

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 26 October 2017 at 5.30 pm in City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 7.55 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT & INDEPENDENT GROUP
Cooke M Pollard Riaz	Warburton Arshad Hussain Bacon Duffy	J Sunderland

Observers: Councillors Hinchcliffe, Ross Shaw, V Slater, Love and Warnes

Councillor Arshad Hussain in the Chair

22. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

23. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2017 be signed as a correct record.

24. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

25. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referral made to the Committee.

26. UPDATE ON PROGRESS MADE FOLLOWING THE FLOODING SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Scrutiny Review into the Boxing Day floods of 2015 made a number of recommendations to improve the Council's response to such incidents, to assist residents and businesses to better prepare and protect themselves, and to receive a report back on further improvements to the Council's response and on flood related work to prevent future flooding.

The Strategic Director Place submitted a report (**Document "K"**) which updated Members on progress made following the Flooding Scrutiny Review into the Council's response to the flooding event of Boxing Day 2015 reported to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 September 2016.

The Assistant Director Waste, Fleet and Transport Services gave a brief overview of the report, stating that the Action Plan had been updated to show further improvements and action that had been taken over the last 12 months to deal with any future incidents of flooding.

During the discussion, a Member ascertained the emergency arrangements that were in place when adverse weather was expected. In response the Assistant Director stated that during inclement weather a conference call took place, involving key organisations. In addition relevant departments within their service plans contained details on what actions they should take during adverse weather, and these service plans were regularly reviewed.

In response to a question regarding the availability use and storage of sandbags, it was stressed that sandbags were stored at a central location in readiness for any flood event, however storage of sandbags could be reviewed in the light of experience. In addition the local emergency flood plan could also look at the issue of sandbags and storage facilities.

In response to a question relating to the Council's ability to have access to the necessary expertise and staffing in place to deal with flooding, it was explained that a team was in place that worked closely with the Environment Agency to deal with incidents of flooding, albeit there was a need to bolster this team.

A Member stated that work around climate change and risk planning was crucial and that he would like to see a more definitive timetable around what the Council was doing in this respect. The Assistant Director Transportation, Design and Planning stated that a lot of work had been done by the Council's drainage team in collaboration with the Environment Agency on both the Flood Strategy and the Flood Risk Assessment to ensure they were fit for purpose.

In response to a question on what collaborative work had been done with neighbouring authorities on flood alleviation measures, it was confirmed that work had been undertaken with Leeds City Council Craven and other North Yorkshire Authorities, to identify catchments and deal with flooding more effectively .

In relation to a question regarding the drainage team, it was confirmed that a drainage team was in place to deal with any call out and that this included cover over any bank holiday periods.

In response to a question regarding the preparedness of the Council's contact centre and their capacity to handle call volumes during a flooding incident, the Emergency Planning Officer stated that where a severe weather incident was predicted the necessary staffing were put in place in the contact centre to deal with such an incident.

In response to a question of what lessons had been learnt since the 2015 boxing day flooding, officers confirmed that the Council was now better prepared to deal with such incidents, and that preparatory work across all Council departments had been improved significantly, to better enable us to deal with any future flooding incidents.

In response to question regards gully emptying and the adequacy of the gully emptying fleet, the drainage officer stated that the Council deployed 3 gully tankers which worked on a rota basis to ensure that all main roads were covered over a 12 month period and that hotspots were tackled accordingly, with some receiving multiple visits.

Resolved –

(1) That the progress achieved by the Council and Partners and the further actions planned with regard to improving the Councils response to flooding/emergency situations and the steps being taken to help reduce future incidents of flooding within the district be noted.

(2) That a progress report be submitted in 12 months time.

ACTION: Strategic Director Place

27. WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Report of the Chair of the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document "L"**) contained the findings from the Water Management Scrutiny Review, undertaken by the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The current and former Chair of the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee were present at the meeting to give an overview of the review, stating that the Scrutiny Review had been a robust piece of work which had taken evidence from key partner organisations such as Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency, as well as a range of Council departments. The key lines of inquiry were alluded to along with the recommendations, stressing that effective water management required effective policies around sustainable urban drainage, together with effective multi agency

collaboration.

During the discussion, a Member ascertained what work had been done in respect of the flood risk assessment as this was not evidenced in the report. In addition he questioned the lack of clarity around funding streams in relation to emerging schemes. In response the Assistant Director Transportation, Design and Planning confirmed that feasibility and preventative work had been done, and that funding streams were looked at via the Combined Authority. He also confirmed that £360k had already been spent on flood alleviation schemes in a number of key areas in the district. In addition a number of in depth studies had been commissioned to assess the extent of the capital works that were required in the district.

