

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 October 2016 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 6.00 pm
Concluded 7.55 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	GREEN
Heseltine Mallinson	Farley Jamil Pullen	Fear	H Hussain

Observer: Councillor Ross-Shaw – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport

Councillor Farley in the Chair

21. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interests of transparency, Councillor Farley disclosed, in respect of the item relating to the Affordable Housing Programme (Minute 25), that two of the schemes were within his Ward.

In the interests of transparency, Councillor Mallinson disclosed, in respect of the item relating to the Affordable Housing Programme (Minute 25), that he was a Member of the Incommunities Board.

22. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

23. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.



24. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME

The Strategic Director, Regeneration presented a report (**Document “J”**) which provided an update on the progress being made with the Council’s Affordable Housing Programme and also advised the Committee of the forthcoming procurement of contracts, associated with the delivery of the programme, which had a value in excess of £2 million.

In presenting the report the following matters were highlighted:

- The Council had, to date, completed the development of 176 affordable rented properties.
- The 2015/18 Programme would deliver a further 157 units across six sites, which included 18 providing temporary accommodation for homeless people.
- Two of the six sites would provide cross-subsidy funding through a proportion of the properties being sold on the open market.
- Four of the schemes were already on-site.
- A key feature of the programme was that it would pay for itself; the rental income would fund the housing management role and repayment of borrowing. In addition there would be a small surplus from Year 5 onwards which would fund on-going maintenance.
- £3 million New Homes Bonus would also be generated.

Photos of the completed developments were displayed and details of the schemes provided. It was noted that all the homes had been built to very high standards and that one of the schemes had brought empty homes back into use.

Apologies were offered to the Committee as two of the associated contracts, in excess of £2 million, had been awarded without prior submission to Members. A Member of the Committee pointed out that this was not the first time that such matters had not been reported to Overview and Scrutiny before the event and this was a matter of concern.

The Director responded to questions from Members as follows:

- In terms of the sites that would provide cross-subsidy funding from sales; they had been chosen on the basis of where the highest yield would be realised. These receipts would be used to subsidise development across the district.
- On the Baildon site 33 of the 70 properties would be available for rent at an affordable rent, which would be 80% of market rent. Efforts had been made to maximise the number of rental properties that would be available but the receipts from the sale of these properties was needed to deliver the programme.
- Consultation had been undertaken on Government proposals to change New Homes Bonus from a six year to a four year programme. The Authority had provided a response to the consultation exercise but no results had been published at this stage. It was anticipated that any such change would have been noted as a potential risk by the Director of Finance.



- There had been three bidders for the housing management role contract.
- A number of Housing Associations had been granted funding by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to build 756 affordable properties across the district; this total included the 139 to be built by the Council. The total figures for the district and the numbers of such properties that would be provided under the requirements of Section 106 legal planning agreements associated with private developments could be provided after the meeting.
- Officers always pushed for the on-site provision of affordable units when planning applications were under consideration.
- In terms of the 'Great Places to Grow Old' Programme and Neville Grange, it was believed that Adult Services were leading this initiative with support from Housing.

Resolved –

That Document “J” be welcomed and that a further update report be presented to the Committee in 12 months time.

ACTION: Strategic Director, Regeneration

25. BRADFORD CITY PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT

'City Plan' was the delivery plan and framework for partnership working to achieve a decade of regeneration and economic growth in Bradford City Centre. It had been endorsed by the Council's Executive on 10 February 2015.

The report of the Strategic Director, Regeneration (**Document “K”**) set out the progress made since the adoption of the City Plan in February 2015. It explained that a review of the objectives and priorities was now in progress, in order to ensure that they remained valid in the light of the changes in the City Centre and other wider regional and national influences, and outlined the emerging areas for action and the proposed next steps.

Photographs to illustrate some of the successes of the plan were displayed.

In response to questions from Members, the Strategic Director, Regeneration explained that:

- A senior officer workshop had reviewed the existing priorities and the next stage was to hold a wider discussion with other sections of the Council involved in delivery of the priorities.
- It was accepted that the timescale for the review was tight. The consultation would not be as extensive as for that for the original City Plan but would include significant stakeholders who had contributed to the delivery of its objectives to date.
- The Odeon project was moving forward. The Council was working closely with



an Events Company and the process was at the business plan/finance raising stage. It was hoped that negotiations would be successfully concluded by the end of the year. If an agreement could not be reached the Council would have to re-consider its position and consider all options. There were deadlines in place.

