In addition, there are efficiencies resulting from the mobile technology, avoidance of duplication etc

Licensing

The Chair revisited question asked by Callton Young earlier in the meeting, as a similar question had been submitted to him by Mark

Samuel, a member of the public, before the meeting. The Chair read out Mr Samuel's question as follows:

When will Councillor Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice summon the Police Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Andy Tarrant, to an open and public meeting of Croydon Council, to explain his understanding of the procedure in setting policy for the licensing of premises, for the sale and supply of alcohol and provision of regulated entertainment in our borough?

The Chair stated that it was not possible for the Cabinet Member to summons the Borough Commander. He added that Chief Superintendent Andy Tarrant had been due to be at this meeting but had tendered his apologies (for Agenda Item 8) earlier in the day.

Callton Young stated that racial discrimination was an emotive topic and that he did not see the Police helping his racial group with this activity or the comments in the press. It was a racial issue as the police appear to be targeting "Bashment" a type of music enjoyed by Jamaicans. He asked scrutiny to consider this as a topic as the police seemed to be profiling people according to the type of music they listen to. He added that it would be helpful for the Jamaican community to be involved in any discussions and that the question of why the Police have taken these steps needs to be asked.

The Cabinet Member stated that he was limited in what he could say as a Licensing Sub-Committee would consider a particular application soon. However he had spoken to the Borough Commander following the Evening and Night Time Economy item at scrutiny on 16 February and they were agreed that they wanted a vibrant night time economy. He added that:

- He was working with the Police to get to a better place on this issue and that there was no ban on any particular type of music in the borough.
- Some venues have their own polices relating to types of music and dress code.
- Bar and club owners were aware that they too needed to play a role in the development of a vibrant night time economy in Croydon
- He hoped it would be possible to draw a line under this and for everyone to work together constructively but that if this is not possible there may be a role for scrutiny.

The Chair stated that a number of venues catering for black and BME communities had closed in other boroughs including Lambeth recently. He added that the Committee had reviewed the night time economy

(NTE) at its meeting on 16 February 2016 as it had not been looked at for a number of years stating further that it was in order to stress its importance that the Committee had recommended that the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice be nominated to take responsibility for NTE. The Chair suggested that the Committee seeks to test the validity of Croydon's Licensing Policy in relation to different groups, to ask the police to explain their operational instructions in relation to the Policy and to make recommendations following this review.

The Chair stated that the council sets the Licensing Policy for Croydon and that the police seeks to implement it by ensuring that crime and disorder is minimised.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for the information provided.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Add an item to its 2016/17 work programme in order to test the validity of Croydon's Licensing Policy and the police enforcement policy in relation to different groups and to make recommendations following this review
- To ask the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice to convey the Committee's thanks to the Gateway team for the difficult and valued service it provides

A22/16

STRONGER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP (Agenda Item 7)

Present for this item:

- Councillor Mark Watson, Cabinet Member for Communities Safety and Justice
- Sarah Ireland, Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning
- Sharon Godman, Head of Strategies and Communities

Stronger Communities Partnership

- Callton Young (CAFCO)
- Mumtaz Hassan (South Norwood Mosque)
- Steve Phaure (Croydon Voluntary Action)

Active Communities Fund

- Sylvia Wachuku-King (tackling social isolation project)

The Cabinet Member gave a presentation to introduce the item, stating that this is a relatively new board which has now met 5 times since its inception. This has been added to the council website and can be seen

here.

In making opening statements to the Committee, the following information was provided.

Callton Young, CAFCO stated:

- The Board is working well, has a good mix of community representatives on it and is delivering a good programme of work
- The Active Communities Fund could provide a faster turnaround for applicants and needs to be promoted better in order to get more ideas coming forward
- Recipients such as the Thornton Heath Festival could be asked to put up signage to acknowledge and promote the source of funding

Mumtaz Hassan, South Norwood Mosque stated:

- The Board pulls together diverse community leaders and provides them with the opportunity to discuss opportunities and challenges
- It would be useful to have sub-group meetings to make quicker progress on some projects/ topics rather than relying on SCP Board meetings alone
- Inter-faith events, such as football tournaments, are successful and break down barriers between communities and these should be encouraged

Steve Phaure, Croydon Voluntary Action said:

- The SCP should build on the work of the Fairness and Opportunities Commission
- Public service reform and the social value agenda needed to be explored more
- Access to external funding was crucial as bids going forward now do not always align with what funders are looking for or with their priorities
- There was the potential for an identity crisis in relation to the priorities and agendas of different partnerships and there needed to be clarity on the role of each partnership
- Asset-based projects need to be self-sustaining and could be rolled out more widely

Sylvia Wachuku-King, who had received funding from the Active Communities Fund for a project tackling social isolation informed the Committee that:

- Supporting people will encourage stronger communities
- Her project aimed to help the over 60s communicate with GPs, would be smart and operate within outcome-based commissioning

In response to questions from Members, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice stated that the Residents Association Forum had been allocated spaces on the SCP Board and had not taken these up although the offer remained open to them.

