

COUNCIL 10 December 2013

MEMBER QUESTION TIME

Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12

1. **Councillor Gill Thornton**

Can the Leader comment on recent suggestions that the Council addresses the funding gap caused by spending cuts by selling off artworks from its municipal collections?

Answer

The Council's art collection is absolutely not up for sale. The subject of selling the Council's art or any other cultural assets has not been raised in Council meetings, nor as part of the budget process to date, by any of the political groups.

It is not policy to sell items from the Museums and Galleries collections. The Council subscribes to the Code of Ethics set out by the Museums Association.

Councils who have carried out sales, in breach of the MA Code of Ethics have been barred from future MA membership and stripped of their Accredited status which excludes them from grant funding and in turn exacerbates any funding gap.

Over the last three years Government spending cuts have forced the Council to cut its spending by £100 million and we estimate that a further £115 million of cuts or new funding will be needed to balance the books over the next three years - around 25% of the Council's remaining net budget.

Even if the Council were to sell off items from its collections this would only realise one-off receipts which would not represent a financially sustainable solution to meeting the Council's £115m funding gap. Using one off resources to fund day to day spending is not good financial management and simply stores up even bigger financial problems when those resources are exhausted.

2. **Councillor Martin Smith**

In the light of the 79.4% loss of budget planned in the Budget proposals to the Youth Service can the Leader expand on how this will affect the Youth of Bradford and particularly work in diverting disaffected youth and in co-ordinating work across Police, Social Services, Health, Education, Job Centres, Voluntary Services, Communities and other external partners?

Answer

The proposals should be seen in the context of cuts in Council funding of over £100m over the last three years, the need to find a further £115m over the next three years to balance Council budgets and the protection offered to other budgets in Children's Services such as child protection and care services, school improvement and achievement and the Youth Offending Team.

Under the proposals, which are currently out for consultation, there would still be two full time Youth Workers attached to each of the Area Committees working closely to local priorities and working with the disaffected youth in that area. They would be backed up by part-time workers and services that have been protected who work directly with vulnerable children including Children's Social Services and the Youth Offending Team. We have also protected the work with Troubled Families in the district through Families First which is successful in getting young people into school, parents into training and work and reducing crime. Young people would also have the support of Prospects (who offer Careers Advice and guidance), Council Sports services, local clubs and uniformed groups like guides, scouts and cadets. We hope to see young people themselves becoming more active as community leaders and running their own provision alongside adult volunteers.

As a Council we do have a duty to secure positive activities for young people but there is no requirement to directly provide them ourselves. So the proposal is to develop a lean commissioning structure where the Council would:

- Have Youth Services integrated with Area Committees and Neighbourhoods
- Deliver community cohesion work from one central base within Bradford and one in the Keighley Area
- Look to see if there is under or over provision in areas and manage gaps in provision at a locality level
- Lead the 'Positive for Bradford Youth' Strategy – this will influence activities offered to young people by voluntary services.
- Help disaffected young people to continue their education, and access training

The proposed commissioner role would oversee the best use of the Community Funding of £300k to fit with the Council's priorities for children: raising educational attainment, protecting the vulnerable and reducing child poverty.

The proposal is subject to ongoing consultation and no decisions on the future of youth services have been made.

3. Councillor Geoff Reid

Is the collaboration agreement between Bradford Council and the owners of Fagley Quarry (Marshalls) still on the table? Have the Council's proposals been abandoned or simply delayed?

Answer

The proposed collaboration between the Council and the Private Partners to combine their respective land ownerships at Fagley Lane, Eccleshill in order to create a single comprehensive development site that could deliver some 600 new homes over the next 5 to 10 years is still very much on the table and was formalised on the 19th November by the completion of a Partnership Development Agreement. This will now enable the Council's Development Partners to proceed with their intended finalisation and submission of a planning application before the end of the year.

4. Councillor Shabir

When is the Council going to do something about the blocked drains on the main A650 located between at the bottom of Heaton Grove and the top of Park Grove? The drain is blocked whenever there is heavy rainfall and is now causing significant danger to cyclists and other road users and pedestrians. Can the leader instruct highways to look at this issue and come up with some long term solution?

Answer

The problem here is leaves on the highway rather than blocked drains. The gully is working but regularly gets covered with leaves which prevent water from entering into the system. Highways officers have been out a number of times in recent weeks to clear the leaves from the gully and Cleansing have also been seen clearing the leaves with a mechanical sweeper. At this time of year more leaves fall especially when we have high winds; when it rains, these leaves wash down to the low point and cover the gully.

