

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 25 July 2017 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 1825
Concluded 2055

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Heseltine Mallinson	Farley Jamil Nazir	H Hussain	K Hussain

Apologies:

Councillors Fear and Salam

Observer:

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

Councillor Farley in the Chair

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interest of transparency, Councillor Mallinson disclosed a personal interest in Housing Allocations Policy Review (minute 5) as he was the Chair of Community Trust Panels for Communities.

In the interest of transparency, Councillor Nazir disclosed a personal interest in the referral from the Bradford West Area Committee (minute 3) as he was responsible for taking the petition to the Bradford West Area Committee.

Action: City Solicitor

2. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

3. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Resolved –

That the referral from the Bradford West Area Committee be added to the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017/18.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

4. BRADFORD DISTRICT'S ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “A”**) provided a progress update on the development of the new Economic Growth Strategy for the Bradford District.

The Strategic Director gave a synopsis of the report. He began by stating that Metro Dynamics (*a company with experience in public and private sectors, expertise in the field of finance, economics, politics and communications and able to influence a drive towards change*) had been commissioned to produce an intelligence base and emerging economic narrative.

A programme of engagement was underway until the end of July, and included discussions with existing business and partner networks through a programme of themed networks. Networks attended include the People and Innovation Board, Regeneration and Prosperity Forum, Bradford Breakthrough, Place Board, and Chamber networks including the Property Forum and Employment Land group.

Feedback from the workshops had been incorporated into the draft strategy and would be shared on the Economic Growth Strategy website. The website was also hosting a citizen's survey on perceptions about the district's economy, and a draft framework for the strategy that brought together inputs from the above would be posted.

The observations made by Metro Dynamics were used to underpin the Draft Bradford Economic Strategy: Growing Together 2017 – 2030 for the Bradford District.

Following introduction, the Chair initiated a question and answer session, as follows:

- How positive was the vision in relation to a key message within the draft strategy, the “ambition to be the fastest growing economy in the UK over the next 10 years”?
 - The art of accelerating to the very top was the concept of having ambition by thinking bigger;
- The neighbouring districts would equally make an effort to improve their economic growth therefore what plan or visionary ideas had the Council in



mind that would give this district an overall favourable advantage to accelerate ahead of neighbours?

- Scale and speed was paramount with the elements specific actions and approaches that could be taken forward in order to maximise opportunities as identified in the draft strategy. Improving educational achievement, ensuring adequate housing affordability, to identify business growth, the development of transport infrastructure including connectivity with neighbouring districts, influencing an interest in technology amongst the young entrepreneurial population, identifying innovative methods to make better use of empty mills, to develop a business covenant to encourage businesses to consider recruitment, retention and progression routes whilst ensuring the Council's procurement review supported local economic growth and to develop a shared sense of confidence and potential;
- Relating to the engagement process, what businesses had been targeted and what kind of feedback had been received?
 - Feedback was mostly on the factors of the strategy the Council had in mind as its long term vision and matters relating to investment for Bradford;
 - It was paramount that the Council had a clear same level focus with companies and to achieve this, 30 companies who employed over a 100 employees had been visited;
 - Following visits, it was established that companies were not employing low skilled employees nevertheless if it came to light that a specific type of skills were required by employees in order for recruitment purposes, the Council would be prepared to invest for into training for the purpose of future growth. On the flip side, every business visited required new candidates with specific skills, yet Bradford was known as a low skilled region;
- Had businesses comprising of less than a 100 employees been approached for their feedback?
 - It was the bigger businesses that drove economic growth however smaller companies were also recognised;
- There were so many young people with no job, skills or a brighter future therefore in reflection of past experiences the Council had failed in its duty to succeed. What different plans had been formed on this occasion in terms of bringing skills, jobs and prosperity to the district?
 - In reflection of past experiences, the Council had moved on and factors had been recognised in the draft strategy that would make Bradford's economy a prosperous one. In order to differentiate from past focuses, previous actions utilised would no longer be progressed.
 - Bradford schools were participating fantastic work with young people and this progress was being made from the time a child began in Early Years therefore Education being a key focus and progression was being made in Bradford.
 - The willingness of partnering with universities, schools was at a co-ordinated peak.



- The Council would also be pursuing the knowledge for insight into what skills employers were looking for at present and the future in order to relay important feedback to the education system through a co-ordinated approach;
- In relation to transport infrastructure, how would this fit with the Air Quality Policy in the district?
 - The Council was addressing congested hot spots in the city and was working with officers in Leeds City Council to create Clean Air Zones; and,

Was this Council working with or competing with Leeds? Working with Leeds and if Bradford and Leeds being together would make the two cities larger than bigger cities.

In conclusion, it was commented that Bradford was a crucial element of the district and providing vision for the city was a paramount feature. Incorporating Air Quality into the strategy was vital in favouring health and the environment. It was about achieving on all accounts as opposed to a limited number of actions in order to prevail at the very end, therefore:

Resolved –

- (1) **That the views and comments expressed by the Regeneration and Economy Overview Scrutiny Committee be taken into consideration during the formation of the draft strategy.**
- (2) **That the Economic Strategy Action Delivery Plan be reported to this Committee when finalised.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place

5. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW

The report of the Assistant Director, Economy and Development (**Document “B”**) sought to gather policy suggestions from the Regeneration & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of a review of the district’s housing allocations policy. The revised policy was expected to be presented to the Executive at its meeting on 12 September 2017 for purposes of adoption.

Following presentation of the report, the Committee thought clarification, that in addition to professional jobs enticing people in, how would housing attract professionals to the city. In response, officers could further reconsider element of housing to attract professionals into the city.

