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COUNCIL
21 October 2014

MEMBER QUESTION TIME

Questions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12

1. Councillor Smithies

I welcome the motion on child sexual exploitation (CSE). At a local Keighley level, what measures are in place to ensure coordinated and comprehensive action and support to front line police, social workers, schools, voluntary & community organisations and families to collaborate together to identify and tackle child sexual exploitation, to support child victims and families, and to help deal with the impact of forthcoming court cases on community cohesion?

Answer

Each part of the District is affected by CSE, and the services that are delivered by the Council and its partners, with scrutiny and challenge from the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board, reflect this fact.

The Council has funded an expanded CSE preventative programme across the District which builds on the work already undertaken by the Council and its partners. This term Keighley Secondary Schools are hosting a CSE education drama and using CSE lesson plans to ensure that students receive clear and powerful messages about the risks and impact of CSE. Targeted preventative work in the Keighley area by the Children's Society Hand in Hand project has been stepped up with Council funding and this now includes the innovative use of young adult volunteer mentors who draw on their own experiences to relate to vulnerable young people and help them to avoid being groomed and abused through CSE.

Safer Schools Officers attached to all secondary schools work with school staff to identify families that require additional support to help them keep their children safe from CSE. The parents and carers in these families can be referred for specific support from PACE – a voluntary sector partner with expertise in working with parents whose children are at risk of CSE.

When a child or young person is identified as being at high risk of CSE the multi-agency co-located Hub takes action to ensure that the child is protected and that evidence is gathered in order to bring a prosecution against perpetrators.

The Council and its partners are acutely aware of the risks to community cohesion arising from the impact of CSE. With West Yorkshire Police and the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board an approach has been developed to provide community reassurance regarding CSE. Work is on-going with a community and faith groups to ensure that the issue of CSE is being addressed and to consider what additional positive community initiatives can be developed in Keighley and other parts of the District. When specific information gives rise to community cohesion concerns linked to CSE, a cross-partnership reassurance and engagement meeting can be called at short notice.

Supplementary Question

I ask this question because I do not know if other Members may have had the same experience but I have had quite a lot of phone calls, emails, etc, after Rotherham. It was very clear to me that members of the public in my ward and across Keighley in general had very little awareness of what we were doing and in fact quite often were accusing us of doing nothing. So I would ask if I could work with the Portfolio Holder and other Keighley Councillors to try and raise public awareness of what we are doing please?

Councillor Berry

I am very happy to do that and can I say Keighley has an outstanding project in the shape of the Hand in Hand project that has been working for some years providing very effective counselling and support for families and works with boys and girls in Keighley who are at risk and provides long term support. I would urge everybody who has got any concerns to follow, just type into your computer, know the signs, or contact the Safeguarding Board website, look at our 7 point plan but as you know we have a substantial motion before this Council today that will cover many of the issues that you raise in concern. It is a duty upon every single one of us to know how to advise people to go to the appropriate agencies and to make sure that all information is shared in a timely and appropriate manner so that this evil can be dealt with.

2. Councillor Cooke

Can the Leader of the Council confirm that policy decisions are the responsibility of the Executive and Full Council and not that of individual officers?

Answer

As specified in the Council Constitution, Elected Members, either meeting in full Council or in Executive Committee, are responsible for setting the Council's policy direction. The Council employs officers to give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of services. Some officers have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely.

The Council Constitution states:

- Members meeting in full Council are responsible for setting the Council's overall policy and budget framework, and for strategic policy decisions which are reserved by law or by the Constitution to meetings of the full Council (Articles 4.1 and 4.2).
- The Executive is responsible for the development and approval of the policies, strategies and plans of the Council (Article 7.12), other than those which are subject to the approval of full Council under Article 4.
- The Council and the Executive delegate to the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors, City Solicitor and Directors and any officer acting in her/his place the authority to implement decisions of the Council, the Executive, the Council's committees and sub-committees in the discharge of the Council's functions within their area of responsibility, including policy, strategy, executive, regulatory and operational decisions (Article 14.20).

If Elected Members have concerns that policy decisions are being taken without due reference to the Council Constitution, they can bring the matter to the attention of the Leader of the Council, or to the Chief Executive or City Solicitor.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for the answer Leader. In the Telegraph and Argus on the 8th August a quote from a Council officer said Public Health Bradford would support the introduction of Alcohol Minimum Unit Pricing to help address alcohol misuse and its associated health problems. That may indeed be a good thing but it seemed to me that that is a statement of policy for this Council and us as Members who have not debated or discussed. I wrote to the Director raising their concerns. I am assured that this was not a statement of policy but was in fact merely that Bradford would support the introduction of the Minimum Unit Pricing which seems to be a statement of policy. All I am asking Leader is that we get it clear to officers and especially those who are regularly contacted by the press that they can't make up a policy on the hoof. That is our job and I think this is one example but there have been two or three others over the last years particularly from Public Health.

Councillor Green

Thank you for highlighting the particular issue and if you had contacted me on the 9th August we most probably could have sorted it out. Feel free to wait for three months, however long it has been. I do have some sympathy and I would also say that the only time that a thing is a policy is when they are stated by a politician. So that is not our policy. That may be the professional advice we receive on which to debate our policy and I am well aware that should we decide to take that advice Councillor Cooke will forcibly and energetically put the contrary point of view so if we do get to that point I look forward to a lively and invigorating debate before a policy is set.

3. Councillor Rachel Sunderland

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities - In the first Quarter of 2014/15 the target for satisfaction with service delivery (Anti Social Behaviour) has been missed again, and Bradford's performance has dropped 9% compared to 2013. Given that the proportion of residents saying ASB has got worse in the last year has increased, when will Bradford Council get a grip on ASB in our communities?

Answer

The Council is doing a great deal in partnership with West Yorkshire Police, InCommunities and other partners to tackle anti social behaviour.

Whilst satisfaction with service delivery, as measured by responses to follow up calls from the Police, has reduced to 73%, perceptions of anti social behaviour as a problem across the District have reduced year on year from 25.4% in 2010/11 to 23.3% currently.

The fall in ASB satisfaction can partially be attributed to an increase in calls about nuisance off road motorcycles and quad bikes across the district. In the last year, up to May 2014, this increased by 17% and resulted in an extra 1,500 calls being received by West Yorkshire Police.

In July 2014 a Nuisance Off Road Motorcycle Team of six Police Officers was created to deal with these incidents of off road motorcycles and quad bikes. Since it started the team has taken 94 motorcycles/quad bikes off the road and have issued 90 warnings under the Road Traffic Act for the anti-social use of vehicles. They have made an

immediate impact on calls for service in this area, which had continued to increase, but is now showing a 1.8% reduction in calls for service so far this year.

