

Minutes of a meeting of the Bradford West Area Committee to be held on Wednesday, 29 November 2017 at City Hall Bradford

Commenced 6.00 pm
Concluded 7.15 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR
A Ahmed
Akhtar
Amran
Azam
Mohammed
Nazir
Engel
Shaheen

Apologies: Councillor Dunbar

Councillor Amran in the Chair

34. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interest of transparency Councillors Nazir and Ahmed disclosed an interest in the item relating to Early Help (Minute 38) as they both worked for the Bradford District Care Trust.

ACTION: City Solicitor

35. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

36. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions submitted by the public.

37. 110-112 TOLLER LANE, BRADFORD - REQUEST FOR A DISABLED PERSONS PARKING PLACE (EXCEPTION TO POLICY)

This report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “R”**) set out an application for a Disabled Persons Parking Place where the applicant did not meet all the Policy criteria.

Resolved–

- (1) That an exception be made to the Disabled Persons Parking Places policy and the application for 110-112 Toller Lane be approved.**
- (2) That the applicant be informed accordingly.**

ACTION: *Strategic Director Place*

Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

38. PREVENTION AND EARLY HELP - A PROPOSED NEW MODEL TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE, INCLUDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOW WE PROVIDE THE CHILDREN'S CENTRE CORE OFFER ACROSS THE DISTRICT

The report of the Strategic Director, Children's Services (**Document “S”**) highlighted the progress the Council and partners had made in bringing together existing arrangements for early help and early years services.

The Assistant Director Children Social Care highlighted that the Council was facing unprecedented pressure on its budgets whilst the demand and costs for services were rising. Government cuts meant that the resources the Council would have to spend on Prevention and Early Help would reduce by £13.3m or more than one third, from £37.1m in 2016/17 to £23.8m in 2020. These cuts were in addition to the ones the Council has already had to make. It meant that from 2010 to 2020, the overall funding the Council had available will have halved whilst demand and costs were increasing.

The report outlined the need for proposed changes to how services were delivered in order to ensure resources were targeted at a time of increasing demand to avoid a detrimental impact on outcomes to children. He stressed that we cannot continue to deliver services in the way we do now with this level of government cuts. The focus will be on a proposed partnership approach which is more targeted to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for children and young people across the District.

On the 7 November 2017, Executive was asked to approve a period of consultation on a proposed new Prevention and Early Help delivery model. Bradford West Area Committee was asked to consider and comment on the report as part of the formal consultation process.

The Assistant Director Children Social Care explained that all Area Committees were receiving the same report as part of the consultation process and that he welcomed the comments of this Area Committee to inform the consultation process.

He stressed that the proposed model would provide the best vehicle for providing early help services in a reduced financial envelope, and although it would be a reduced provision, the reconfiguration of services under the proposed model would still aim to work with the most vulnerable groups.

During the discussion Members asked a number of question, the questions together with the responses are set out below:

A Member expressed his reservation at the proposed model of delivery and the potential for families to slip through the net. In response the Assistant Director stressed that a number of options had been looked at in the report to the Executive and that the proposed model was the best model that would be deliverable within the available budget.

A Member stressed that the proposed consultation events should be held in the ward locality, to enable residents to attend and he urged officers to look at the venues in light of this. The Assistant Director acknowledged the concerns and agreed that his officers were happy to attend additional consultation events.

A Member questioned the proposals to provide some provision within the existing Children's Centres and the current difficulties people had in accessing outreach sessions; adding that if concerns about a particular child were not picked up at an early enough stage this could have an impact on our responsibilities as a Corporate Parent. In response the Assistant Director stressed that additional training and development would be provided to enable staff to work with all ages. In addition the key family workers would work with a plethora of issues and co-location with other services would provide a more integrated service.

In relation to how the proposed model would serve different localities and how provision would be targeted to serve the most vulnerable, the Assistant Director explained that existing measurements such as indices of multiple deprivation and Not in Education, Employment and Training would be utilised to identify need and target resources accordingly.

A Member expressed her concerns that under the proposed model, there was a potential to miss early problems a child or family may be experiencing. In response the Assistant Director stated that referrals could still be made within existing programmes such as 'Born in Bradford'.

In response to a question of how services would be structured via the Children's Centre, it was highlighted that an analysis of the Children's Centres had identified some underuse, so there was scope to use Children's Centres within the Early Help provision.

On the question of structure, the Assistant Director stressed that no structure had been finalised and this will be subject to further discussions with the Trade Unions.

In response to a question on the risks associated with the proposed structure, the Assistant Director stated that in looking at risk and needs, the model would map out geographical area and needs within that area and key workers would then be deployed accordingly, however given the proposed reductions in the workforce, caseloads and the ability to manage them would be depleted.

A Member raised concerns that the proposed model could have a severe impact on people with the greatest need. In response the Assistant Director stressed that the proposed plan would offer the Council the best possible vehicle to provide early help services within the budget envelope we had.

A Member stated that the preferred model failed to factor in that Bradford had one of the youngest populations and this reduction in service could have a detrimental impact, and there was a danger that we may not meet our statutory responsibilities. In acknowledging the concerns raised, the Assistant Director stated that other funding opportunities could be looked at, however the budget cuts were a reality.

In relation to a number of concerns expressed around statutory provision, the Assistant Director stressed that referrals to statutory services such as referrals, for example Looked After Children services would remain unaffected.

A Member stated that in considering the proposed model, expectations had to be realistic in terms of what services would be provided under the proposed structure and how, so that the public were clear about service provision.

Resolved –

- (1) That it be noted that formal consultation is underway from 15 November 2017 until 12 February 2018 with all interested parties, on the proposed new model for Prevention and Early Help.**
- (2) That the comments and views expressed by Members of the Bradford West Area Committee, in particular Members concerns on the deliverability of the proposed model and its impact on the most vulnerable, be taken into consideration as part of the formal consultation process.**

- (3) That officers be thanked for attending the meeting and giving an honest account of the proposed changes.
- (4) That the Area Committee notes that Executive will receive a further report in April 2018 following formal consultation.

ACTION: *Strategic Director Children's Services*

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Bradford West Area Committee.

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER