

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 14 December 2016 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 8.00 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR
BM Smith Cooke Rickard	Arshad Hussain Duffy Green Warburton

Observer: Councillor Imran Khan (Education, Employment and Skills Portfolio Holder)
Minute 69

Apologies: Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

Councillor Arshad Hussain in the Chair

63. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received:

- (1) In the interest of transparency Councillor Rickard declared an interest in the item relating to the Armed Forces Covenant (Minute 67), as a former member of the Armed Forces.
- (2) In the interest of transparency Councillors Cooke and Duffy declared an interest in the item relating to the Industrial Services Group (Minute 69), as Board Members of InCommunities.
- (3) Councillor Rickard also disclosed a prejudicial interest in the item relating to the Industrial Service Group (Minute 69), as he was a Council appointed Director on the ISG Board. He left the meeting during consideration of the item.



- (4) Councillors Cooke and Green disclosed prejudicial interests in the item relating to the Bradford District Partnership (Minute 70), as a Member and former Member on the BDP Board respectively. They both left the meeting during consideration of the item.

ACTION: *City Solicitor*

64. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

65. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals made to the Committee.

66. POLICING ACROSS BRADFORD DISTRICT

The Strategic Director Environment and Sport submitted a report (**Document “AC”**) which updated members on the approaches to policing across the Bradford district.

Representatives from West Yorkshire Police gave a brief overview on the policing approaches. Particular reference was made to the changes in delivering problem solving, which had been refined to ensure there are dedicated problem solvers across the district.

It was stated that problems were identified by statutory bodies and assessed on vulnerability, and appropriate resources were then deployed to address the problem. Currently there were approximately 100 live problem solving occurrences across the district.

The Police representative alluded to a number of positive examples of problem solving and partnership working at a local level, which demonstrated the strengthened approach of a investment at a ward level; examples included officers in Keighley securing 12 civil gang injunctions; tackling an increase in anti-social behaviour in the Holmewood area had been effective in reducing criminal damage.



During the discussion the Chair ascertained how the Police liaised with elected Members when there were particular serious incidents of crime in their ward. In response the Police representative stressed that where there was a level of tension or a particular serious crime, the Police would always endeavour to liaise with Ward Councillors and the community to ascertain who the perpetrators are and also how any wider community issues could be addressed.

A number of Members commended the work the Police had done in their respective wards and the difference it had made in resolving pertinent issues.

A Member stated that although the report was a positive one, how was this information being disseminated to the wider public, as there was a perception that many people were unaware of the positive work being undertaken by the Police. In response the Police representative stated that information about the new policing arrangements had been widely publicised in the media as well as engagement work taking place with the schools and the wider community.

A Member highlighted that many Neighbourhood Watch Schemes had folded due to people's inability to have access to IT. In response the Police representative stated that the Police were utilising IT more and more in disseminating information to the public. However it was acknowledged that, where there was an issue with IT access, there were still existing lines of communication, such as Parish Councils, PCSOs that could be utilised.

A Member expressed some concerns in respect of the 101 telephone service and problems in getting a response. The Police representative acknowledged that there were some issues with the 101 service, which was a national one, however efforts were now underway to ensure that the call centre was fully staffed and she was confident that any issues would be resolved in due course.

In relation to a question on what the critical risk factors were in achieving policing outcomes going forward, it was explained that it was important to maintain the direction of travel that had been set, together with ensuring that the work of the problem solvers and the multi agency group was maintained.

In terms of the risks, the Police representative stressed that the key priority for the Police was to address crime and threats that were out there, particular in relation to the threat posed by terrorism.

A Member stated that the Police had regular discussions with senior elected members on current and emerging risks, and the relationship between the Council and the Police was a positive one.

The Chair highlighted the need for the Police to build stronger relationships with the local mosques and that this was an area of work, the problem solvers could get involved with. In response the Assistant Director Neighbourhoods and Customer Services explained that work was already underway to bring together different faith groups and address key issues around policing .



Resolved –

- (1) That representatives from West Yorkshire Police be commended for attending the meeting and responding to Members' questions.**
- (2) That information on progress be circulated informally to Members of this Committee in 12 months time.**

ACTION: Strategic Director Environment and Sport

67. BRADFORD DISTRICT ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE

The Strategic Director Environment and Sport submitted a report (**Document “AB”**) which provided an update on the implementation of the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant and reported on the progress made by the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership in identifying and addressing need within the Armed Forces Community. Previous progress was reported to this committee on the 8th September 2015.

The Assistant Director Neighbourhoods stated that Bradford Council had been a very active member since the Armed Forces Covenant was signed, and that an excellent relationship had been forged with the armed forces as a result.

A representative from the armed forces was present at the meeting and stated that Bradford was one of the strongest partners in the Covenant. That Bradford had a proud history of reservists, cadets and veterans, and that many activities had been undertaken to develop and support understanding between the military and the civilian community. Activities to foster this relationship included Armed Forces Study Day and the Royal British Legion Outreach sessions.