Stop and Search

- There had been a SCP meeting recently about Stop and Search and although it was disappointing that there were no young people present, it was a step in the right direction.
- It was agreed that Stop and Search was a useful tool and the police agreed that it needed to be used carefully
- The use of body worn cameras may be helping with successful Stop and Search
- A report resulting from the meeting was submitted to the Safer Croydon Partnership Board and it was agreed that it had been useful in improving dialogue

Paul Astbury, Deputy BCU Commander (present for Agenda Item 8) stated 18 months ago Croydon had been first in London for knife crime and through a number of methods, including education in schools, it was now 18th. Stop and Search was a delicate subject and was generating positive outcomes as improvements in how it was done were made.

Callton Young added that he had attended the meeting and that communities were supportive of Stop and Search when it was done well. He added that the meeting had set out to challenge the police and that it concluded that although Stop and Search had improved in recent years, there are still issues relating to knife crime.

In relation to the **Active Communities Fund**, the Cabinet Member stated that:

- It is easy to apply for funding and it is frustrating that more community-based projects do not come forward
- The process was being changed so that the right information is provided initially and is then followed up with an interview
- There is no need for separate funds (small and micro) especially as Ward Budgets provide another source of community funding

- Shortening the lead in time would be a good way of maintaining enthusiasm among applicants as for some, three months would be too long
- He agreed that the name could be confusing to some and that this could be considered
- There were a number of priority areas, themes and projects the Fund

- was keen to support (including domestic violence, digital enabling)
- Publicity including the suggestion that plaques/ signage etc be used could also be considered though there would be cost implications to these

In response to a question about ensuring the voices of all communities were included, Members heard:

- Steve Phaure say that communities need to develop leaders, that they needed mentor organisations to help them and that although the CVA provides some support in this area, more could be done.
- Callton Young added that the management of funding (getting value for money) was key and that the quality of trustees, expertise and governance would ensure that money would be spent well
- The Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning stated that the SCP is one of a number of Boards within the Local Strategic Partnership, that it is important that Partnerships work together and that they are flexible in responding to new communities.

The Committee concluded that the Strong Communities Partnership seemed to be working well and had made progress since its inception. It commended the work of the Active Communities Fund though it recognised that more needed to be done to encourage people to put forward projects for funding and that speeding up the approval process and increasing publicity would help with this.

The Director of Strategy, Communities and Commissioning agreed but added that this was public money and its use needed to be demonstrated.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to encourage the Stronger Communities Partnership Board to consider:

- Changing the name of the Active Communities Fund (by dropping the word 'active')
- Continuing its work to speed up the process for approving funds for projects
- Increasing publicity and promotion of the Active Communities Fund eg. plaques, signage, acknowledgements on literature
- Encourage community leaders to meet outside the auspices of SCP Board meetings to discuss issues and share information

- Councillor Mark Watson
- Councillor Jane Avis, Chair of the Licensing Committee
- Andy Opie, Director of Safety
- Cheryll Wright, Senior Manager Policy Performance and Partnerships
- Paul Astbury, Deputy BCU Commander
- Adam Kerr, National Probation Service
- Paula Doherty, LBC Domestic Violence
- Malcolm Saunders, Croydon Neighbourhood Watch

Apologies for this item had been received from:

Bernadette Alves (Public Health), Frederick Clarke (Mighty Men of Valour), Ian Lewis (LBC), Paula Swann (CCG), Matthew Sims (Croydon BID), Andy Tarrant (Borough Commander Met Police) and Caroline Mack (Croydon Citizens Advice Bureau).

The Cabinet Member gave a presentation to introduce the item. This has been added to the council website and can be seen [here](#).

Crime and disorder

In response to Members questions, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Justice agreed that with regard to the evening and night time economy in Croydon, there had been a noticeable reduction in the numbers of people in the town centre since the closure of Tiger Tiger

Paul Astbury, Deputy BCU Commander added that Tiger Tiger had been a hot spot for crime and disorder on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings and that its closure had resulted in some police resources being returned to their teams. He said that footfall on a Thursday evening had fallen from 500-600 people to 300-400 though the numbers on Fridays and Saturdays had not changed significantly.

The Director of Safety stated that this pattern had been seen in other areas of London.

Councillor Jane Avis, Chair of the Licensing Committee, asked the Deputy BCU Commander why there seemed to be little policing at clubs outside the town centre despite requests for support from these clubs. Paul Astbury replied that resources were allocated in response to demand and that crime and disorder was centralised on the town centre. He added that this tended to be anti-social behaviour, violence, theft and that it was often alcohol and drug related.

The Cabinet Member stated that the council had conducted a fear of

crime survey recently and that the results were being collated. He added that this had also collected demographic data so gaps in reaching some communities could be identified.