The District is committed to developing victim centred services and restorative approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour, low level nuisance and offending behaviour. Bradford Community Safety Partnership has funded the Neighbourhood Resolution Panels, which sit within the Restorative Justice Hub and supports 70+ volunteers. This work had received national recognition winning an award in July 2014.

In June 2014 the Community Safety Partnership agreed funding for an ASB Victims Champion. The post will identify the most vulnerable victims as well as developing capacity to support volunteers.

The Police's operational model and the co-located Neighbourhood Team Hub has provided opportunities to improve understanding and the ability to identify local problems and affectively target resources, which should make a further impact on this key issue for district residents.

So there is a lot being done but we cannot be complacent and need to continue working to reduce the impact of ASB and the blight it brings to communities. However the job has been made much harder by the Coalition Government cuts that have unfairly and disproportionately targeted Districts like Bradford and have seen tens of millions of pounds stripped from Council and Police budgets.

4. Councillor Ahmed

After my previous questions to the Leader about my concerns about Child Protection and Safeguarding of our children (asked soon after the tragic and sad death of 4 year old Hamza), I raised a concern about the impact of reducing Social Workers. The more recent issue with the case of the girl whose case went under the Council's radar resulting in £160,000 pay out, the more recent invitations for historical cases to come forward and the publicity surrounding the more recent senior appointment to the safeguarding position) could the Leader reassure me and the public that he is certain that these vulnerable groups are better protected in the future and those responsible at the highest level are identified and held responsible for failures?

Answer

The Council has protected child protection services and in fact significantly increased the resource to cope with more demand. Since the Hamzah Khan case there have been 25% more referrals to the social work teams and the numbers of children on a child protection plan has nearly doubled. In response we have invested in 10 additional social workers, two case conference chairs and minute takers for the meetings. We are in partnership with West Yorkshire Police creating a review team to look at the historical cases of child sexual exploitation. We are taking all concerns seriously and on top of the considerable police resource we are allocating two social workers and an IT and archive specialist to help track records. The Safeguarding Board is responsible for making sure that everyone who works with children learns lessons from serious cases like Hamzah Khan and from others. The training on offer, the guidance to staff and supervision and support makes our social work service strong and focused on protecting the most vulnerable children. This Council is a learning organisation and we change the practice of front line staff, the answer is not holding single individuals responsible for what is often a whole system failure.

The appointment of the new Independent Chair has been questioned but the Council has appointed Elaine McHale with due diligence and with a multi-agency recruitment panel. Her appointment has also been approved by the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board. She has significant experience of child protection having worked as a Director of Children's Services in a nearby authority.

5. Councillor Hawkesworth

In relation to the unauthorised and improper use of Council resources by the Conservative leader in May 2014 for electoral purposes will the Leader please state the amount of such resources so used as estimated by Council officers stating separately the amounts estimated in respect of physical materials, Council facilities and Council officers' time?

Answer

A total of 1374 sheets of A4 paper and about 900 envelopes were used to create letters to individual constituents for electoral purposes. 458 of those pages were discarded but have been counted towards the total. A further 21 pages of names and addresses of constituents were also printed. All of these sheets of paper and envelopes were Council resources. The estimated officer time for putting about 900 letters into envelopes is 7 hours 30 minutes.

Supplementary Question

Thank you Councillor Green for the words in your response. I did expect there to be some figures or cost of the improper use of Council resources. Can I be assured that the accurate figures will be conveyed to the Governance and Audit Committee when the time comes?

Councillor Green

Knowing the membership of the Governance and Audit Committee I think you can be suitably reassured that this will be fully investigated, yes.

6. Councillor Morris

What action has the Council taken to report to the police the illegal use in May 2014 of Council facilities for electoral purposes by the Conservative leader?

Answer

It is the Council which has acted unlawfully in the use of its resources and not the individual member. The use of resources in this way is a breach of the civil law but not of the criminal law. In those circumstances there was no basis upon which to report the matter to the Police.

Supplementary Question

Was Councillor Miller authorised to use Council equipment, stationery and officer time for his own personal gain for the election?

Councillor Green

I think we have already covered that. There is no Councillor in this building and no candidate in this building who is authorised to use Council facilities for electoral or party political purposes which is why this issue is being investigated both by Standards and by Governance and Audit and until I see the final report of those people who are

investigating the matter I think it would be unfair on all concerned to start making a statement but I will be making a statement once those investigations have been completed.

7. Councillor Swallow

What is the Council's policy on the removal of grass cuttings from grass verges and public areas and is it uniform across the District?

Answer

The Council does not collect grass cuttings from its general mowing operations within parks, public open spaces and road side verges as the cost involved would be prohibitive.

In some fine turf/ornamental operations, such as bowling greens and high specification areas, there is a need for the grass to be collected and this is carried out using small pedestrian machinery with grass collection boxes attached.

The standards and operations associated with each type of grassed area are currently uniform across the District, including those for grass collection.

8. Councillor Wainwright

On Monday February 3rd 2014 it was reported to Bradford Council that a large vehicle with an extremely large trailer on Sunday Feb 2nd had smashed down the gates at the entrance to Black Carr Woods. This vehicle then made numerous trips down the bridle path dumping farm waste into one of the fields. The vehicle was so large that bridle path was deeply rutted and walkers were unable to access the woods for weeks.

Question - How many times have the main gates to Black Carr Woods been broken into in the last three years and have the police been contacted on each occasion?

Answer

Records indicate seven incidents where the gates or locks have been damaged. Such damage and fly tipping are not routinely reported to the Police whereas damage to buildings and theft of, and from, vehicles together with abuse of staff is reported to the Police.

Question - What has been the cost to the Council to repair the gates after the farm vehicle smashed them down on Sunday February 3rd 2104?

Answer

The cost of repairs and rubbish removal following report of damage on 3rd February 2014 was £369. The farmer did not admit liability and alleged that the damage to the "keep post" had been caused by illegal fly-tippers.

Question - What was the result of the request from officers after Tong Councillors requested a legal letter be sent to the farmer to reinstate the cost of repairing the gates following the incident on February 3rd 2014?

Answer

The Tree and Woodland Manager wrote to the farmer in question on 21st February 2014 reminding him of his responsibilities when using his approved right of way and a copy was sent to Tong Councillors.

Questions - What has been the cost to repair the gates over the last three years?

What has been the cost to the Council to clean up the area after fly tipping over the past three years when the gates have either been left open by the farmer, his contractors or broken down by fly tippers?