There is a gully nearby which is full of silt and the Highways Delivery unit have been requested to clean all the gullies on Keighley Road as a priority. In addition the Highways Delivery Unit, in conjunction with the Bradford West Area team will investigate, in the near future, the possibility of a more permanent solution.

5. Councillor Warnes

Will the Leader please quantify the total additional carbon emissions that will be associated by the 42,000 new homes envisaged in the draft Local Plan Core Strategy, assuming that they are all built to a standard equivalent to Code 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes?

Answer

Domestic CO2 emissions are generally calculated to include emissions arising from household travel and other household services. Using Ofgem energy consumption figures for a low consuming household the average annual emissions from energy consumption is around 8 tonnes. For an additional 42,000 homes this would equate to 336,000 tonnes pa.

6. Councillor Azam

Will the Portfolio Holder comment on the recent remarks by Lord Nash about Bradford's Schools?

Answer

Lord Nash's recent comments demonstrate his ignorance of the District and its schools and are an insult to our hardworking teachers, pupils and parents.

The Council continues to work with the educational Partnerships across Bradford and there is agreement across all stakeholders that we all want the very best for all of our children and young people. Work to improve outcomes is being accelerated across all phases of education.

This year there were marked improvements in outcomes in the Early Years Foundation stage with a narrowing of the gap with national results by 3 percentage points (p.p.) on the 'Good Level of Development' measure.

At Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) Bradford improvement in reading matched the National increase. Bradford also improved its results in writing and maths.

At Key Stage 2 there were significant changes to the way results were reported. However Bradford's results in Reading were very disappointing (a fall of 4 percentage points (p.p.) compared with a National decline of 1 percentage point.) Writing improved by 1 p.p. (this is on top of a 6 p.p. increase in 2012.) Bradford's results in KS2 maths fell by 1 p.p. compared with a National increase of 1 p.p.

At Key Stage 4 Bradford's GCSE 5A*-C results again increased compared with a National decline and so Bradford continues to narrow the gap in this important measure.

In 2013, for the first time Bradford's performance has exceeded the National average on the 5 or more GCSE A*-C in any subject measure (by 2 p.p.)

Finally, one of the key measures of educational performance is the percentage of pupils attending a school that is judged to be good or outstanding by OFSTED.

In August 2012 64.7% of our Primary Schools were judged to be good or outstanding. In November 2013 this has risen by nearly 15 percentage points to 79.4%.

In August 2012 27.8% of our Secondary Schools were judged to be good or outstanding. In November 2013 this has risen by nearly 20 p.p. to 47.5%.

7. Councillor Engel

Is the Council certain that those who learn and work in Bradford's schools are not at risks from asbestos, be it in the fabric of the buildings, heating systems or props used in history lessons, and if not, what is being done to address the problem?

Answer

The Council's Asbestos Management Unit (AMU) have carried out asbestos management surveys to all Schools that are under Council control.

The AMU have issued Premises Asbestos Registers (PAR) to all Schools, these registers have been presented to head teachers as they are the duty holders.

The PAR forms part of the asbestos management plan and includes information on managing asbestos containing materials if present.

All the above ensures that the Schools comply with HSE legislation.

On the advice from the HSE - The Department of Education (DFE) in England has now issued a warning to all Schools not to wear or handle WW2 gas masks.

This statement was issued 23/11/2013. This statement also includes guidance notes.

The Council has (through its safety section) published this statement on the Schools web page.

8. Councillor Martin Smith

Can the Leader advise members about the claimed £15m spent in the Voluntary Sector within Youth Support activities and can we have a list of where this was spent and the performance of those recipients of funding?

Answer

There seems to be a misunderstanding about what has been set out in the budget proposal paper. The £15m spend on youth services has been identified by Young Lives and it refers to voluntary sector spend in the district not Council funding. Young Lives Bradford is a network of voluntary sector groups and organisations in Bradford district that deliver services to children, young people and families. It currently has over 300 members and is recognised by the Council and Children's Trust partners as the coordinating body for the Voluntary and Community Sector. They undertook a survey of their members to find out how much is spent on youth services in the district and the £15m is the total they came to. The Council does commission work with young people from a variety of voluntary sector organisations and the quality of the work is checked and a particular focus is on whether it improves outcomes for young people. In addition to this the Community funding pot of £300k funds a number of Youth Organisations in the district and the list of them can be circulated to full Council.

