

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 11 August 2016 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 7.35 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Cooke M Pollard Townend	Duffy Green Arshad Hussain Warburton Watson	Ward

Observer: Councillor Val Slater (Deputy Leader)

Councillor Arshad Hussain in the Chair

16. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

17. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2016 be signed as a correct record.

18. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

19. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals made to the Committee.



20. BRADFORD COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2015-2019

The Director of Human Resources submitted **Document "H"** which provided an update on Bradford Council's Workforce Development Programme 2015-2017 and presented the proposed programme for 2017-19.

The purpose of the Workforce Development training and development programme is to provide a coordinated approach to workforce development that will enable the Council to recruit, retain and develop the skills, competence and confidence of the workforce, and to ensure that every member of staff is working to full capacity and capability to achieve our key priorities.

The Director of Human Resources referred to the progress to date as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report and highlighted that; there had been a 40% response rate to the Staff Survey; the new 'Evolve' system would allow better recording of staff development and succession planning; the Future Leaders Programme had received a 'highly commended' award from the Public Sector People Managers' Association (PPMA); the Council had signed the Time to Change pledge and made a commitment to tackle mental health stigma in the workplace; and a staff-led innovation hub had been developed. Areas for improvement included increasing the number of young people employed and encouraging employees to self-report disabilities, as the percentage was below the national average.

The Head of Workforce Development gave a presentation on the information contained in Appendix 4 of the report. She used new technology to deliver the presentation on software called Prezi to highlight investment in new technology. During the presentation, Members were informed that the 'un-mentoring' programme, once established, would provide opportunities for staff across different areas of the Council to get together in an informal setting, helping to break down barriers and encourage collaborative working.

A Member urged officers to liaise with Members regarding embedding a new Member/Officer Development Programme.

A Member commented that the report was informative about the processes being used but lacked statistical information about where we were last year, where we are now and where we want to be at the end of the programme. He considered it difficult to make an assessment about whether investment in the programme was paying off due to baseline information not being included in the report. In response, the Director of Human Resources stated that the baseline information had previously been reported to this Committee and the Executive, when the Workforce Development Plan was approved in June 2015.

A question and answer session ensued as follows:

- The level of staff appraisals were extremely low and feedback from appraisees were key to the appraisal process but why was it not cited in the report as an area to address?



- 21% of completed performance appraisals were recorded however more were expected to have been undertaken but not recorded. The Evolve system would help to record this better.
- A large amount of work had been carried out on the recruitment and retention of good quality teachers in the District; were any lessons learned being used to attract staff to the local authority?
 - Discussions were due to take place shortly with regard to picking up lessons learned that Human Resources could use in recruitment.
- How were employees being supported to cope with the on-going change management?
 - Due to budget cuts there had been a 20% reduction in staffing. The 'staff line' would provide an option for employees to speak to someone outside of their department and it had been introduced to help people cope with the on-going changes.
- How did Bradford compare with neighbouring local authorities in terms of a lack of a young workforce and low numbers of employees self-reporting disabilities?
 - These were both common workforce issue amongst all neighbouring local authorities. Bradford was however outperforming other local authorities with regard to training and developing its workforce and other authorities were asking to learn from Bradford on some of its recent training and development e.g. the Future Leaders Programme. Statistical information on this could be provided.
- How much had the Workforce Development Programme cost?
 - £100,000 had been spent to date.
- How were employees recruited to the Future Leaders Programme?
 - The recruitment strategy piloted had worked well and was based on commitment to the Council's vision and values rather than the number of years experience within the authority. 104 applications had been received for the 40 places on the programme and of the successful candidates 55% were BME staff and 55% were women.
- What work was being done to ensure the workforce reflected the district it served?
 - It was acknowledged that the current job evaluation system rewarded on the basis of years experience and qualifications and therefore ruled out a number of good potential candidates. There was a debate taking place around the system and how to change it to fit in with the modern workplace.
- What opportunities did the authority present to its younger employees to help them develop without the need to leave the authority to undertake professional training?
 - The programme aimed to ensure staff had the skills development to ensure the workforce was equipped to deal with changes and reducing budgets. Different delivery methods to do this were being explored and a process was being introduced to enable staff to request development opportunities.

Members requested further information on the new Evolve system.



A Member raised concern that the report made no mention of any work being done to attract the LGBT community to work for the authority and questioned how it was promoting itself to under-represented groups. The Director of Human Resources acknowledged that the Council did not do enough work in this area and would aim to do more.

A discussion took place regarding the criteria within job specifications and the need to challenge whether it was necessary to specify the requirement of degrees or 'x' number of years experience as these requirements sometimes excluded potentially good candidates. In response, it was stated that managers set the desirable and essential criteria for jobs and HR had a review role.

A Member commented that the Council's Equal Rights Policy had remained unchanged for many years. He also alluded to the need to ensure that the authority did not lose core skills and experience in reducing its workforce whilst recognising the need to encourage a steady stream of younger people joining the authority.

The Deputy Leader addressed the Committee. She welcomed the new Evolve system as it would provide a better performance management tool and stated that the authority should be proud of how reflective it was of its community, in relation to the make up of its elected Members as well as its employees. She also stated that the Council had a commitment to consider its own looked after children as a priority for its apprenticeships.