Answer

Gates at Ned Lane between 1st October 2012 and 1st October 2014, total cost of repairs and rubbish removal £3,447.20 as follows.

30/06/2012	Damage repair and rubbish removal, actual cost £89.70.
15/07/2012	Replace lock and remove rubbish, £239.20
15/08/2012	Replace lock (cut off) and rubbish dumped, £299.00
16/09/2012	Install second gate to deter fly tipping, £1,657.80.
29/07/2013	Secure both gates and remove fly tipping, £184.50
03/02/2014	Report of damaged "keep post", rubbish dumped and surface rutted, £369.00
27/08/2014	Report that both gates damaged, rubbish dumped and cable burning carried out, £608.00

Council Officers have no direct, first hand evidence of who is or may have been responsible for specific incidents, without which there is no prospect of taking any legal action.

9. Councillor Brown

In the light of growing concerns about the impact of physical traffic calming measures on vehicles, would the Leader of the Council consider instigating a review of the design and profiling of road humps and related features?

Answer

The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 are the current regulations setting out provisions for road humps in England and Wales. They allow local authorities to install humps on a road with a speed limit of 30mph or less, without the need for special authorisation provided the humps are between 25 and 100mm high, at least 900mm long in the direction of travel and have no vertical face greater than 6mm.

In the Bradford district there are 4 main types of feature that have been used: -

- Thermoplastic Humps (Thumps) - 42mm high, 900mm long.
- Round Top Road Humps - 75mm high and 3700mm long.
- Speed Tables - 75mm high with a standard length of 9m, this is made up of a 6m flat top with 1.5m entry and exit slopes (1 in 20). The 6m stays standard to accommodate the wheel base of most buses. The entry and exit slopes may be increased to 2m where noise/vibration problems are a concern. This would increase the overall length of the table. The table may be constructed to the level of the footway i.e. 100mm high at school crossing points and raised formal crossings with a 1 in 20 entry/exit slope.
- Speed Cushions - 75mm high with a tolerance of +/- 5mm and can either be 1.6m or 1.9m wide with a length of 1.9m.

There are a number of factors that need to be considered in determining the type of calming to be used; for example emergency vehicle and public transport routes, traffic volumes at different times of the day, numbers of HGV's. The physical characteristics of the road are also important; road width, alignment and gradient, parking provision and environmental factors; noise, emissions, vibrations also need consideration. These are on top of the main concerns of safety and cost.

With a distinct move towards evidence-based priorities for Safer Road funding, measures are now only being installed where there is a proven history of road casualties or where there are perceptions of speed being a significant issue and there is strong community support for traffic calming.

The Council has to ensure that it meets the aforementioned legislative requirements and also strives to follow best practice by following Department for Transport guidance. We also work with partners, for instance the Combined Authority (with whom we have developed guidelines for measures on bus routes) and cycling representatives. Provided that motorists approach features at an appropriate speed there should not be a detrimental impact on vehicle condition (beyond reasonable daily wear and tear).

Traffic calming measures have had a huge positive impact on Road Safety in the Bradford district and have made a significant contribution to reducing the number of casualties on our roads.

10. Councillor Jabar

Could the portfolio holder for Children and Young People's Services update us on the Kings Science Academy?

Answer

The school is currently being led by an Executive Head, Jane Tiller, the headteacher of Immanuel College. She will remain in post until December 31st 2014 when the new principal will take over and the Dixons Academy Trust formally becomes the sponsor of the academy. Dixons have a very successful record of developing leaders and the new principal is currently working in one of the Dixons schools.

The acting principal has worked hard to ensure that accurate baseline data has been established and ensured that the quality of teaching has improved and that leadership skills at all levels have been enhanced. When the acting Principal leaves the school it will be much more secure than it was when she took over in the spring term last academic year

Kings Science Academy was first inspected on 12 Feb 2013 when it was judged to require improvement. The academy is likely to be re-inspected during this term or early next term.

11. Councillor Shabbir Hussain

How many road sweeping vehicles and cleansing staff are operating in Bradford West constituency, how frequently are the roads swept and how do these figures compare to other parts of the District?

Answer

Bradford West has three mechanical pavement sweepers and also shares a large road sweeper with Bradford East and Bradford South which concentrates on the main roads and gateways.

Generally, pavements are swept on a four monthly cycle, although routes are suspended in the autumn so that the machines can concentrate on the areas of the constituency that have more dense tree/leaf cover to help keep the pavements clear of fallen leaves.

Details on operating hours and resources have been presented to Bradford West Area Committee on 23 July 2014 and form the basis of an annual report. The mechanical resource and frequency of sweep is comparable across all parts of the district, with the exception of the City Centre which is swept every day.

In terms of clean teams Bradford West has five teams with Thornton and Allerton sharing with Clayton and Fairweather Green (20 staff in all). This is also comparable with other areas.

The City ward has an additional 12 staff working in the City Centre Monday to Friday.

12. Councillor Cooke

Since the Council considers that offering paid work subsidy for under-25 year olds is not a breach of its duties under the Equalities Act, can the Leader of the Council advise what programmes of support are in place for over-55s who find themselves redundant or want a switch of career?

Answer

We do fund support for over 55s. We recognise that there are specific groups requiring additional support when it comes to help and support in entering the labour market. For this reason, the Council's Get Bradford Working initiative has actively targeted the over 50s to offer support for them to up-skill and re-enter the labour market. We have also targeted our young people under 25, as well as disabled people. To date 139 people over 50 have gained employment through Get Bradford Working programmes.

The Employment Opportunities Fund has created over 400 12 month jobs to provide a "Bridge into Work" for our target groups, and 65 people over 50 have found employment as a result.

Through the Routes into Work commissioned fund, a specific support package is in place for people over 50, and this has resulted in 74 people over 50 finding a job.

Get Bradford Working continues to deliver outstanding results, and offers vital assistance to those who face disadvantage in the employment market, including people over 50 years of age. The programme is receiving national acclaim, and continues to transform the lives of some of our most disadvantaged residents.

Supplementary Question

Can we undertake to do a little bit more promotion of the work that has been done to support older people getting back into work especially ones who feel the necessity to change career. Can we also look perhaps at those older people who go back to college or university, get a degree and then they say many of the things that are set aside for graduates exclude older graduates and it seems slightly perverse that if someone who is

35 or 45 or even 55 decides to go through that route, that we should open up the same avenues in terms of graduate opportunities as we offer to the more regular kind of graduate.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

The whole point of the Get Bradford Working programme is to support those who are struggling to find employment and therefore we have to work with other agencies who do refer people to us on a regular basis so we work with Jobcentre Plus and other agencies around the district to make sure that we are working together and not duplicating their effort. So I am happy to tell you where that information is and which partners are working with and perhaps that will help you find out how your constituents can get in touch with the programme and use it to their benefit.