- The 'Top of Town' area was not as healthy as it had once been and this locality was a clear priority.
- Cities evolved over time and the Authority had to deal with that. It was known that the Broadway development had impacted on other areas and a lot of work had been/was being undertaken with independent businesses particularly in respect of the 'Top of Town'. Increasing the amount of residential use in the city centre was also a priority. There was no 'Plan A' or 'Plan B' but rather an evolving programme of activities.
- The Council was well aware of concerns in respect of anti-social behaviour and its effects on the City Centre. Action had recently been taken by the Police which had resulted in a significant reduction in the numbers of street drinkers and rough sleepers. An Alcohol Prohibition Order was also being implemented in public areas. Work was being undertaken with the Council's partners on this issue and it was considered that there had been a significant improvement.
- A lot of work had been done to promote Bradford as a Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) stop and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority was supportive of the creation of a station in Bradford; work was progressing in respect of how/where this might be implemented.
- It was accepted that there was a need to attract people from outside Bradford to work in the City Centre and a number of projects to provide new office space were in development with that aim in mind. The majority of the offices vacated by Council staff moving into the City Centre had been sold on to the private sector.
- Information on the total number of retail units within the City Plan area could be provided after the meeting.
- There had been a significant increase in the numbers of people living in the City Centre. Although this may not compare particularly favourably with cities such as Manchester others such as Wakefield had a similar experience in this regard. There was a target of 3100 units within the Plan which covered the period 2014 to 2030.
- It was considered that there was a need to redefine the City Centre and what appeared within it. It was believed that retail was a social activity and thus would continue to thrive notwithstanding the changes that had occurred in shopping behaviour. There was a need to bring services into the centre and a number of projects were on-going to achieve this aim.
- The City Centre was being reviewed and the role and function of some areas may change as part of this exercise.
- The 'Next Actions' would be agreed and a report was anticipated to go to the Executive in Summer 2017.
- Bin stores had recently been installed at the bottom of Ivegate.



Members made the following comments:

- The Odeon was a ‘fly in the ointment’ for the regeneration of the City Centre and deadlines for action should be in place and applied.
- The improvements in terms of the prevalence of anti-social behaviour in the City Centre should be publicised to combat the public perception.
- It was of concern that the City was behind others in terms of the numbers of people living in the centre.
- The challenge was to do something different, particularly in light of the change in people’s shopping behaviour; it was not considered possible to regenerate a specific area of the City Centre and then to replicate this in another area.
- Was it time to redefine the City Centre and how far it extended?
- A report should be submitted to this Committee for consideration prior to submission to the Executive.

The Portfolio Holder was in attendance at the meeting and commented as follows:

- He was concerned at the suggestion that all Broadway had done was to move retail from one part of the City Centre to another. The majority of the stores in Broadway were new to Bradford and the development was a move in the right direction and a huge net gain to Bradford. It had also assisted in the progression of other projects such as the Digital Exchange.
- The delay to the Council’s Core Strategy was a concern in respect of the effect on delivery of the City Centre Plan, particularly if this proved to be on a longer term basis.
- Planning rules had been relaxed to encourage City Centre residential occupancy above retail units at ground floor level.
- Bradford had had to deal with a different economic situation in comparison with other cities.
- The NPR link could help in the future.
- He considered that the ‘Top of Town’ area would be struggling regardless of the Broadway development. The loss of Morrisons had caused a huge problem. Longer term plans for this area were under consideration.
- The Plan did not propose another Broadway development but aimed to support existing retail and attract new providers across the City Centre.

Resolved –

That the progress made with the delivery of the City Plan be welcomed and that a further update be included within the report to be submitted to the Committee on City Centre Regeneration at its meeting to be held on 8 March 2017.

ACTION: Strategic Director, Regeneration



26. ESTATE MANAGEMENT

A report was presented by the Strategic Director, Regeneration (**Document “L”**) which provided an update for Members in respect of the work of the Estate Management Service, further to the report considered by the Committee on 17 November 2015.