9. Councillor Warburton

Given recent reports of increasing pressure across the country on Child Protection Services can the Portfolio Holder explain what the Council is doing to protect and secure the resilience of these services in Bradford District?

Answer

Bradford Safeguarding Children Board oversees the work of all partners in the district to make sure children are safe. Its funding has been protected by the Council and it has an important role in delivering training so front line staff know how to spot signs of abuse. It also produces guidelines and procedures to help staff. The turnover of social work staff working in child protection is low compared to other Councils. This is due to the quality of support and supervision they received but our experienced workforce allows the service to cope well with pressure. Bradford has seen an increase in child protection work and is now dealing with 100 more children on child protection plans than last year (470 compared to 370). The Board is quick to respond and has agreed additional capacity to manage the demand for child protection case conferences. The workloads of social care are monitored at Children's Overview & Scrutiny and show that social workers still have balanced and manageable caseloads.

Integrated working makes our service more effective, we have a multi agency Integrated Assessment Service. The team is made up of Social Workers, a Police Officer, Education Officer and Health Visitor, all working together to respond to new referrals which report safeguarding issues for children and young people, living in the Bradford District. Our re-referral rates are monitored and scrutinised, to ensure that referrals are responded to appropriately and in a timely manner, across all communities. Bradford Children's Social Work Services are also partners in the Multi Agency Hub Team that was set up by West Yorkshire Police, to respond to any concern about a child at risk of child sexual exploitation. We have a full time Team Manager and a full time Social Worker in the Hub, to work with the Police and other partners in identifying, responding and intervening with this group of vulnerable children and their families.

Our budget proposals, currently out for consultation, would protect budgets for child protection and safeguarding in their entirety.

10. Councillor Wainwright

Does the Leader agree that food collection posts for food banks should be established at Council buildings?

Answer

I agree that the Council should support these initiatives that are providing basic necessities to some of the District's most vulnerable families and individuals.

There are already three collection points in council buildings for food banks and I have recently asked the Chief Executive to look at expanding that number.

If organisations would like to establish further collection points then they should contact the Assistant Director of Economic Development and Property.

11. Councillor Davies

Does the leader of Council consider that Parish and Town Councils are suitable vehicles for the devolution of services? If so what protections are in place to prevent double taxation for those services?

Answer

In some cases, dependent on the type of service and the capacity of Local Councils, Parish and Town Councils may be suitable vehicles for the devolution of services. The Local Authority works with Local Councils through the Bradford District Local Council Charter which encourages dialogue and partnership working on issues of joint concern. The Community Right to Challenge section of the Locality Act gives Local Councils the opportunity to express an interest in running services should they wish to do so. It should be noted that local delivery of services does not always result in cost reductions.

The agreed Charter between the Council and Parish and Town Councils sets out a number of options for ensuring that double taxation does not occur in the financial arrangements made with Parish and Town Councils prior to the transfer of running a service. In the limited instances where a service is provided by a Parish Council in one part of the District and by the District Council in other parts of the District, to date the Council's preferred option has been to pay the Parish/Town Council a grant. However if the number of Services to be run by Parish and Town Councils was to significantly increase, the Council would need to consider introducing "special expenses". If a service is deemed a special expense, residents in the Parish/ Town Council that runs the service would pay for the service through their local precept and pay a lower Bradford Council tax.

In situations where a Parish/ Town Council makes a choice to enhance local provision beyond that applied by the Council in the district as a whole, local taxpayers will pay for the enhancement through the Local Council precept. So whilst this will be a concurrent function there would be no double taxation in the strict sense, due to enhancement.

12. Councillor Smithies

What are the Excess Winter Death figures for the District last year; how do these compare with the previous year and how do they compare with the national and regional figures. Does the Council have plan in place to address Excess Winter Deaths and if so, how is its impact monitored and evaluated?

Answer

Excess winter deaths (EWD) numbers in 2012/13 are not available at a local level as yet from the Office of National Statistics (ONS); the nearest year that actual numbers are available is 2011/12. The figures for that year are 320 which represent an increase on the preceding year's figures which were 240 (2010/11).

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) calculate an Excess Winter Deaths Index so that comparisons can be made over time and between sexes, age groups and regions. This index increases from 17.9 to 24.0 in Bradford in the two winters under consideration. This appears to be a statistically significant increase, and occurs at a time when nationally and across Yorkshire and the Humber, the Excess Winter Deaths Index has reduced.