13. Councillor Jabar

How are we tackling the shortage of school places and what progress are we making?

Answer

Primary schools

Over the last 5 years, the Council has provided an additional 5,720 places across its primary school estate, making it the 10th largest increase in England (out of 152 education authorities).

Two primary free schools have opened: Dixons Music Academy which will eventually cater for 420 pupils, and Rainbow Academy – up to 525 places.

For September 2014 a number of schools have increased their admissions number. Consultation has been recently been undertaken to increase, a further four primary Schools to meet the demand for places in future years.

Other options are being appraised in a range of areas particularly where there are known new housing developments which are likely to bring new families.

Secondary schools

The increase in primary school pupils is now beginning to extend to secondary schools. New families to the District are also increasing the demand for secondary school places.

The Admissions Team in Children's Services is working closely with schools in groups in order to ensure that pupils are admitted to schools.

Two new secondary schools have opened: Dixons McMillan Academy and Dixons Trinity Academy and a further school, Bradford Forster Academy for 11 to 16 years olds, is currently under construction and is due to open in September 2015.

It is however anticipated that further secondary school places will be required and work is on-going looking at options.

14. Councillor Reid

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Transport - How many transport projects in Bradford MDC will the West Yorkshire Combined Authority start in its first year (from 1 April 2014)?

Answer

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) is working with Bradford Council on the development of a very large number of schemes and programmes across the District and is specifically leading over thirty of these projects and programmes of work. The WYCA led projects and programmes range from the development of major schemes such as Apperley Bridge and Low Moor Stations and the Yorcard Smartcard project to programmes of maintenance of, and improvement to, public transport assets. More details of the projects being developed by the WYCA and the Council will be provided in reports being prepared for the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee later this Autumn but a table showing many of the current projects being progressed by the partners is available if required.

See table at Appendix 1

Supplementary Question

I am grateful to the Portfolio Holder for listing the schemes on one side of the paper so that we can stick them behind a kitchen cupboard door and take them off as they happen. I have come across the phrase "shovel ready". I wonder if the Portfolio Holder can give us any indication of how many of these schemes are shovel ready.

Councillor Val Slater

Thank you for your supplementary question. I refer you to a report coming to the Environment Scrutiny on Tuesday next week that will be going into these in much greater detail. If you attend Councillor Reid you will be able to interrogate the officers but off the top of my head I cannot say how many are "shovel ready". I can draw your attention to the work happening at the moment on Canal Road on what the money we got from the Government on the Pinch Point Fund the junction with Stanley Road. We are working very hard to go through some of the design stages for some of the integrated transport fund. I met with the officers from the combined authority yesterday to make sure that we are on track with that. One of the things that I want to progress and bring forward is the work on the station gateways because there is no doubt that there are stations in Bradford that are not up to standard for the fourth biggest Metropolitan Council. We have got master plans. I need to bring those forward. I now need to start fighting not only with the combined authority to make sure that we get the share of the transport fund to deal with it but also with Network Rail and the Government to make sure that they put their money in there and that we do get stations that this city is proud of. I could go through these at length but I am aware there are other questions. I do not want to hog it. Thank you Lord Mayor.

15. Councillor Wainwright

What are the annual costs to the Council over the last four years of dealing with the obstruction of bridleways?

Answer

Time costs for dealing with all obstructions on public rights of way calculated over the last 4 years total £160,618, or £40,154 per annum. Based on a pro-rata proportion of rights of way which are bridleways (7% of total network), the costs of dealing with obstructions on bridleways over this period is £11,243 (or £2810 per annum).

16. Councillor Pennington

Further to the decision of Tesco to scrap plans for a new store in Ilkley and dispose of the site, coupled with supermarkets greatly reducing their interest in increasing their number of large stores, is the Council confident that it has a robust strategy for the disposal of the Richard Dunn Sports Centre when replacement leisure facilities are provided?

Answer

The Council has established a City Pool Project Board to steer the development of its Sports Facilities Investment Plan (SFIP). This board has the task of examining the potential disposal and possible future uses of the Richard Dunn Sports Centre site within the context of the SFIP. The board will ensure that all potential options are reviewed and fully explored to enable informed decisions to be made and to secure the best outcomes for Council Tax payers.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for the response. Can you tell me who the members of the board are and when will their informed decisions be concluded?

Councillor Andrew Thornton

There are various people on the project board and on some of the sub-boards as well which look particularly at the disposal of Richard Dunn Sports Centre. List of people on the project board include the Strategic Director (Environment and Sport), Assistant Director (Sport and Leisure) and there are also officers from Economic Development and Planning and Transportation and Highways. I can provide you with a list if you like.

17. Councillor Swallow

Can the Portfolio Holder update us on progress against targets in the Council's Road Safety Plan and in particular can she tell us what progress is being made against the stated aim of influencing driving behaviour because the perception of many people is that driving behaviours and standards are getting worse not better. Is there anything more that the Council and its partners can do to address the issue?

Answer

The Casualty Reduction target within the Road Safety Plan mirrors that set at a West Yorkshire level within the Local Transport Plan and is for a 50% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) by the year 2026. This uses the 2005-09 five year average as a base. This equates to a reduction from 248 to 124 in the Bradford district. A projection line determines the annual target figure. For 2013, the annual target figure was 204, the actual figure was 190. Notwithstanding this, an encouraging figure for last year will not lead to complacency and Council and its Safer Roads partners will continue to strive to maximise resources to further reduce casualty figures.

It is acknowledged that anti-social driving is a major concern within the district and evidence points to strong links between motoring lawlessness and road traffic collisions. As such we are seeking to improve driver behaviour through a number of mechanisms, i.e. engineering measures, education/training/publicity and enforcement. The task is a difficult one as the Council's and other agency's resources, particularly the Police) become stretched. However as a Council we are continually striving for ways to work more effectively with our Safer Roads partners to tackle such issues. The Police & Crime Commissioner has recognised that road safety is a priority by inclusion within the latest Police & Crime Plan. Highways officers recently met with to him to reiterate the important

part that Police enforcement plays in reducing road casualties and unsafe driving, with a view to closer partnership working and a continued commitment to roads policing.

The recent integration of Public Health into the Council has also contributed to a wider road safety agenda and a strengthening of partnership working. There are strong links between Road Safety and the Public Health Outcomes Framework. This has yielded funding from Public health sources to support Road Safety initiatives.