The Strategic Director, Regeneration gave the following responses to questions from Members:

- If a property was withdrawn before a scheduled auction this would be as a result of a problem with the legal pack or that it had been identified that there was a need for the property concerned. Properties were not sold prior to an auction by other means; the service was very conscious of the need for transparency in its work.
- Valuation was not an exact science and a value could only be reached using the market information available at the time. The outcome of an auction was very difficult to predict as there were a number of factors involved but it was a straightforward method of sale and it also allowed the market to determine the value of the property concerned. Guide prices for auction did tend to be pitched low to stimulate interest but reserve limits were set (below which an item would not be sold). If a property was sold directly, for example to a tenant, an independent valuer would always be used.
- In respect of the Mornington Road Annexe, which was held in trust by the Council, there had been a delay in the process of disposal due to the introduction of a new decision making process and the consequent need to get independent legal advice on behalf of the Trust. Permission would be sought for the marketing of the property and its subsequent sale and the capital receipt would be reinvested for the benefit of the Trust. It was anticipated that the matter would go before the Council's Regulatory and Appeals Committee shortly.
- There had been a huge increase in the number of applications for Community Asset Transfers. The number of instructions to Legal Services had trebled in the last twelve months.
- At present there was no cost to the Council in terms of the proposal to provide a Public Sector Hub on the site of the Jacob's Well building. Two companies in a joint venture partnership had a five year option agreement on the site which was subject to 50% of the new building being pre-let to public sector bodies. In the meantime the Council bore the security and other costs associated with the vacant building.
- £700,000 revenue p.a. had been saved by moving staff out of Jacob's Well.
- Improvement works had been undertaken to Jacob's Well in 2011, at a cost of £2 million, due to the need for a complete re-wire of the building and at that stage 650 staff had worked there. Post improvement it had accommodated 1350 people and this had facilitated the closure of 19 other properties. This work had made financial sense at that point in time and the stated lifespan in the strategy had been 3 to 5 years. When the building had closed in excess of £2 million in maintenance was outstanding. Materials from the building would be recycled and used elsewhere.



- It was believed that the Government intended to introduce between 14 and 18 public sector hubs nationally. The principal regional hub would be located in Leeds. The Jacob's Well site would house a smaller hub.
- A hub could be defined as two or three Government, health or public sector agencies in one location with shared facilities such as reception, meeting rooms or even desks.
- The Service had to work in partnership with Legal Services. More resources were required in light of the increase in the amount of work referred by Estate Management.
- There had been issues with the former Keighley College site associated with the need for a future use to be established prior to demolition. The site had been deemed appropriate for use as a public sector hub.

Members commented as follows:

- It was considered admirable how the Service had dealt with the increase in work.
- Whilst it had been explained that a lower guide price was used at auction to generate interest it had to be borne in mind what the public perception of this could be when higher figures had previously been in the public domain and also how it looked when items were removed from auction.

Further to questions asked by Members that concerned commercially sensitive information in respect of potential occupiers of the new hub, the Committee passed the following resolution:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during part of the discussion of the item relating to Estate Management on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if they were present exempt information within Paragraph 3 (Financial or Business Affairs) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed and it is considered that, in all the circumstances, the public interest in allowing the public to remain is outweighed by the public interest in excluding public access to the relevant part of the proceedings for the following reason: it is in the overriding interests of proper administration that Members are made fully aware of the implications of any decision without prejudicing the position of the parties involved,

and the Strategic Director provided the relevant information.

Further to which the Committee resumed public session and it was:

Resolved –

- (1) **That a further update report be submitted to the Committee in the next municipal year.**



- (2) That the increasing workload of the Estate Management Team is acknowledged and the progress they are making with reduced resources welcomed.

ACTION: *Strategic Director, Regeneration*

27. **REGENERATION AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- WORK PROGRAMME**

Resolved –

That, as previously agreed, the following be added to the Committee's Work Programme:

- An update on the City Plan as part of the scheduled item on City Centre Regeneration to be considered at the meeting on 8 March 2016,
- Affordable Housing Programme Update Report in October 2017,
- Estate Management Update Report in 2017/18,

and that the Programme continue to be regularly reviewed throughout the year.

ACTION: *Overview & Scrutiny Lead*

Chair

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

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