This change is obviously a cause for concern. As a single year figure, the Bradford rate for 2011-12 is the highest it has been for over 10 years. However, single year figures can be misleading, and year-on-year comparisons are notoriously unstable. It is not uncommon for a local authority to experience improving rates in a year when national rates are worsening, and vice versa, a more stable measure is achieved by grouping years together and the graph below – produced independently by the West Midlands Public Health Observatory - shows Bradford winter mortality figures have consistently been slightly less than the rate for England and Wales.

Resources from a range of statutory partners are committed into the delivery of the services laid out below, the Bradford and Airedale Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Bradford Council via A&CS, CHES and PH, nationally the DoH and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

There has been an additional investment committed from Public Health budgets over the next two years in recognition of the importance of these programmes and of the need to resource partnership framework across key agencies in the district.

The Council has a range of strategies in place to try to mitigate EWD these include the following;

1. **WHHP**-multi-agency partnership delivery plans for a range of short, medium and long term practical interventions for those households most at risk due to cold weather conditions. These include fostering neighbourhood support systems, community transport, path and driveway clearance, healthy eating and hot food services and
2. **Fuel poverty** workstreams which offer longer term solutions to fuel poor homes including access to insulation, new heating systems etc
3. **Increased advice services** to be offered from non-traditional locations such as GP surgeries, children's centres, drug and alcohol treatment services and mental health services.
4. **Trips and Falls preventions** services-offered on a multiagency basis which includes health, social care and the not for profit sector this aims to reduce the instance of falls in the home and is also linked to hospital discharge systems
5. **Multi-agency hospital discharge**-operating within a multiagency planning approach the preparations made for hospital discharge consider the needs of the individual and where they are going to, to ensure that independence can be fostered whilst minimising risk. This may involve the Trips and Falls services and also an assessment of initial support needs including aids and adaptations etc

The evaluation of the WHHP programme is undertaken as the programme is implemented from December 2013 through to March 2014. 'First Contact' which is the agency which manages access to the range of different services offered though WHHP is able to gauge the overall take up and profile of service users.

13. Councillor Middleton

Question to the Leader - What is the latest position regarding the former Bradford Council building Laurence House in Peel Park?

Answer

It is understood that the property is to be used as sheltered housing for people in need of care. The Planning Service confirmed that this use falls within the existing permitted use of the property.

14. Councillor Swallow

Could the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services please outline which essential life skills are taught to our young people in our Districts schools and does he agree that financial education is an essential life skill?

Answer

Life Skills are a key component of the curriculum across all of the phases of education. These are taught to children and young people through a wide range of formal and informal methods.

Schools often approach 'life skills' through Persona, Social, Health and Emotional education.

In Bradford we have developed an Investors in Health Scheme and this is being promoted with all Bradford schools. The scheme includes the following elements:

- Emotional & Spiritual Well-being
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco education
- Health, nutrition & fitness
- Sex & relationships education
- Safeguarding and Poverty Proofing the school day
- Financial Literacy

Financial management and learning and combating poverty are a key component of the scheme.

15. Councillor Townend

The Children's Centre in Baildon was erected with Government money which I believe to be in the region of £400,000, but should the revenue cease will this money have to be repaid and, if so, on what terms?

Answer

Baildon children centre was built with £492,385 of General Sure Start Capital Funding.

The Government has cut the revenue grants used to fund Bradford's Children's Centres by 31% or £10.4m, the equivalent of £253 for every 0-4 year old in the District.

Under the current budget proposal, which is currently out for consultation, the Council would withdraw £2.4m of revenue funding from Children Centres within the district and this does not affect any clawback. If the centre is sold, transferred, or there is a change of use from its original intention, then we may be required to repay the capital funding. If the asset is still used to meet the aims and objectives of the Sure Start initiative then there will be no capital funding clawback. Until we have the outcomes of the consultation, the future use of the Baildon Centre is not known.

16. Councillor Engel

Can the Portfolio Holder please provide an update on progress in addressing the issues of environmental and visual blight and any breaches of planning regulations at the site of the former Reservoir Pub at the junction of Allerton Road and Rhodesway which continue to cause concern to many members of the local community?

Answer

The original complaint regarding the use of the site for the storage of cars was received by the Council in March 2013. A Planning Enforcement Notice was issued on 4 June 2013. Shortly after this date the owner of the land lodged an appeal the Enforcement Notice with the Planning Inspectorate. As is his legal right to do so. The local Planning Authority's case was submitted without delay and the matter is now in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol and we are awaiting the Planning Inspectorate visiting the site and their subsequent decision.