Resolved –

That the views and comments expressed by the Regeneration and Economy Overview Scrutiny Committee be taken into consideration during the review of the District’s Housing Allocations Policy.



ACTION: Assistant Director, Economy and Development

6. TOURISM CONSULTATION UPDATE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “C”**) provided an update on the Tourism Review and the Destination Management Plan consultation which had undergone a public consultation. It would provide the recommendation of the Tourism Review and the findings of the DMP and feedback from the consultation.

The public consultation went out on 9 January to 6 March 2017. Sixty two people had responded to the consultation through the Council website, four responded by letter and a petition was sent from Haworth traders and residents with 1,087 signatures. A total of 5 comments supported the Bradford Visitor Information Centres (VIC) (Low response as recommendation was to keep Bradford open), 18 comments supported Haworth VIC, 20 comments supported Saltaire VIC, 25 comments supported Ilkley VIC and 10 of the comments also commented on the closure of the public toilets across the district.

The Strategic Director continued, industry partners in Bradford had welcomed the recommendation. The majority of comments from Haworth, Ilkley and Saltaire related to the importance of the VIC to the local community and visitors to the destination. Many of the concerns from Ilkley were in relation to the ticket sales that the VIC provided. Other comments included the recruiting of volunteers for Saltaire, Haworth and Ilkley, consider seasonal hours was being explored, single manned VICs to reduce staffing costs, relocating Ilkley VIC into the library and Bradford VIC also becomes the telephone and email centre for visitors.

A question and answer session ensued:

- How was the campaign progressing?
 - Lots of activity was on going across the district through the means of various groups and it was all about bringing different groups under the same umbrella. The campaign would assist the Council in understanding what kind of visitors came to Bradford for which themes. The campaign also included the inviting of journalists from France to visit our city’s attractions. Unfortunately the Bradford Interchange was not very welcoming. Vast advertising had been undertaken in the Leeds and Bradford Airport;
- Had officers thought on whether free advertising could be undertaken through the Council’s Wi-Fi?
 - It was a matter of time for a vacancy for a full time post for Social Media was filled and this factor could then be discussed. Future promotions through social media and the internet was a big part of the future for attracting tourists and the Council had every intention do undertake significant advertising through such means;
- Had the Council considered whether hackney Carriage Drivers could become Cultural Ambassadors for the city?
 - A pilot had been undertaken over a 3 months period and this could be undertaken again with the assistance of the Hackney Carriage



Service;

- Was it at all possible to reduce the numbers of paid staff in the VICs and recruit part time staff on a voluntary basis?
 - The options of running VICs in all areas was being considered at this present time.

During the discussion, the Committee made the following comments:

- The Committee concluded that in addition to fantastic attractions, Bradford had a good transport and networks links and the Hackney Carriage Service was a key partner towards the Council's successful goal in enticing visitors to Bradford;
- Cleanliness has to be addressed in Bradford as the first glimpse of something is always the everlasting reminiscence therefore making Bradford clean in the entering gateways was of paramount importance;
- It was important to get in dialogue with Metro in order to promote the city in buses;
- There was the occasional Anti Social Behaviour in the Centenary Square and would give Bradford a bad reputation if visitors witnessed such acts of appalling behaviour; and,
 - In response to comment, officers were employed to tackle appalling behaviour by small groups in prominent areas of Bradford.
- Bradford was already in the forefront in terms of the Curry capital and this advantage could be used to entice visitors to the city.

Resolved –

That the views expressed by the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee be shared with the Executive.

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place

7. SPORTS FACILITIES INVESTMENT PLAN

Following previous reports to the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 March 2015, this report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “D”**) provided Members with an update on progress made to date and set out steps for the next stages of the project.

Following presentation of the report, the Chair opened a session for questions and answers, as follows:

- Why had a cycle track not been included into the plan?
 - There were significant costs towards the implementation of a cycle track. Nevertheless this plan was a benchmark of a facility of a similar size by the company and had taken best possible advice;
 - In response to answer, the lack of a cycle track around the facility was a missed opportunity especially during the time when cycling was a core element towards a healthy living in the country.



- Clarification was sought on the business proposal as it seemed slightly flawed to the extent that the cost of the facility with the anticipated numbers to visit the facility in comparison to income generated were significantly far apart and if the Council failed in the success of the facility then the Council would eventually have to pick up the bill?
 - Advice was sought by professionals on assumptions and not second guessed;
- It was not only about having a gym in an area but people were different to one another and wished to pursue various activities, one being cycling?
 - The plan could be reconsidered with the implementation of a cycling track;
- Who had given advice to officers on the business aspects of the facility?
 - Good advice had been sought by consultants from a leisure day company;
- What was in plan for the exterior part of the plan?
 - One Rugby site would be marked;
- With teams playing on a formal basis, would this exclude the local community from booking and playing on the exterior pitch?
 - The community would be allowed to play free of charge in between bookings by formal teams;
- Was the Rugby pitch an all weather one?
 - This avenue had been explored but had not warranted investment for an all weather pitch but the proposed pitch was a good quality one; and,
- What was the financial timescales?
 - A full build between 15 – 18 months from point of start.

Resolved –

- (1) **That the progress made towards the development of Sedbergh Sports Facility be noted but the Committee expressed concerns that a cycle and/or a running track had not been incorporated into the design and therefore kindly requested that the design be reconsidered with the inclusion of this specialised sporting facility.**
- (2) **That an update report be presented to the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2018.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Place

8. REGENERATION AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18

Resolved –

- (1) **That due to the ever increasing workload of the Committee, a further meeting of the Regeneration and Economy be arranged in 2018 in this Municipal Year.**



- (2) That amendments to the Work Programme be agreed and noted and the Work Programme continued 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