A Member in commending the work done expressed some concerns in relation to veterans not being able to seek the appropriate help, or when help was being offered there was sometimes a reluctance amongst veterans to disclose their status, which then compounded the problems further. He suggested that organisations should have a method of ascertaining whether or not somebody had served in the armed forces. In response it was stated these were amongst a number of issues that were being looked at by the housing options teams and that the Ministry of Defence was also providing financial assistance to develop the Covenant further.

In relation to a question regarding the number of veterans that may be homeless and what specific support could be offered, the Assistant Director Neighbourhoods stated that although the Council undertook an annual count on the number of homeless people in the district, this did not give a breakdown as to who might be an armed forces veteran. He suggested that when individuals presented themselves to the Council seeking help, a question could identify their status and what additional help can be offered.



Members were in agreement that further work should be done across Council and voluntary services to ensure that members of the armed forces were identified and given appropriate help and advice, and it was therefore:

Resolved –

- (1) That this Committee requests that the Executive builds in support for the Armed Forces Covenant within all parts of the Council's procurement processes and partnerships.**
- (2) That the Executive look at ways to disseminate information about the Covenant to front line charities and third sector organisations to encourage greater awareness of the aims of the Covenant and what it can do to help their clients.**

ACTION: City Solicitor (referral to Executive)

68. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved –

That the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the item relating to the Industrial Services Group on the grounds that it is likely, in view of 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 proceeding for the following reasons:

It is in the public interest in maintaining the exemption because it is in the overriding interest of proper administration that Members are made fully aware of the financial implications of any decision without prejudicing the financial position of the authority.

69. INDUSTRIAL SERVICES GROUP (ISG) - FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Strategic Director Regeneration submitted a report (**NOT FOR PUBLICATION Document "AE"**) which provided an update to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the current financial performance of ISG and future plans for the organisation.



Resolved –

- (1) That the recommendations contained in Not for Publication Document “AE” be approved.**
- (2) That this Committee requests that quarterly updates be circulated to Members of this Committee.**

ACTION: Strategic Director Regeneration

70. BRADFORD DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

The Assistant Director for the Office of the Chief Executive submitted a report (**Document “AD”**) which set out the key achievements, future challenges and areas of focus of the Bradford District Partnership in delivering the priorities of the District Plan.

It was explained that the BDP’s main purpose was to harness the collective resources of the district to drive delivery of the outcomes outlined within the District Plan 2016-20 which included:

Better skills, more good jobs and a growing economy;
A great start and good schools for all our children;
Better health, better lives;
Safe, clean and active communities; and
Decent homes that people can afford to live in.

Performance was monitored on a regular basis through the District Plan performance management framework. Details of the progress made was set out in the report.

During the discussion a Member ascertained how the work of the BDP was supported by Council officers and what budget was set aside for this. In response it was explained that support for the Strategic Partnership came from within the Council, and that officers undertook this work as part of their overall duties, however no dedicated budget was set aside to assist with the work of the BDP.

In relation to a question on how the 29.5% increase in recorded crimes could be explained; the Assistant Director Neighbourhoods explained that the increase maybe in part, down to the way reported crime was now recorded.

A Member ascertained what the value of the BDP was in real terms. In response it was stated that the outcomes were outcomes that the Council shared with its partners, and there was therefore intrinsic value in the work of the partnership.

In relation to a question regarding the progress made in developing a rail link between Bradford City Centre and the airport, the Strategic Director Regeneration explained that this was still an aspiration that would bring huge benefits, and that the Council was committed to realising this link.



In response to a question regarding duplication of work, it was pointed out that work with partners was about achieving common objectives.

In relation to a question regarding empty homes and bringing them back to use, it was stressed that empty homes were assessed in terms of the risk they posed to neighbours and the wider community, and appropriate action was taken in the worst cases. In addition there was no evidence of large scale abandonment and in some cases there was a genuine reason why a home may be empty. In any case the Empty Homes Team would encourage owners to bring homes back into use and offer appropriate advice and support to achieve this.

In response to a question on how poor housing in the private rented sector was being addressed, it was explained that the Housing Standards Team were proactive in dealing with complaints from tenants and offering redress.

A Member ascertained what effort was being made to move from Producer City to a digital based economy. In response the Strategic Director acknowledged the potential and the need to harness developments in digital technology, however Bradford also had an engineering niche which was growing over time, and that a new industrial strategy will help the Council define its priorities.

Resolved –

That the report be noted and that a further annual report be submitted to this Committee in 12 months time, which gives a breakdown of the costs associated with the work of the Partnership.

ACTION: Chief Executive

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

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (**Document “AF”**) which set out the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2016/17.

Resolved –

That the work programme 2016-17 continues to be reviewed regularly during the year.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

Chair

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

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

