

# Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 21 December 2016 at Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 1800  
Concluded 2030

## Present – Councillors

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

Observers: Sarah Ferriby, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport and Culture

Apologies: Councillor Fear

## Councillor Farley in the Chair

### 35. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The Chair disclosed an interest in Minute 38 as the Fairtrade Champion for the District.

### 36. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

### 37. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

### 38. SCRUTINY OF FAIRTRADE ACROSS THE DISTRICT

The report of the Assistant Director for the Office of the Chief Executive (**Document “N”**) was presented by the Business Transformation Officer.

Following a synopsis of the report, a question and answer session ensued:



- What had been planned in terms of promoting Fairtrade further in 2017?
  - There was significant work due towards promotion which was to begin on 27 February 2017 for a fortnight to include events in the Bradford Broadway and Keighley Airedale Shopping Centre;
- How was Fairtrade being promoted in schools? and,
  - This could only be achieved through securing officers time to push this policy further due to the significant amount of work involved.

During the discussion the Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport and Culture including officers made the following comments:

- Fairtrade was a Council policy and therefore no need for a Committee approval in order to progress with the principles of implementing Fairtrade across the Council;
- It was important for the Portfolio Holder to ensure Fairtrade was being adhered to and enforced across the Council;
- Despite it being a Council policy it was there were concerns as to the low level of implementation;
- Appreciating the fact it being a policy but at what point should the Council say that enough is enough taking into consideration that people either adopt Fairtrade or not. Equally important was to note that products could be purchased cheaper elsewhere and therefore reasons for not wishing to adopt Fairtrade;
- Fairtrade was a policy and this should be built into the Council's procurement process by giving incentives for providing Fairtrade products;
- There was a clear lack of progress over the course of a decade;
- The enforcing throughout the whole Council had to come from top management;
- Fairtrade was implemented in the region of 600 towns and without the support of Councillors, it was difficult to progress with Fairtrade in a wider context. Fairtrade was out there and the team had worked tirelessly to coordinate all the work to promote Fairtrade. The Fairtrade logo was now very recognisable in the public eye. Unfortunately the team lacked a lead officer from within the Council to assist in coordinating the work in order to drive it forward; and,
- Fairtrade had over 1400 products and with the right strategy there was significant potential for opportunities for this to grow as opposed to the lack of impact over the past decade.

The Chair concluded the discussion by echoing the Committee's sentiments and highlighted the reason for the update was to identify how the Committee could assist in the work of driving Fairtrade across the Council, therefore:

#### **Resolved –**

- (1) That the Executive clarifies which Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Fairtrade and that it ensures that Council Policy on Fairtrade is implemented Council wide; in addition an officer be identified as a point of contact for Fairtrade.**



- (2) That the Chief Executive be requested to remind the Council Management Team that Fairtrade is Council Policy and therefore should be built into all relevant procurement contracts.
- (3) That the forthcoming Fairtrade Fortnight events in 2017 which will enhance the profile of Fairtrade and offer the opportunity to improve links with businesses be noted.
- (4) That the information regarding Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation Fairtrade products and pricing be circulated to Members.

**Action: Assistant Director, Communications**

### 39. THEATRES STRATEGY

The Assistant Director of Sport and Culture was present and accompanied by the Chief Executive of Bradford Theatres. They jointly gave a synopsis of the report which included a PowerPoint presentation.

Following presentation, a question and answer session ensued:

- What work had been done in terms of forward planning in the context of training programs and would the successful work continue if the lead officer decided to leave?
  - There were no plans for the Chief Executive to leave and the team working tirelessly to ensure success was of substance. Nevertheless the department managers had been working alongside the lead for a number of years and the theatres were being run by good personalities;
- Was there a significant difference in the cost of running the 4 venues?
  - The management costs of running the venues was proportioned out accordingly as it would be difficult if they were to run on their own. St George's Hall was yet to reopen to the public after the completion of refurbishment was refurbished which would be an additional income. Booking fees were also very popular and this option was on standby should the need arise in any shortfall of finances;
- The Bradford Telegraph and Argus featured an article in relation to theatres being put into a Trust hence no longer run by the Council. In view of the feature, it was important that the Council maintained control over the theatres was of great benefit and would oversee the financial aspects of this sector of Bradford;
  - It was confirmed that the theatres were not for sale however in relation to municipal year 2020 and the status of the level of funding following implications of the budget, maybe then this would be an option that may have to be considered;
- Environmental improvements such as installation of double glazing had been considered for the re-development of St George's Hall therefore why had single glazing been made a preference by Historic England for the listed exterior?
  - There was a projected increase with the overall work and the theatres were under immense pressure to complete the work on an accelerated