Once the Enforcement appeal has been determined the Enforcement Team can then progress the matter further. The Council cannot control the speed in which the planning Inspectorate deal with this issue.

There are also outstanding issues regarding the ownership and occupancy of this land which will be subject to a Court ruling. We do not have a date for the Court

17. Councillor Faisal Khan

In its discussion with Westfield, can the council detail what it has done to ensure the Westfield 'preparation works' translates to a real start in development (by the end of this year) and is not just a checkbox exercise by the developer?

Answer

Officers of the Council have been working with Westfield for over 2 years to assist with achieving a successful build in Bradford. Works have included a modified planning permission, design of public realm works, assistance with the promotion of the scheme to prospective tenants and developing initiatives which will maximise local employment benefits.

Westfield for their part have been securing new tenants and incorporating their requirements into the design process. The Council's City Growth Zone initiative has played a significant role in attracting tenants to the site. The current site preparation works are necessary to allow the construction phase to begin. Council officers are working closely with the Westfield Team and resolving any issues as they arise.

18. Councillor Shafiq

Can the Portfolio Holder update Council on the current rate of adoptions?

Answer

The number of children being placed for adoption in Bradford is increasing every year. The process for adoption is made up of a number of stages and a useful measure is the number of children who are matched and placed with adoptive parents. Once this is done the adoptive parents can then apply to court in 10 weeks for the full Adoption Order.

Between Jan – Dec 2012, 65 children were matched and placed with prospective adopters. So far this year between January to the end of November there has been 70 matches so already an increase on 2012.

19. Councillor Cooke

Given concerns about the threat to jobs in Bradford from the introduction of standardised packaging for cigarettes can the Leader say that no representations will be made by this Council to the Government's new review of options for standardised packaging without reference to members and consideration of the Policy's negative impact on employment?

Answer

Yes

20. Councillor Engel

What is the Council doing to provide safe, decent cycleways around school and commuter routes?

Answer

The Council, through the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, and adopted cycling strategy is developing a number of strategic cycle routes across the district which link into key employment areas and schools. Bradford has been successful in attracting millions of pounds of Department for Transport funding to improve the cycle network across the district. Key routes currently being implemented include the Canal Rd greenway that links Shipley to the City

Centre, the Utley to Stockbridge cycle route (which allows young cyclists to avoid a dangerous stretch of road on their way to and from school and links into the Airedale Greenway) and the Cycle City Ambition Grant project which includes a 23km cycle superhighway between Leeds and Bradford City Centres along with improvements to the canal towpath to Shipley. These will complement the Living Street / Connect 2 project which was recently completed creating a safe route between the City Centre and West Bowling including an iconic bridge across Manchester Road.

A set of standards for high quality cycle route design are being prepared and will help inform the development of future routes across the district to make Bradford both more attractive and safer for all types of cyclists, in line with the Tour de France Cycle Yorkshire legacy strategy. The Area Committees are also currently considering their approach to cycle lane provision in their areas.

21. Councillor Swallow

The Portfolio Holder should be applauded on bringing a new library into the Bradford City Centre. I note that this library will contain c.60, 000 books. Would she please tell us how many books in total are owned by the Council, how many are on display across the District's libraries, how many are in storage and the value of our District's book collection?

Answer

The Council library service has approximately 578,000 books in its collection for borrowing and reference. These comprise of 560,000 on display and/or accessible for borrowing or reference with approximately 18,000 in storage. It is difficult to value the book stock however taking a nominal replacement value of an average £10.00 per book that would equate to £5.8 million.

In addition of course libraries house extensive archive material both in local studies and through its partnership with West Yorkshire Archives Service

22. Councillor Middleton

Of the approximately 4,000 items in the Bradford MDC Fine Art Collection as reported to Governance Committee 28 November 2013, what % of these items have been on public display in the Bradford District during 2013?

Answer

The service shows the best quality and historically interesting art work by rotation. Paintings from the collections are displayed in all our museums, galleries and civic buildings across the district. In addition we loan to other museums in the country and around the world.

The Lowry recently loaned to the Tate was seen by 212,541 people and is now returned and displayed at Cartwright Hall. As with all galleries large and small it is estimated that 15% of a collection is displayed at any one time. An exhibition programme ensures that paintings from the collections are frequently displayed, in addition to works on permanent display. Recent and popular exhibitions, include 'David Hockney The Early Years, as well as the

additional paintings revealed at Cliffe Castle Museum after reopening in the summer.