Supplementary Question

I welcome the answer from Councillor Val Slater and particularly the strong drive, no pun intended, by the Council and Safer Roads partners. However with reference to the funding from Public Health sources to support road safety initiatives I would be very interested to see how this develops and the impact it has and I would welcome some updates at some point in the future. My supplementary question is slightly tenuous however but I will ask. How many of our district schools, primary and secondary, have got safe spaces, either crossings or lollipop people, whatever we call them nowadays, to cross outside for the children and carers to cross safely. I would be interested to know that because that is something that is brought up regularly within Council about safe crossing for children.

Councillor Val Slater

Thank you. I am sure Councillor Swallow does not expect me to have that information readily available as she admitted it was a tenuous question. I will find that out and I will obviously communicate in writing, copy it to everybody. I do know there has been previous questions about road safety personnel etc, crossing patrols but I will look into it. I am not sure if the crossing patrols comes under my portfolio but I will follow it up.

18. Councillor Ahmed

Could the Leader report on what progress has been made since he was asked over a year ago about the lack of representation at senior management levels in the Council? Could he also tell us what the ethnic make up is by number and percentage of total workforce at assistant director and next two levels below assistant director level in the Council and inform us of the ethnic make up of the District both by number and percentage?

Answer

The Council, through an external procurement exercise contracted with the Hay Group to consider the Council's current approach to Talent Management. Part of Hay's brief was to consider how we might look to attract and retain talent especially at Senior Management Level so that the Council reflects all our communities across the Bradford District. This of course is not just about encouraging applications from people from Ethnic Minority backgrounds but also takes into account people with other protected characteristics such as those who have a disability. Our talent management approach will also be about trying to support more youth employment.

The Hay Group have undertaken a comprehensive exercise with a whole variety of staff groups across the Council including those from ethnic minority backgrounds to understand what we do well and areas that we need to consider if we are to improve. These findings will provide a series of recommendations which the Council's Executive will consider shortly.

Even in times of continuing Senior Management reductions, we will continue to ensure we do everything we can to achieve our aims. The ethnic makeup as at the start of October level is as follows:

	Headcount	Percentage	Headcount	Percentage
	<u>Assistant Director</u>	<u>Assistant Director</u>	<u>Next 2 Levels</u>	<u>Next 2 Levels</u>
White	15	88.24%	447	85.47%
BME	0	0.00%	62	11.85%
Not Stated	2	11.76%	14	2.68%
Total	17	100.00%	523	100.00%

The ethnic makeup of the District is information from the 2011 Census and is the most recent data available by ethnic origin:

QS201EW - Ethnic group

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geography	Bradford	
time	2011	
	Rural	Urban
Ethnic Group	Total	
	value	percent
Total population	522,452	100.0
Total White	352,317	67.4
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	333,628	63.9
Irish	2,541	0.5
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	433	0.1
Other White	15,715	3.0
Total Mixed	12,979	2.5
White and Black Caribbean	4,663	0.9
White and Black African	875	0.2
White and Asian	5,677	1.1
Other Mixed	1,764	0.3
Total Asian	140,149	26.8
Indian	13,555	2.6
Pakistani	106,614	20.4
Bangladeshi	9,863	1.9
Chinese	2,086	0.4
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	8,031	1.5
Total Black	9,267	1.8
African	4,993	1.0
Caribbean	3,581	0.7
Other Black	693	0.1
Total Other	7,740	1.5
Arab	3,714	0.7
Any other ethnic group	4,026	0.8

19. Councillor Dodds

What are the implications for Council policies and the local Taxi trade of Private Hire companies licensed by other authorities who are operating in Bradford District?

Answer

The law states that 'hackney carriages' (taxis) can legally operate as private hire vehicles outside of the area in which they are licensed without further licensing. There are two stated cases where Councils have challenged this and in both cases the Councils lost their challenge.

Allowing Taxis to operate as a Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) outside their licensed area raises various issues. There is a need for the PHV to work for a PHV Operator licensed within the area they intend operating (PHV Operators are licensed separately by each licensing area). There are often differing driver and vehicles standards between different Licensing Authorities, e.g., vehicle safety inspection standards, driver Disclosure and Barring Service (old CRB) requirements, licensing eligibility criteria and knowledge tests. In addition, Bradford's Licensing Enforcement Officers have no jurisdiction, without specific delegated powers from the licensing authority for the vehicle and driver, to conduct safety and compliance checks on vehicles and drivers licensed outside of their area.

This issue of "out of district vehicles" is also recognised in other local authorities and Bradford has arranged and hosted joint Local Authority meetings over the past 12 months, where this matter has been discussed. Bradford Council has also written to other Local Authorities Chief Executives, highlighting the potential legal ramifications that exist with such vehicles/drivers.

The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Service (HCPHLS) has been working with Rossendale Borough Council (where the majority of the out of district vehicles come from) to obtain 'delegated powers' by which they could stop, check and if necessary suspend the vehicles/drivers working in Bradford that are licensed by Rossendale BC. This is not an ideal solution as the Council receives no income for this work. Recently the HCPHLS have been running a number of joint initiatives with the West Yorkshire Police force with officers working jointly together within the Bradford District, stopping vehicles and checking for compliance and safety on 'out of district' issues. Currently any non compliances are reported to the issuing authority for their actions.

The HCPHLS continues to work on educating licensed Operators of their responsibilities of 'managing' all their drivers. Operators are aware that if issues arise with any of their drivers or vehicles, they themselves will be subject to investigation and possible enforcement action.

20. Councillor Davies

Can the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services detail progress made on securing the 5600 childcare places required for eligible 2 year olds funded by the government? Do you welcome the government focusing funding on these children in order to help with school readiness?

Answer

While we welcome resources providing early education providers with additional time to work on improving "school readiness" it is unfortunate that the Government has seen fit to pay for this offer through cuts to the Early Intervention Grant used to fund Children's

Centres. In Bradford this led to a reduction of £2.6m in Early Intervention Grant putting resources for Children's Centres across the District under severe pressure including the one in Cllr Davies' Ward.

Of the 4,899 Bradford children currently known to have an entitlement to a funded two year old early education place, **3,064** are currently accessing provision. This represents 63% take-up. Although more work needs to be done, Bradford has the highest take-up of the Yorkshire and Humber local authorities at this stage of the introduction of the new entitlement.

Available capacity has expanded by a third over the last 18 months. By January 2015 there should be 4491 places available for two year olds. To-date two year old capital has been used to secure an additional 1214 places. The majority of these places have been created in good and outstanding schools in disadvantaged areas.

An update on the progress of securing 5200 places will be presented to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 4th November 2014.

Supplementary Question

Thank you for the answer. I just wondered if you know why so few parents have taken up the offer of free childcare? If there are any reasons given?