pace. Windows was a significant cost on budget. Significant thermal improvements would still be made by making the venue watertight. In terms of the overall picture St George's Hall as one of Bradford's oldest buildings and had been in need of major investment for some time due to the crumbling sandstone façade common to many of the city centre's buildings dating back to the Victorian era. The Hall is currently closed for refurbishment which included maintenance to the stonework, windows and roof, re-wiring and essential health and safety improvements, minor reconfigurations to the bar and front of house areas, installation of a passenger lift and re-decoration, plus improvements to the comfort and sight lines within the auditorium. The project budget was £5.2 million, of which £1.5 million was a Heritage Lottery Fund grant and the remainder BMDC;

- What was the percentage of increase of ticket sales in the last 12 months?
  - It was difficult to give a breakdown as it was dependent on featured shows;
- The Council had recently commissioned a consultancy report on the possible financial benefits of moving many of the sport and cultural facilities to a trust model, the results and recommendations of which would be reported to Members in due course. What was the timeframe for the report and would it be presented to this Committee for the purpose of scrutiny?
  - This was the intention of Options Appraisal for the consideration of management of buildings by the Council and yes following receipt of the report, the report would be presented to this Committee for scrutiny; and,
- What was your idea on perception and what would you wish for the Council to act on in terms of changing perceptions for the sake of theatres being looked at in a better light for current audiences and for attracting new audiences?
  - In terms of factual accuracy, Leeds being a neighbouring authority had a higher crime rate but Bradford had always been in the receiving end of negative coverage and this being that Bradford had always struggled to send out positive coverage to benefit it's own welfare. Promoting what was good in Bradford was essential not only for the success of the theatres but for the economic future of Bradford.
    - In response to the answer the Committee highlighted the fact that some newspapers continuously showcased Bradford in a poor reflection in comparison to promoting the neighbouring cities.

During the discussion the Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sport and Culture including officers made the following comments:

- The building beside the Alhambra was not a pleasant site for visitors;
- It was important to consider the added value as local people may question themselves as to why they should be contributing to buildings that they never used hence showcasing to the local economy in addition to outside of Bradford;
  - In response to comment, it was explained that a Wetherspoons Bar was on the same road as the Alhambra and was maximising on sales



from the flow of the Alhambra users and therefore there was talks on whether a bar and dining facilities should be the next project in order to claw back the loss of revenue to other establishments;

- It was important to have in place a culture offer to reflect the makeup of the citizens of Bradford. It was paramount that efforts be invested in showcasing the efforts of the theatres to Bradford yet equally it was disappointing not to see on a regular basis the outstanding performance of our theatres and the it's value for the local economy;
- The booking of tickets for the general public was occasionally confusing and needed to be addressed and made more friendly user taking into consideration that people of all age groups including the elderly would be using the system;
  - In response to comment on the booking system it was explained that historically bookings were not allowed over Council computers due to the commercial aspects however this could be addressed through other devices such as the iPad and mobile phones; and,
- Employing financial consultants was appreciated owing to their expertise however the whole financial structure had to be addressed including the internal financial model so that a clearer picture was in full view in order to familiarise what needed to be improved to make the delivery of the theatres system a much value for money and a better one.
  - In response to comment, it was explained whilst echoing the comment of the Committee of the expertise of the consultancy and it was the area of the technicalities that was being looked into for the future consideration of the future of the theatres.

The Chair praised the Chief Executive of Bradford Theatres for the detailed explanation of the theatres in Bradford and requested that he passed on the thanks of the Committee to his staff who had worked tirelessly to maintain the value of the theatres.

The Committee echoed the final comment of the Chair.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That Document “O” be note and officers be thanked for the tour of the Alhambra that took place prior to the meeting.**
- (2) That the Consultancy Option Appraisal report be presented to Members of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest possible opportunity and that the Terms of Reference for the report be circulated to the Committee Members immediately.**
- (3) That the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake a tour of St George’s Hall whilst contractors are still on site.**
- (4) That the General Manager, Theatres Bradford and his team be**



**congratulated for an extremely successful year and the team be thanked for the hard work.**

- (5) That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to look at the internal finance options for the Council's Commercial Services.**

*ACTION: Assistant Direct, Sport and Culture*

**40. REGENERATION AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17**

**That the 2016/17 Work Programme continues to be regularly reviewed during the course of 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