Just looking at displays over one year in isolation can be misleading. The collection has been in existence for our forefathers over the last 130 years and will be available for at least another 130 years during which time a huge amount of the collection will have been on display.

We are constantly exploring the possibilities for increasing public access to our collections and I am happy to give consideration to any new proposals.

The service is working to publish its collections on line. Currently all the Oil Paintings can be viewed on line on the 'BBC Your Painting' website. Last year saw the opening of the Print gallery which enables the public to see many of the prints and drawings stored and displayed and search digital images of all prints and drawings in the collection.

In May 2012, Arts Council England and the National Museum Directors' Council jointly published a report on the contribution of arts and culture to the UK's national and regional economies.

It found that in 2011, culture generated £5.9bn of gross added value to the UK economy and accounted for 1% of GDP. In addition, the impact of the sector on inbound tourist expenditure amounted to an estimated £856m.

Research by the Local Government Association recently estimated that cultural investment brought an average of £4 into local economies for every £1 spent.

But funding cuts are restricting organisations' ability to measure value. The regional tourism agency Welcome to Yorkshire, for example, can no longer offer a detailed breakdown of the impact of individual venues on the local economy, making it harder to demonstrate the case for investment.

23. Councillor L'Amie

Can the Leader give an assurance that work on the Shipley Eastern By Pass will be completed during the life of the proposed new LDF. If this cannot be given will development in the Canal Road Corridor and Baildon be restricted?

Answer

The Shipley Eastern Relief Road has been identified by the Council's Executive as a strategic transport investment priority for the District (Executive 12 March 2013). Although funding has not yet been secured for the scheme, and it has not been prioritised within the 10 year West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund, the Council will continue to seek funding for the project with the intention of delivering the scheme within the lifetime of the Local Plan. Development in the Canal Road corridor is critical for the delivery of much needed new housing in the District and each individual development will be considered in respect of its impact on the transport network. Future housing development in Baildon is likely to be of a much smaller scale than that on the

Canal Road corridor and again the impact of individual sites on transport will be considered as they come forward.

24. Councillor Engel

Will the Leader comment on proposals to hand the responsibilities of the Fire Authority to the Police and Crime Commissioner?

Answer

I understand that Home Office Ministers are considering shifting responsibility for fire services from Fire Authorities to Police and Crime Commissioners which would represent a significant change in the governance of the Fire Service. I do have concerns about the proposal because fire services are a hugely important public service and decisions about them need to be informed, open, transparent and be subject to checks and balances which would not necessarily be the case if powers are transferred to Police Commissioners. The recently published Stevens Report says that the Police Commissioners model is “..seriously flawed as a method of democratic governance” so I can see no benefit in providing Commissioners with additional powers over Fire Services.

25. Councillor Hassan Khan

Does the Portfolio Holder for Stronger and Safer Communities agree with the Police and Crime Commissioner that all money seized from criminals in West Yorkshire should be retained in West Yorkshire?

Answer

Yes. The West Yorkshire force faces a 26% cut in funding between 2010-11 and 2016-17, including £75m over the last three years and the announcements in the Chancellor’s Autumn statement mean that a further £7m of cuts may be made on top of this. Under these circumstances it is critical to ensure that all the cash seized by Police from criminals stays in West Yorkshire and does not go to the Government. The campaign is gathering momentum and Home Office ministers have agreed to look at the issue. I would urge anyone who hasn’t yet done so to sign the online petition at <http://action.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/page/s/giveusbackallthemoney>

26. Councillor Davies

Does the Leader think that a strategy similar to ‘The Green Heart of Essex’ campaign developed to noticeably improve the appearance of the Braintree District, would be suitable for adoption in the Bradford District?

Answer

Bradford District already has many elements of the ‘Green Heart of Essex’ campaign to improve cleanliness, recycling, address climate change and promote and involve active citizens. These are delivered through Neighbourhood working, Ward Clean Teams, Multi agency Ward Officer Teams and Days of action.

At a time of reduced resources, our focus has been on concrete actions to improve the environment through innovative service delivery and behaviour change initiatives with minimum spend on marketing and communications campaigns.

27. Councillor Engel

Will the Portfolio Holder/Leader/Council support me in congratulating Bradford University on winning first prize at the Green Gown Awards for their environmental improvements on campus?

http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/10811293.University_wins_top_green_prize/?ref=twtrrec?

Answer

Yes. The Green Gown Awards recognise exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the UK.