Councillor Berry

Excellent question and one I am quite happy to work with anybody on. We have got a number of communities where the presumption that has been made that you will make your child available for this childcare provision perhaps conflicts with people making their own private arrangements within the family. I think what we have to try and get across here is what we are offering is a high quality experience that will be supportive of the family. It supports all our objectives of school readiness and is a very positive relationship with the family. I have found over the years that it has sometimes taken a little time for some of these things to establish themselves and pick up and really engage with communities. It is not enough to just say it is available, there it is, why aren't you using it. It does involve going out, seeing people, persuading people and working with them. I believe we are doing quite well here in the face of the scale of the expansion and the demand compared to many comparative authorities. We are doing well but I share your view if we are making high quality childcare experience available that should be really sold positively to as many people as possible but even I will say, Nannyng Fussbucket as some might say, do have to gently remind people that you are free to make arrangements for your own children in your own way until you reach statutory school age which is something that even current ministers sometimes seem to forget.

21. Councillor Smithies

Twenty local authorities have already joined the 'Energy Bill Revolution' campaign, including two of our neighbouring West Yorkshire Council's (Leeds and Wakefield). The campaign is a broad alliance, made up of children's and older people's charities, environment groups, health and disability groups, trade unions, consumer groups, businesses, politicians and public figures. It seeks to highlight the impact of fuel poverty, and in particular the energy bill crisis, with millions of people struggling to heat their homes.

One of the main causes is that the UK's homes are some of the least energy efficient in Europe – leaking heat from their doors, walls and windows.

As a result energy bills are high and fuel poverty is getting worse. The campaign focuses on four key areas:

1. Home energy efficiency to be made a UK national infrastructure priority.
2. All 6 million UK low income homes given grants to make their homes highly energy efficient (EPC Band C) by 2025, with 2 million homes brought up to this standard by 2020.
3. Carbon tax revenue used to provide long term funding for the programme.
4. 0% loans for energy efficiency measures for the able to pay.

This programme would create the world's most ambitious home energy efficiency programme, slashing energy bills and carbon emissions, creating over 100,000 jobs and helping end the fuel poverty crisis once and for all.

Will Bradford Council join the campaign?

Answer

We support the aims of the “Energy Bill Revolution” campaign and would be happy to join.

22. Councillor Jabar

What effect has been the affect in Bradford South of the reorganisation of the local Police force on Police staffing resources and the Council's contribution to partnership working?

Answer

Bradford District Police implemented their New Operating Model in April 2014. This saw new Partnership Working Areas being created which aligned to the 5 Areas and City Centre operated by the Local Authority. Whereas officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Teams had previously been located at Trafalgar House Police Station, it was a key driver to have them starting & finishing their duty within the areas they patrolled. This has resulted in the Bradford South Neighbourhood Policing Team moving to Dudley Hill Police Station, with work progressing to also have officers working from Wyke & Queensbury Police Boxes.

As part of the New Operating Model, Sergeants have been aligned to each Ward to lead on Partnership Working and Problem Solving. Patrol Officers who provide our 24/7 emergency response have been aligned to the Bradford South Partnership Working Area and again are deployed from Dudley Hill Police Station.

The result of this has led to an increased visible Police presence within the Bradford South Partnership Working Area. Since the realignment of resources within Bradford South Partnership Working Area, crime from the 1st April to 12th October 2014 compared to the same period last year has fallen as follows;

Total crime	6% reduction of 274 offences
Domestic burglary	23% reduction of 92 offences
Non Domestic burglary	4% reduction of 16 offences
Theft from motor vehicle	6% reduction of 33 offences
Robbery	28% reduction of 14 offences

23. Councillor Fear

Question to the Leader - When will the new West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service station, planned to replace the Idle Fire Station, be opening please?

Answer

The West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service have confirmed that construction of the new fire station should take place by late summer 2015 with an anticipated completion by the end of 2016. The station will be crewed by whole time firefighters who will staff one fire engine and provide a 24/7 response.

Supplementary Question

I would just like to ask whether assurances can be given to the people in Idle and Thackley who live in blocks of flats, the tower blocks, that the response times will be improved?

Councillor Imran Hussain

I am sure that will be the case. We will ask the fire authority and get back to you.

24. Councillor Sykes

Can the Portfolio Holder for Childrens' Services clarify how children's centres will be funded in the interim period before the changes (estimated to take place by October 2015) are made given that the Schools Forum money runs out at the end of March 2015?

Answer

The Early Childhood Service has made savings during the current financial year to contribute to any shortfall during 2015-16. In order to achieve the reductions during the period of transition, a percentage reduction to all existing Children's Centre budgets will be applied.

Supplementary Question

Thank you Councillor Berry. How much and what percentage please?

Councillor Berry

I will get back to you with that as soon as possible.

25. Councillor Mallinson

Given the sometimes confidential nature of the images collected by the Council's CCTV systems is the Leader of the Council aware of any policy document existing between the Council and the police that ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that any perceived criminal information is handled in the best possible way?

Answer

The use of the Councils CCTV equipment is subject to the joint Council and West Yorkshire Police CCTV code of practice of 2007. The code makes arrangements for information sharing with the police of images from the CCTV cameras caught in the normal course of the overt (publicised) use of street cameras which may assist the police in the prevent or detection of crime and disorder. The code (Chapter 9) deals with the management of recorded material by the police and the Council, its protection and final destruction, acknowledging the publics right to a private and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.

In addition the Council from time to time permit the police to make use of the Councils CCTV cameras for the covert (unbeknown to the public) detection of specific targeted disorder or crime. As such use is regulated by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) this requires the police to provide the Council with written authorisation for the covert use under that Act. Material obtained in this manner is also subject to the Councils CCTV Code of 2007 and the management and final destruction of it. The Council has its own policy and procedure on covert surveillance and the Council is fully compliant in its use of covert surveillance via CCTV.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 the data recorded on the Councils CCTV equipment is held no longer than is reasonably necessary in accordance with the 2007 code. Individuals are allowed access to information held about them where appropriate (subject to information held for the prevention or detection of crime) via the systems manager or data controller.

In addition the Council and the Police are parties to a broader 2014 Information Sharing Protocol (alongside the NHS and others) which also protects the public against misuse of their private information.

Supplementary Question

Can the Leader or Portfolio Holder tell us if the quality of the images that are recorded by the CCTV are of sufficient quality to be used in a court of law for prosecution?

Councillor Green

No I can't because I am not legally qualified to comment on what is a quality that is acceptable but my guess would be that as it has been used in courts of law then it is of a quality that it can be used in courts of law and the reason why I know it has been used in a court of law is because I have identified somebody off it and that photograph has been used in a criminal case.

