

## **Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 22 November 2017 at 5.30 pm in Ernest Saville Room - City Hall, Bradford**

Commenced 5.40 pm  
Concluded 8.00 pm

### **Present – Councillors**

<b>CONSERVATIVE</b>	<b>LABOUR</b>	<b>LIBERAL DEMOCRAT</b>
<b>BM Smith</b>	<b>Warburton Arshad Hussain Watson Bacon Duffy</b>	<b>J Sunderland</b>

### **Councillor Arshad Hussain in the Chair**

Apologies: Councillors Cooke and Riaz

### **32. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

In the interest of transparency Councillor Sunderland disclosed an interest in the item relating to Mid Year Finance and Performance Statement 2017-18 as she was involved in 2 community asset transfers in her ward.

***ACTION: City Solicitor***

### **33. MINUTES**

**Resolved –**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2017 be signed as a correct record.**

**34. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

**35. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no referrals made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**36. MID-YEAR FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE STATEMENT FOR 2017-18**

The Strategic Director Corporate Services submitted a report (**Document “Q”**) which provided Members with an overview of the forecast financial position of the Council for 2017-18 and a mid-year performance report.

It examined the latest spend against revenue and capital budgets and forecasted the financial position at the year end. It stated the Council's current balances and reserves and forecasted school balances for the year.

The report was considered by the Executive at its meeting held on 7 November 2017.

In relation to performance, in many key areas performance was improving and remained on target, although there continued to be areas where the district faced significant challenges, and where performance was either deteriorating or was not improving quickly enough in order to meet the Council Plan targets.

In relation to Finance, at the mid year point, a £3.8m projected overspend was being predicted above the approved budget of £375.2m, a significant improvement since the last quarter reporting stage. Areas of projected overspend principally related to adult and children social care, reasons which had been linked to increase demand in those service area and savings not being delivered as planned.

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

The Chair stated that in previous performance reports red, amber and green ratings gave a flavour of how the Council was performing, however this report did not adequately set out a direction of travel. In response the Assistant Director stated that this could be added in future reporting of performance data.

A Member highlighted that a number of service areas were performing below target, such as the number of looked after children, and ascertained the reasons for this underperformance. In response the Strategic Director Children's Services stressed that in comparison to other local authorities, Bradford's performance was good, acknowledging that some areas did require improvement. He acknowledged that the number of children in care had increased, however weekly performance management meetings were held with the Portfolio Holder and plans were in place to closely monitor the situation.

In relation to a question regarding comparisons with other local authorities, the Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder stated that more work was needed to achieve stability in placements, as evidence showed that children flourished in a stable environment.

A Member raised a number of issues; in relation to fly tipping in Keighley West, she commended officers for the work they had done to tackle the problem, however more work was needed to encourage people to recycle more. In relation to the Council's sickness absence figures, the Member ascertained what measures were being put in place to address the issue of stress and mental health. In response the Strategic Director Place confirmed a lot of effort had gone in to address the issue around fly tipping across the district, which had yielded some very positive results as well as successful prosecutions, in relation to the issue of stress, the Strategic Director Children's Services alluded to the work being done with frontline staff and how they can be better supported to reduce incidents of stress.

The Chair stated that the issue of sickness absence needed further investigation, as sickness absence resulted in a significance cost to the Authority, and he suggested that this Committee could undertake a detailed scrutiny in how the Council managed sickness absence.

A Member stated that the Council's performance had to be seen in the context of Local Authority cuts. In response the Strategic Director Corporate Services acknowledged that this was a key issue and that Authorities were trying to balance performance and diminishing resources in a challenging fiscal environment. In this context a recent star chamber session was held to hold departments accountable and bring the budget back on track.

The Strategic Director also highlighted that in the area of Children's Services, a small increase in the number of looked after children had a huge financial implication on the budget, however overall the Council was managing the budget well.

A Member stated that many services were no longer being provided and this was the reality of the situation, and there had to be an acceptance of this reality.