In response to a question regarding supplementary planning guidance in relation to sustainable development and the weight that would be given to this by the Planning Inspector, it was stressed that once adopted supplementary planning guidance was a key document which the Inspector would have to have regard to in determining an application.

Resolved –

That Members of the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and officers be thanked for compiling a comprehensive report.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

28. MANAGING ATTENDANCE

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report (**Document “M”**) which updated Members with regards to managing attendance as requested in the Committee resolution of 5 April 2017.

The report provided information on sickness absence in the Departments of Children’s Services, Health and Wellbeing and Place.

Representatives from the respective departments were present to give an overview of the actions taken to address sickness absence, which had resulted in a slight fall in sickness absence. Reductions has also been registered within Health and Wellbeing as a result of more proactive work around improving manual handling techniques, take up of the flu vaccination and phased returns. Within the Department of Place managing attending continued to be discussed at Departmental Management Team meetings with better support being provided to managers to better support staff, Initiatives such as focus groups, self management strategies, stress buster sessions were being rolled out to try and address sickness levels, which were yielding benefits.

During the discussion, a Member asked how Bradford Council's sickness absence figures compared to other local authorities, In response it was stressed that different authorities compiled statistics differently, however Bradford was statistically somewhere in the middle.

In response to a question on stress related absence it was stated that most cases were as a result of stress related issues staff were facing outside of work. Proactive work the Council had done with managers around identifying and dealing more effectively with mental health issues was alluded to.

In relation to a question around long term sickness and capability, it was stressed that although due process was in place to deal with long term absence, managers were encouraged to put early intervention measures in place, including referrals to Occupational Health.

A Member welcomed the initiatives in place to deal with mental health issues affecting staff, however she stressed that training should be offered to all staff to better equip them to identify and deal with mental health issues.

Resolved –

That this Committee requests that a Council wide managing attendance report be presented in 12 months time.

ACTION: Director of Human Resources

29. BRADFORD COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015 - 2021

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report (**Document "N"**) which provided an update to Members on the Council's Workforce Development Strategy 2015 - 2021.

During the discussion a Member ascertained the number of apprenticeships that had been recruited, since the new programme had been launched. In response it was stated that 19 new job opportunities had been created, with an emphasis on ensuring that underrepresented groups were reflected in this cohort.

In response to a question on the Member Development Programme and the low number of delegates attending the training being offered, it was confirmed that further evaluation was taking place, however it was also stressed that separate training was also being provided at political group level, of which attendance was good.

In addition officers were also exploring the possibility of enabling Councillors to access the evolve online training system.

Resolved –

That a further progress report be presented to this Committee in 12 months time, to also include detailed information relating to the Member Development Programme.

ACTION: Director of Human Resources

30. BRADFORD COUNCIL'S EQUALITY OBJECTIVES PROGRESS REPORT (JANUARY TO JUNE 2017)

The Assistant Director for the Office of the Chief Executive submitted a report (**Document “O”**) which provided the first annual progress report on the Equality Objectives covering January 2017 to June 2017, following approval of the Council's new equality objectives at the end of 2016.

The Assistant Director stated that the new equality objectives were set in the context of Bradford being a young and diverse city, with people from a ethnic background making up 36% of the total population, with a quarter of the overall population being aged less than 20.

During the discussion, Members welcomed the positive work being done and the importance of these objectives in ensuring the Council worked for the benefit of all its residents.

A Member urged that the Council should get involved in promoting events during the upcoming Black History Month.

In response to a question on the Council's workforce profile and the underrepresentation from the BME communities and what the Council was doing to address this underrepresentation, it was stated that workforce diversity was a key issue for the Council and to this end the Council was looking at issues around recruitment methods and career development.

A Member also raised an issue around the equality objectives not being explicitly addressed within Council reports to Committees and suggested this reporting be improved.

Work around addressing sexual harassment across the piece was also alluded to, together with the role the Council was playing in bringing communities together using the 'People Can' approach.

Resolved –

- (1) That Members commented on and supported the progressing work on the Council's equality objectives 2016-2020.**
- (2) That a further progress report on the equality objectives be considered in 12 months time.**
- (3) That an equality objectives section be included in committee report templates to enable each area to report on how they are meeting the Council's equality objectives.**

- (4) **Members heard that ethnic minorities make up 36% of the Districts population and that this is not representative of the Councils Workforce Profile – grades by ethnicity. The Committee requests that a further report be presented to this Committee which details the approaches being used to address this.**

ACTION: Assistant Director for the Office of the Chief Executive/ City Solicitor (Resolution 3)

31. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (**Document “P”**) which set out the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2017/18.

Resolved –

That the work programme 2017-18 continues to be reviewed regularly during the remainder of this Municipal 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.