The University's Green Library Environment and Education (GLEE) project has radically improved the old, inefficient learning environment of the City Campus Library and at the same time achieved carbon and utility savings via a low carbon refurbishment. In addition, reduced noise and litter have been a welcome bi-product of the enhanced environment. This is one of a number of components in the University's sustainability programme.

28. Councillor Davies

It is widely recognised that Baildon has missed out on Youth Service provision over a large number of years compared to other areas (for example we have never had a full time youth worker). Recent limited progress is jeopardised by proposed cuts to the service. Given the amount of officer and councillor time spent on improving things for the young people of Baildon can we be given a chance to redress the balance?

Answer

Although there has been no full time youth worker in Baildon, the youth work sessions there over the last year have been supported by an Advanced Practitioner and other youth workers. The following has been in place:

- 1 night a week 'Open Access Youth Session' at Ian Clough Hall on Mondays
- 1 night a week sports focused activities at Baildon Recreation on Tuesdays

This is currently funded by Youth Opportunities Funding and will be funded through the Youth Service base budget from January 2014.

- The Baildon Young People's Cycling Project, was Youth Opportunities funded from July - November 2013 and led by Youth Service staff.

A second youth work session at Ian Clough, with a focus on activities leading to Duke of Edinburgh Award accreditation was piloted in September 2013 for

4 weeks. There was limited uptake of this session and so withdrawn as resources could be effectively used elsewhere.

The budget proposals, which are currently out for consultation, should be seen in the context of Government cuts to Council funding of over £100m in the last three years, a further estimated £115m funding gap and the importance attached to protecting other budgets in Children's Services for example, child protection, safeguarding, school improvement and achievement, school crossing patrols.

The proposals, if adopted, would mean a phased reduction in activity from next year as the service moved to the new structure in neighbourhoods for youth service delivery. Depending on requests for voluntary redundancy and overall staffing it would be likely that there would be some provision at Ian Clough Hall and sports focused activities at Baildon Recreation. A possible office base for youth workers is also being explored at either Baildon Methodist Church or Baildon Link to increase Youth Service contact with young people.

29. Councillor Leeming

Has a decision been made by Bradford Council regarding the Market Licence Application for the former QLM Building on Idle Road?

Answer

No decision has been made to issue a Market Licence to operate a Bazaar from the former QLM building as the pre conditions around transport imposed by Council's Markets and Highways Services remain outstanding.

The applicant has now submitted a revised proposal to reduce the impact on local residents by limiting the operation of the bazaar and this amendment will be considered alongside proposals to meet the pre-conditions

The Council's Markets Service and Highways Department will continue to consider the Application as conditions are met or otherwise and prior to any final decision will be inviting local Ward Members to attend a meeting with the applicant to discuss his application.

30. Councillor Faisal Khan

What is the current cost benefit case of City Park and when is the projected payback, is it in line with initial estimations and projections?

Answer

In 2009, during the economic downturn, the Council approved funding which, together with funds from Yorkshire Forward and the Regional Transport Board, enabled the City Park scheme to be delivered. City Park was completed in December 2011. The original business planning exercises made clear that the importance of the scheme to Bradford was much greater than simply creating a new piece of public realm.

The project team worked to deliver on 6 key objectives:

- 1. 'To put Bradford on the map'** - we have done this by creating a new asset for the region which has the qualities to be a destination of national interest. By delivering a public space which clearly identified the location as Bradford we have successfully set ourselves apart from other cities.
- 2. 'To be a place for people'** - we wanted City Park to be distinctive but maintain a broad appeal and it is clear that the space is used and valued by a diverse cross section of the community.
- 3. 'To be a place for events'** - since the success of the City Park launch event on 24th March 2012 the space has hosted a diverse range of events and activities attracting residents and visitors alike.
- 4. To glue the centre together** - City Park creates a pedestrian link between the National Media Museum, the University and College and the remainder of the city centre to the east. By adopting a complementary palette of materials across the city centre there is a natural flow from City Park into the Heritage Streets public realm and the main retail areas.
- 5. To be a catalyst for regeneration** - during project development the stalled Southgate scheme was taken forward with assistance from the local authority. The developers cited their confidence in City Park creating an unrivalled setting for their scheme as an influential factor in them striving to take the development forward at a time when most building projects were mothballed due to the economic downturn.
- 6. To change the perception of Bradford** - as well as creating a high quality, flexible space it was important that the scheme was of such a quality that it would be recognised nationally and we therefore submitted the scheme for relevant awards and have achieved great success including the BCIA (Building Construction Industry Award) Regeneration Project of the Year and Academy of Urbanism Great Place Award.