## **Resolved –**

- (1) That all future performance reports include all the performance indicators with the Red, Amber and Green rating and year on year comparisons.**
- (2) That this Committee undertakes a detailed scrutiny review into how sickness absence is managed throughout the Council.**

**ACTION:**     *Assistant Director Office of the Chief Executive  
(Resolution 1)  
Overview and Scrutiny Lead (Resolution 2)*

## **37. ARRANGEMENTS BY THE COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS TO TACKLE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

The Strategic Director Children's Services submitted a report (**Document "Q"**) which provided an update to the report previously presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and subsequently to the Districts Area Committees regarding the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). It particularly focused on the 9 Point Strategic Response to CSE and how it is used by BSCB and partners in working together to drive improvements across the District's safeguarding partnership and to hold agencies to account for their work in their area.

Representatives from West Yorkshire Police, and Barnardos were present at the meeting to give an overview of the work being undertaken and progress made in tackling CSE. The following areas of work were highlighted:

- That a Review of the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board had been undertaken in light of the Wood review and Children and Social Work Act in the structure and governance of the Local Children Safeguarding Boards
- Refresh of the 9 Point Strategic Response to CSE had been undertaken.
- Completion and publication of 2 serious case reviews around CSE.
- Co-location of Local Authority and Police resources had taken place to oversee Missing Children.
- Innovative methods of raising awareness through Safeguarding Stories, Mr Shapeshifter, Someone's Sister and Someone's Daughter and Police Cyber Teams
- Barnados Nightwatch and Police Problem Solving Teams continued to work effectively with the industry sector and night time economy.
- Increased communication and awareness through the BSCB and CSE campaigns.
- Training had been delivered to elected members on CSE with a specific session on CSE and boys, to raise awareness of the issues relating to boys, following the Jack Serious Case Review.

It was acknowledged that although the number of referrals were going up this had to be seen in a positive light, in terms of the increased reporting in CSE.

During the discussion, the Chair welcomed the progress made by the CSE Hub and urged the need to do further work with the new emerging communities. In response the Assistant Director Children's Services explained that some work was being undertaken in this area by the voluntary sector.

The Chair also highlighted the impact of the plays performed in schools to raise awareness around CSE and ascertained whether this would continue into the future. In response the Assistant Director acknowledged that funding for the play had been time limited, however discussions would be had as how these messages could be communicated to children in the future.

In response to a question regarding resources, the Assistant Director acknowledged the budgetary pressures facing the services, however CSE would continue to be prioritised.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That the 9 Point Strategic Response to CSE be reviewed and replaced with a new Strategic Response to CSE be endorsed.**
- (2) That the report be noted and that a further update on the progress of the response to CSE be submitted in 12 month's time.**

***ACTION: Strategic Director Children's Services***

**38. FAMILIES FIRST PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a detailed report in January 2017 which included information about the Families First programme, progress with engaging families onto the programme and claiming payments up to Oct 2016, information about the new Targeted Early Help structure introduced from January 2017, national and local cost benefit analysis information and examples of outcomes for individual families.

The Strategic Director Children's Services submitted a report (**Document "S"**) which provided an update on progress with the programme and related developments in early help services. It covered national programme development, local progress made since the last report in January 2017 and provided examples of recent case studies which showed how the programme had helped local families.

In response to a question regarding outcomes and the type of engagement undertaken with families, it was acknowledged that any number of avenues would be pursued in respect of individual families, however in essence constructive engagement with families was key to getting good outcomes, however this sometimes remained a challenge.

A Member stated that good family networks were sometimes key to resolving issues.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That officers be commended for the excellent work and progress made by the Families First Programme and that a progress report be submitted in 12 months time.**
- (2) That this Committee requests that the consultation relating to Early Help be presented to this Committee in January 2018.**

***ACTION: Strategic Director Children's Services***

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

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (**Document "T"**) 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.**