26. Councillor Walls

Thursday 25th September the recycling operator emptied my bin, along with other residents bins, into the back of a caged pick up truck rather than the usual vehicle, where the waste is sorted by type, can the Portfolio Holder confirm that this waste for recycling will be /has been sorted at another site and not included with the general waste?

Answer

On the day in question owing to a number of vehicle breakdowns, and in order to avoid missed bins, a smaller transit type vehicle was deployed to collect a number of recycling bins. All the recycling collected by this vehicle was unloaded into the designated recycling bays in the same way had it been collected by the normal re-cycling collection vehicle.

27. Councillor Fear

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability - When will Bradford Council catch up with other Local Councils in the region and expand the recycling of domestic waste to include more plastics, as only plastic bottles are recycled at present?

Answer

Having only recently introduced the collection of plastic bottles we currently have no plans to expand the range of plastics accepted in our Kerbside recycling collections.

Currently, our outlet for recycled plastics requires high grade HDPE and PET, not the thinner and lighter PVC plastics from other products such as yoghurt pots and margarine tubs. To collect these other plastics would require further sorting to separate out the different plastic fractions, adding extra costs for the Council Tax payer and little gain in terms of our recycling rates.

The range of plastics collected by three out of four neighbouring West Yorkshire LA's is the same as Bradford

28. Councillor Hawkesworth

Will the Portfolio Holder please state the total number of visitors (or footfall) (stated separately for each centre) for each of the Council's Visitor Information Centres (at Bradford City Centre, Saltaire, Haworth and Ilkley) for each of the two municipal years 2012-13 and 2013-14 stated separately for each year?

Answer

Bradford	April 2012 - March 2013	April 2013 - March 2014
Footfall	48,060	51,037
All Enquiries	61,850	75,079

Haworth	April 2012 - March 2013	April 2013 - March 2014
Footfall	89,280	96,496
All Enquiries	97,817	104,083

Ilkley	April 2012 - March 2013	April 2013 - March 2014
Footfall	68,490	67,372
All Enquiries	76,530	73,426

Saltaire	April 2012 - March 2013	April 2013 - March 2014
Footfall	31,080	37,056
All Enquiries	33,820	40,702

* All Enquiries = Footfall / Email / Post / Telephone / Fax

29. Councillor Cooke

Can the relevant Portfolio Holder inform colleagues of how many properties have been charged the 50% Empty Property Supplement, how much revenue has the measure raised and what support is available to people who are finding it difficult to either secure a tenant or else sell the property?

Answer

As at 6/10/2014 there are 1,336 properties paying the additional 50% premium. This equates to additional income of £600k. These figures fluctuate over the year as properties become occupied and others reach the trigger for the premium.

Officers in the Council's Empty Homes and Loans Team provide advice and information to owners of empty properties on a number of issues and in particular in helping to remove the barriers that may be preventing them bringing the property back into use. A number of products are available, ranging from providing advice on becoming a landlord, property standards, relevant legislation and how to find a tenant to providing financial assistance to help renovate the property and bring it back into use.

Supplementary Question

Thank you. I have had a number of representations on this one and I am concerned that it would really be valuable to revisit the one month gap. I appreciate there is a financial implication. I do not want to say we should necessarily change it but I do know that particularly with people who are if you like accidental landlords, inherited a property or something like that, then it is something of an issue.

Councillor Green

I am not quite sure what the supplementary question was there. I am struggling and I am not sure that Councillor Cooke was but if what you are saying is can we revisit, there is always that option to revisit at any time by changing the policy which as Councillor Cooke well knows is done by elected members and therefore if he wishes to bring a policy either here or to the Executive I am sure we can consider it.

30. Councillor Sykes

Can the Portfolio holder for Children's Services please tell us how much the first consultation into changes to Children's Centre provision in the District cost and how much he expects the current consultation to cost?

Answer

We have a statutory duty to consult on proposed changes to Children's Centre provision. The consultation costs were just over £2,000 in 2013/14. In 2014/15 they will be £1,200.

The consultations were necessary to help inform plans to reconfigure Children's Centre provision following a 30% plus Government cut to Early Intervention Grant totalling over £10m and including £2.6m to help fund the two year old offer referred to in the answer to Q20.

We believe that it is important to engage in effective consultation and the sums involved do seem to provide good value for money.

31. Councillor Miller

Can the relevant Portfolio Holder advise of the value of fines levied by safety cameras on the A629 through the Bradford District?

Answer

Information on individual cameras or lengths of road that feature fixed cameras is not held by the Council as this is a statutory function of the Police. Requests such as these need to be made direct to the Police.

32. Councillor Leeming

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways - What is happening regarding the Street Lighting on Swain Mount BD2 1HJ please?

Answer

The Street Lighting that is affected by overgrown trees at the end of Swain Mount has been reported to the Woodlands Officer in the Council who indicated that they should be cut back by Friday 10th October 2014; the trees were cut back last Friday.

33. Councillor Davies

Is it possible for the Portfolio holder for Children's Services to provide an update on the progress made on the targets contained within the performance indicators in the Education Improvement Strategy 2012-2015?

Answer

We have worked hard with the school partnerships on our joint, overriding priority to rapidly improve outcomes for children and young people. That being said, results in 2014 were extremely disappointing.

However, there has been a trend of improvement in recent years but we have failed to narrow the gap with the national picture. Recent end of Key Stage 2 and 4 results have further emphasised the need for urgent action and the LA is working closely school partnerships to address this. There are indications, however, that A level results have improved significantly.

One of the most important targets is the number of pupils attending a school that is judged by Ofsted to be good or better. In 2012, 51% of schools were judged good or better by Ofsted. Currently 62% of schools are judged good or better meaning that 71% of primary and 42% of secondary pupils now attend schools judged to be good or better. Current calculations indicate that all schools will achieve a good or better Ofsted outcome by the end of 2017.

There was an increase in the percentage of children achieving a "good level of development" in Early Years Foundation Stage from 49% in 2013 to 55.3% in 2014.

Year 1 Phonics expected levels have steadily increased from 57% in 2012, to 71% in 2014 against the current national figure of 74%.

There was a steady improvement in GCSE results between 2012 and 2013. However, there has been a very disappointing set of results this year and we are working closely with schools and academies to put in place robust action plans.

Consistent progress has been made in reducing the number of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Supplementary Question

Do you think the targets will be met?