Hate crime

The Cabinet Member stated that:

- The Board was working to encourage people to report hate crime
- Better reporting mechanisms were needed as in many cases the police were unable to act but it was important that incidents are recorded
- Many people do not consider low level hate crime to be a crime

The Deputy BCU Commander added that Croydon was leading a London-wide project on hate crime in order to raise awareness of the issue. He stated that however minor it is very serious to the person on the receiving end and that minor hate crime can escalate to something more serious.

Prevent

The Cabinet Member stated that there were many reasons why young people were in contact through Prevent and that there was a Youth Crime Strategy in place to support them. Croydon was not a Prevent hot spot, did not therefore receive Home Office funding and did not face the same level of issues as other areas of London.

The Director of Safety added that the Channel process was described in the report and that interest in Prevent had risen up the agenda since the Paris attacks in 2015. He added that there was a statutory duty to deliver Prevent and that training was in place for teams including in schools and with social workers. He confirmed that although there had been an increase in referrals through the Channel process, this had not converted in to an increase in Prevent cases and the number remained static.

Youth Crime Strategy

The Director of Safety informed Members that through the Youth Crime Strategy good performance had been seen with reductions in the number of youth reoffending cases. In addition there were fewer young people in the justice system and there was positive work in relation to youth custody.

Domestic violence

The LBC Team Manager for Domestic Violence provided Members with information about a number of campaigns which had been run over the past 12 months or so. She added that there was a board strategy for dealing with domestic violence, that Croydon was participating in London-

wide work and that it had been shown that children suffering sexual exploitation were more likely to go on to enter into relationships with domestic violence.

Repeat offending

Adam Kerr, the representative from National Probation Service Croydon informed the Committee that he could only comment on this aspect of the service as the CRC representative was not at the meeting.

He added however that the CRC had experienced considerable change recently and had moved to a cohort model.

He stated that there were stretch targets in relation to court reports, that these had been met and that the number one priority is to protect the public. The service used a number of interventions to support first and repeat offenders. In addition, he reported that over the past few months Croydon had been leading on a project to provide mentoring and coaching support to sex offenders alongside Circles UK with a view to preventing reoffending.

The Director of Safety confirmed that the CRC attended Safer Croydon Partnership Board meetings though it had not been present at the last meeting and that it was changing the way it supported the Board. He added however that day-to-day it was as effective as ever and that there was no risk in relation to the CRC.

Funding and outcomes

The Director of Safety informed the Committee that over the past 2-3 years the Partnerships had seen reductions in funding resulting in more focus on priorities and the need to gather evidence and monitor results. The Partnership had a good programme of activity with £600,000 coming from MOPAC and the GLA for a number of projects (including on reoffending, mentoring) and that some funding was now going to the voluntary sector to fund projects (eg relating to victims).

Road safety

The Deputy BCU Commander agreed that Croydon has a poor record in relation to people killed or injured on the road and accepted that the work of the Safer Transport Team was not reflected in the Partnership strategy. He added that the Safer Transport Team was not within his remit and undertook to inform the Command of the Committee's concerns about road safety and its interest in:

- Priorities for enforcement
- Poor roads/ junctions

- Driver behaviour

The Cabinet Member said that he had met with the Safer Transport Team and that it could provide a report to the Partnership in the coming months.

In forming its conclusions, the Committee noted that it has a statutory duty to review community safety through the work of the Safer Croydon Partnership. In the past the Committee and the Police have been frustrated that much of the focus of this scrutiny has been on the activities of the Police rather than the partnership as a whole as they have been the only partners to attend the scrutiny meeting. In 2015, the Committee expressed its dissatisfaction with this and specifically asked the Partnership to ensure a good presence at the meeting on 22 March 2016.

Once again the Police were in attendance and the Committee was pleased to hear from the National Probation Service representative for Croydon. However, the Committee again received apologies from many other partners agreed to make a recommendation to the Safer Croydon Partnership that the 2017 meeting be diarised as soon as the date is confirmed by the Committee.

In addition, the Committee decided to make recommendations in relation to minor hate crime and road safety including that an item on the Safer Transport Team be added to the 2016/17 work programme for the Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

The Committee therefore **RESOLVED** to:

- Recommend to the Safer Croydon Partnership that it notes the date of the scrutiny meeting in 2017 and that partners be formally asked to attend the meeting
- Seek an update on minor hate crime at its review of the Safer Croydon Partnership in 2017
- An item on the Safer Transport Team and specifically road deaths and injuries be added to the 2016/17 work programme for the Streets and Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting.

A24/16

Thanks to Councillor Emily Benn

The Chair congratulated Councillor Emily Benn on her recent promotion and resulting move to New York which meant that she would be standing down as a ward Member with effect from 24 March. He added that the

Committee would miss her contributions at scrutiny meetings.

The meeting concluded at 9:38pm.

PART B

It was not necessary for the Committee to refer to the Part B papers circulated with the Agenda.