City Park has attracted considerable media coverage in addition to inclusion in local, regional and national newspapers the scheme. It has also been the focus of a prime time BBC1 'One Show' special feature, Bollywood Live! Production which attracted significant BBC funding. City Park also provided the setting for television programmes DCI Banks and The Syndicate. The benefits of positive coverage are significant.

Footfall cameras have been installed at key locations around the city centre and data is monitored. All Council led events are evaluated and information used to inform future programming. It is evident from the information to date that high quality events and good weather generate significant footfall which has a positive impact on city centre businesses. Although the full benefit of the scheme will not be realised until the surrounding development sites are taken forward the initial assessments of the first two years are positive. We have held approximately 100 events of differing scales and in addition to the regular footfall in the area we have attracted around 400,000 people specifically to attend activity in City Park and it is estimated that these visits generate in excess of £4.5m spend in the city.

Work to invite Expressions of Interest in the former Odeon is progressing and design work to relocate the cells beneath the former police station is underway and will release that site for redevelopment. We will continue to monitor impact.

31. Councillor Warnes

Does the Leader of Council agree that constructing 11,000 new homes on 'Green Belt' land is not a form of sustainable development for Bradford District?

Answer

The Local Plan Core Strategy is required by national planning guidance to plan for and meet in full its objectively assessed need for housing. The district is facing a major challenge in meeting the estimated need for around 42,000 new homes over the period to 2030. How and where that need is met depends on a number of factors most importantly the scale and distribution of available and deliverable land supply. The Council through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) have undertaken a comprehensive examination of the possible land supply to meet the housing need, in particular brown field and non green belt land. The results of the SHLAA show that although the majority of need can be met in locations within existing settlement boundaries, meeting the district's need in full will require a substantial contribution from the release of green belt land. The current evidence suggests the scale of development which may be required on the green belt could be in the order of 11,000 dwellings. However this is not a target and will hopefully be lower once work on the detailed site allocations progresses.

As the member may appreciate the sustainability or otherwise of a location for development depends on a variety of factors and not just its status as green belt or non green belt land. In some cases revisions to the green belt may provide sustainable solutions to meeting the district's housing need particularly where such releases provide the opportunity to plan for sustainable urban extensions which ensure the right mix of development as well as supporting infrastructure. Furthermore the release of some green belt will in some cases provide positive sustainability benefits for without it the cramming of even more development within existing urban areas could only be achieved without the loss of substantial areas or urban green spaces which would both impact on the quality of places and undermine regeneration efforts.

32. Councillor Brown

Can the Leader of Council congratulate Haworth on becoming the first Fair Trade Village in the world and consider recognising this on signs leading into the village?

Answer

Haworth was the eighth place and the first village to be awarded Fairtrade status by the Fairtrade Foundation on the 22 November 2002. A certificate recognising this achievement was presented to the people of Haworth by the then Lord Mayor of Bradford, Cllr Richard Wightman, so our congratulations today would be somewhat belated.

We are happy to discuss signage with the local parish council and the community but given the devolution of the Highways Budget to the Area Committee appropriate signage can be decided by members of that Committee.

33. Councillor L'Amie

Could the Leader say how many children are currently in Council care and how does this compare with the numbers in care a year ago?

Answer

On 31st Oct 2013 there were 886 looked after children, compared to 887 the previous year. There has been a slight increase since then and today there are 902 looked after children. Children's Social Care have been managing increased demand and with strong edge of care services the Council has not seen the huge rise in numbers that other Councils have.

34. Councillor Middleton

I have been asked by residents to inquire why the Yorkshire Flag is not displayed all year round in Bradford City Centre?

Answer

The Council is currently undertaking a review of its flag flying protocols and I will ask officers to look into the issue and report back to Members as part of that review.

35. Councillor L'Amie

Can the Leader say what proposals are there to ensure that the IT facilities available to Elected Members are fit for purpose?

Answer

The Member IT Improvement programme will ensure that the IT facilities available to Elected Members are fit for purpose.

- A review of Member's Council IT equipment will be carried out that is in use both at home and in City Hall to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Improved Member IT support to ensure computer faults are picked and expedited quicker coupled with timely communications to Members so they know when their issues are likely to be fixed.
- Improved access to mobile email through a replacement programme to manage the move from Blackberry devices to touch screen Smartphones.

Revised Member Development (ICT specific) which working in collaboration with the Member Development officer will offer guidance and advice to help Members the most out of Council IT equipment and systems.