Councillor Berry

We need to get as close as we possibly can but as someone who was around during the Serco period you have got to make sure that targets are stretching but achievable but we will be presenting with schools tomorrow at the Schools Forum a reinforcement of the target setting and improvement process as well as making sure we get advice from a number of external and other sources to make sure that that can be underpinned by effective action to ensure the most rapid level of improvement possible.

34. Councillor Whiteley

In order to try and raise standards does the Portfolio holder for Children's Services support specialist Maths teachers in primary schools, as advocated by the Government?

Answer

As an outcome of the Williams report (2008) it was recommended that every primary school should have a maths specialist teacher (MaST). A government funded training programme ran for a couple of years, delivered by HE institutions. Our Local Authority maths consultants supported this programme and some were tutors.

Bradford schools have a number of MaST teachers who are making impact in their school. Our maths consultants believe that the MaST trained teachers have improved their own understanding of the subject and in some schools there has been a wider impact on the other teachers in their schools.

The latest government initiative is to create Maths Hubs. Our nearest is at Trinity High School in Halifax. They began work on this initiative during the summer and are already linking with the LA maths consultants and Bradford schools to improve teachers' mathematical understanding and teaching. Part of this programme has already seen primary teachers travel to Shanghai to study Chinese methods. Initial feedback indicates that their specialist teachers have a significantly less teaching commitment.

Earlier this year the Bradford Primary Improvement Partnership reviewed the teaching of maths in Bradford's eleven most successful schools for maths. They have just published a report of best practice which is being circulated widely amongst Bradford schools.

35. Councillor Middleton

Question to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability - Will Bradford Council consider following the example of Leeds City Council and introduce in the summer months fortnightly collection of the Brown Green Waste wheelie bins?

Answer

The kerbside collection of green waste has operated in Bradford for many years, and has always been based on a 4 weekly cycle covering Spring, Summer and Autumn periods. The brown bins, purchased through grant funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), are currently being rolled out across the District during the current green waste collection season. Once this operation has been completed, and at the end of the 'green season', we will be reviewing the service. However, there are no plans to introduce fortnightly collection of green waste in the summer months.

Supplementary Question

With regards to the question. A slight correction for the answer. It does say that over the years the green waste has been cycled Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. That is not true because we used to drop it. The question I will ask as a supplementary one is people do raise the question most of the waste that is generated is generated in the Summer so in fact you would be better to collect more fortnightly in the Summer and collect less in the Winter. You would get the same amount but that would be a more practical thing for people who are using the green waste service so would that be a consideration that the Portfolio Holder would consider?

Councillor Andrew Thornton

We are in the process at the moment of rolling out the green waste bins and will have completed that by the end of this Autumn, by the end of this collecting season, so we do intend to have a look at how the scheme is running at that point. I would suggest however that if you are increasing the frequency in the Summer then potentially what you

are doing is increasing the cost of that, effectively you will add about 50% cost to the collections.

36. Councillor Poulsen

Can the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services inform colleagues of how many children's centres are participating in the Early Words Together programme?

Answer

Approximately 25% of our Children's Centres are participating in the Early Words Together Programme which brings together a range of local partners and services to support families in improving their home learning for 2-5 year olds and aims to increase the potential of school readiness. Funded by the Dept of Education, the volunteer-led engagement and learning activities with families in children's centres, runs until March 2015.

Supplementary Question

Given the 25% at the moment are there any plans to extend this across the other children's centres in light of the review going on at the moment?

Councillor Berry

Yes the review is about just this sort of thing. It is about good practice and other issues. You are quite right so a very worthwhile programme and one of the key bits about getting to a sustainable model is to make sure best practice is evenly rolled out throughout the district.

37. Councillor Davies

Can the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services inform colleagues of how many schools have signed up to the Literacy Trust's Premier League Reading Stars scheme which seeks to help children aged 8-13 with their reading skills?

Answer

We currently have 12 schools signed up to run Premier League Reading Stars (PLRS) who took up the offer in the 2013/14 round of available funding covered by the programme.

We are currently drawing up our National Literacy Hub delivery plans and PLRS features as something which the hub could fund for primary and secondary school target groups. This would involve a partnership in the delivery with the local football club Bradford City AFC.

Supplementary Question

Is it any surprise that standards are not improving when only a few schools are participating in schemes like this?

Councillor Berry

I was just at a presentation yesterday where a load of Bradford schools got a very high level of qualification for improving communication and engagement with families and children. There are a competing range of programmes that you can get validation from and accreditation from and I think what we have got to do in a sense is make sure that we work on the best evidence and it is interesting that we sometimes get told off for being over-directive of schools and sometimes we get told off for not being directive enough.

What I would like to do is follow the evidence and I think that would be something we could probably agree on.

38. Councillor Morris

Can the Council look at ways to provide an incentive to local business by a reduction in business tax for local those companies who are prepared to take on an apprentice?

Answer

Any eligible business within the City Centre Growth Zone that is creating new and additional jobs can apply for a Business Rate Rebate. This includes employment of apprentices as long as they are actually employed by the business.

Payment of business rates is required to be made on time and confirmed along with a process of ensuring that “employees” are still in work before any rebate is made every quarter by the Department of Regeneration.

A district wide scheme could be considered by using section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act. This allows the Council to set up its own Local Discretionary scheme but funding would have to come from the Council.

Figures suggest that in 2013/14 2990 apprenticeships were started within Bradford LEA.

Supplementary Question

Is the answer to the question there? Why do we only have a Growth Zone for the city centre and not for the rest of the district because we are all in the same boat?

Councillor Green

It has been recognised across, I think all political parties, that the main economic driver of the district is Bradford City Centre and that is why the Growth Zone was included in just for the city centre area. The money that was available, half of which is the Councils and half of which came from Central Government, had to be directed geographically to satisfy the Government but I think more importantly the recent sudden interest on all sides of the political process in devolution would enable us if the powers that be, whoever that is, in eight months time are serious about it by devolving the skills budget by further devolution of business rates and local Government financial control by devolving the work programme type idea would enable Bradford and other Councils to be able to deliver some imaginative schemes. We already work extremely hard to support people who are taking apprentices. We also work extremely hard with businesses including those in Keighley so it is not just the Growth Zone to support their training and there are a number of businesses in Keighley that we are working closely as well as there are in Bradford and in Shipley and in other parts of the district. So we are continuing to work with the coalition of the willing in the private sector to find imaginative ways of doing it. Further devolution would strengthen our hand and enable us to build on our success.

39. Councillor Barker

Can the Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services inform colleagues of how many schools are signed up to the Children’s Food Trust ‘Let’s Get Cooking’ food programme?

Answer

We currently have 35 Primary schools, 11 Secondary schools, 1 Special School and 1 Sure Start Children’s Centre who have signed up to this programme.