Resolved –

- (1) That officers be thanked for the report.**
- (2) That a further progress report be presented to this Committee in 12 months reflecting the issues raised by Members.**
- (3) That further information relating to the new 'Evolve' system be circulated to Members.**

ACTION: Director of Human Resources

21. PROGRESS REPORT ON BRADFORD'S FAMILIES FIRST PROJECT PHASE 2 - NATIONAL TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMME

The Strategic Director, Children's Services submitted **Document "I"** which reported on the Bradford's Families First (Phase 2) project and its aim to identify and deliver interventions to 5,990 families by March 2020 against locally agreed payment by results targets.

The Deputy Director of Children's Services provided a summary of the report and acknowledged the challenges of delivering Phase 2 of the project given the increased number of families the Council were being asked to work with. The authority would receive an upfront payment of £1,000 per family following



commitment to the programme and £800 per family based on successful intervention. Each family would have one lead practitioner with a co-ordinating role. So far 1114 families had been identified, which equated to approximately 81 per month. The target figure was 100-105 families per month and therefore the authority were 20% behind the trajectory figure but he was confident that the numbers would be achieved once early help teams were established.

Members were also informed of the Multi-agency Early Help pathfinders being piloted to test out the best ways to offer support and plans to children and families below the threshold for children's social work. They were currently operating in the Keighley and Better Start (BD3/4/5) areas and were due to be rolled out across the rest of the district by November 2016.

In response to Members' questions raised during the discussion, it was reported that:

- The target figure of 5,990 had been set by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and was based on population size and deprivation indicators. They had also set the Phase 2 criteria.
- Families chose to go on the programme; it was not mandatory but only a small percentage refused. A written response would be provided to Members on the percentage of families identified but refused engagement in the programme.
- It was suggested that nine of the wards in the table contained in paragraph 3.28 of the report did not contain a percentage breakdown per heading due to the numbers being so small and the risk of families being identified. Members would be sent a written response to clarify this after the meeting.
- Phase 1 had focused on worklessness and families on the programme had had an older profile as it related to children in secondary schools. The criteria for Phase 2 had been expanded to include all children who need help.
- The authority could not claim funding for a family until a child had attended over three full terms which was considered to relate partly to ensuring they did not relapse.
- There were checks in place with internal audit to ensure claims were being made appropriately and to hold the authority to account.
- In most cases the parents of families concerned had lost parental boundaries and work was done with them to help them regain control of their household and establish those boundaries.
- It was recognised that most of the families concerned were female led with the absence of a male role model. Some of the work of the early help team involved working with young males around role modelling and expectations. The lack of role models for children was a particular issue.

A Member raised concerns about whether the target figure was realistic and whether the programme was steering the authority to be more target driven to meet national outcomes rather than concentrating on the outcomes for families. He alluded to Families First 'fire fighting' to an extent once they stepped in to help a family as early help would have prevented the need for their involvement. In response, the Deputy Director of Children's Services stated that there was a need to achieve targets to gain outcomes and stated that the interventions that were



being attached to the programme would still have been made by the Council whether the programme existed or not, therefore it made sense to attach the work to the programme if outcomes were being met by doing so.

A Member stated that it would be useful to see actual outcomes of the programme to understand what it really meant for Bradford. The case studies in the report were useful and more information on how the programme was helping families would be welcome in future reports. In response, the Deputy Director of Children's Services stated that it had been easier to measure differences under phase 1 than in phase 2 as some of the criteria was generic e.g. 'children who need help' which was difficult to articulate.

The Chair referred to the 93% of families 'turned around' in phase 1 and questioned what had happened to the other 7% of families. In response, the Deputy Director of Children's Services suspected that these families were in phase 2 of the programme but agreed to confirm this via a written response after the meeting.

A Member commented that a family could not be defined as being 'turned around' but that situations could be mitigated and that those mitigations resulted in a financial gain which was considered to be more than could be achieved from payment by results targets.

Members made references to recent national media coverage about the Families First programme. The Deputy Director of Children's Services stated that this had related to a leaked report which had not yet been published. He stated that the local authority had absolute encouragement of the DCLG to reach the pledge made by the Prime Minister in 2013 to turn around the lives of 120,000 of the country's most troubled families.

The Deputy Director of Children's Services stated that whilst some authorities were putting all their resources into success criteria 7 (an adult in the family moving off benefits and into continuous employment) he considered it would be wrong for this authority to do so as there was intelligence around the way the programme had been put together. He also stated that whilst the authority may be putting more money into the programme in terms of resources than it was obtaining in payment by results, it was still worth doing as we were reaching families we would not normally reach and particularly because the programme had a whole family approach.

Members looked forward to seeing a cost/benefit analysis of the programme once it was completed.

Resolved –

- (1) That a further progress report be presented to this Committee in 12 months which also focuses on actual outcomes for families on the programme.**



- (2) That the cost benefit analysis for Bradford's Families First Programme be presented to this Committee by the end of the year.

ACTION: *Strategic Director, Children's Services*

22. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

The Chair of the Committee submitted **Document "J"** which presented the Committee's Work Programme for 2016/17.

The Scrutiny Lead officer stated that, with regard to the Scrutiny's Flooding Review, there was one remaining scrutiny hearing scheduled in August 2016, following which the findings would be discussed by the Committee.

He also reminded Members that an additional Committee meeting had been scheduled for 7 September 2016, as outlined in the Work Programme.

No resolution was passed on this item.

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

