

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 22 March 2018 in City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 6.30 pm

Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT
BM Smith Cooke Riaz	Warburton Watson Thirkill Duffy Arshad Hussain	Ward

Observer: Councillor Hinchcliffe (Leader of Council)

Councillor Arshad Hussain in the Chair

69. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

70. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2018 be signed as a correct record.

71. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

72. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals made to this Committee.

73. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PREVENT STRATEGY IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT

The Strategic Director Place submitted a report (**Document “A1”**) which outlined the approach taken to delivering the Government’s Prevent Strategy in Bradford District since Prevent became a statutory requirement in July 2015, and responded to the recommendations made by this Committee at its meeting held on 28th September 2017.

The Assistant Director Neighbourhoods stated that following a review, it had been decided to amalgamate the current Prevent Plans into a single document and also incorporate the recommendations from the Home Office, which would include performance measures, be more target driven and the Plan being more aligned to counter terrorism aims.

A Prevent training event for elected Members was held during December 2017, supported by a senior team from the Home Office, and 22 Members attended this training session. It is envisaged that in future Prevent training will be done annually.

During the discussion a Member ascertained how we responded to threats in what was not a static environment, and how was a resurgence in the extreme far left being tackled within the Prevent framework. In response the Assistant Director explained that the threat level was updated on a quarterly basis and plans were adjusted accordingly, however Prevent did not address the threat posed by the far left. In response the Member stressed the need to be vigilant when it came to threats from both the far right and the far left.

In response to a question regarding the sufficiency of resources for a city the size of Bradford, the Assistant Director stated that the Service was preparing for a larger bid next year given the resources required to adequately tackle to the issue.

The Chair suggested that Councillors should be given advance notice of projects being undertaken in their respective wards under the Prevent agenda.

In response to a question regarding outcomes and attitudinal changes, the Assistant Director stated that Prevent had been considered a ‘toxic’ brand in the past and increasingly the process of radicalisation was being recognised as a safeguarding issue. To this end the work undertaken under the mothers against radicalisation had been extremely beneficial, in capturing real stories and informing the Prevent action plan.

In relation to a question regarding referrals made to Prevent and ensuring those referred received the appropriate help and support, it was explained that unless a crime had been perpetrated or was in the process of being committed, any offer of help was dependent on the recipients willingness to accept help, and there was no compulsion for an individual to engage with the programme.

In terms of the perception around Prevent, it was explained that there was now a greater recognition out there and that Prevent had a crucial role to play and to this end there had been a step change in the communities acceptance and engagement with the programme. However vigilance was still key as the threat level from terrorism had increased with the potential for 'lone wolf' attacks and the threat posed by individuals returning to the UK from Syria and other war zones.

In relation to a question on Member training, it was stressed that although 22 Councillors had attended the recent Prevent training, there was scope if Members wished, to offer bespoke training at a political group level.

A Member stated that the recent Government Integration Strategy also had an overlap with the Prevent agenda and this Committee should scrutinise the Strategy as it is developed and rolled out in Bradford.

Resolved –

- (1) That the progress on work undertaken in implementing the Prevent agenda in Bradford and its approach to supporting vulnerable people be acknowledged.**
- (2) That this Committee requests that all Ward Councillors be informed of project work taking place in their wards before it takes place.**
- (3) That a progress report be presented in 12 months in relation to Bradford's new updated Prevent Programme.**
- (4) That the Integration Strategy be presented to this Committee in the new Municipal Year.**

ACTION: Strategic Director Place

74. WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Following the Bradford Council's Equality Objectives Progress Report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny on 26th October 2017, Members requested a report detailing the actions that the Council is taking to improve workforce diversity.

The Interim Human Resources Director submitted a report (**Document “AJ”**) which highlighted the actions, and the progress made to date, in particular highlighting activities currently underway to improve workforce diversity. To this end the Future Leaders Programme, Mental Health at Work Workshops and the inclusive apprenticeships offer were alluded to.

During the discussion the Chair stated that the figures set out in the report were no different to 3 years ago and the Council had to do more if it was to tackle the issue of diversity in the workforce. He further questioned the outcomes relating to the Future Leaders Programme and whether the Programme had made a tangible difference in terms of enabling the participants to make progress. In response it was acknowledged that although it was difficult to measure outcomes on the FLP, there had been a step change, but clearly there was more the Council could do. It was agreed that further statistics would be made available on the FLP to date, particularly in terms of the progression of the participants and also the costs associated with delivering the Programme.

In response to a question regarding the apprenticeship offer it was explained that there was an element of flexibility with the programme and apprenticeship opportunities could be explored, and extended to include the existing workforce.

In relation to a question on the number of children leaving care being offered apprenticeship opportunities, it was stated that this information would be provided after the meeting.

In response to a question on the ageing workforce and what the Council was doing to address the skills deficit as a result of technological changes, it was acknowledged that more work was needed in this area and that they were working closely with managers to develop staff.

In terms of the number of black and ethnic minority staff, it was stressed that amongst new starters the percentage of BME entrants was higher.

Resolved –

That officers circulate a response in due course to the questions posed by Members of the Committee.

ACTION: Interim Human Resources Director

75. SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO MANAGING ATTENDANCE ACROSS BRADFORD COUNCIL - DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented a report (**Document “AK”**) which set out the DRAFT Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Review of Managing Attendance across Bradford Council.

Resolved –

That the Draft Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Review into Managing Attendance Across Bradford Council be adopted, subject to the inclusion of examples of good practice.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

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

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (**Document “AL”**) 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.