

# Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 6 March 2018 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 6.05 pm  
Concluded 8.15 pm

## Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Heseltine	Farley Jamil Nazir	R Ahmed

Apologies: Councillors Fear, H Hussain and H Khan

## Councillor Farley in the Chair

### 44 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interest of transparency Councillor Ahmed disclosed an interest in the item relating to City Centre Markets Refurbishment Proposals (Minute 51) as he was by profession, a retailer.

***ACTION: City Solicitor***

### 45 INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

***NO ACTION***

### 46 REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

***NO ACTION***

### 47 UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S INVOLVEMENT IN RESIDENTIAL HIGH RISE

## **BUILDINGS FOLLOWING THE GRENFELL TOWER DISASTER**

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “W”**) provided an update for members on the Council’s involvement with high rise residential buildings following the Grenfell Tower disaster.

On 14 June 2017 a fire caused multiple fatalities and injuries at the Grenfell Tower in North Kensington. Grenfell tower was a 24 storey residential block. The cause and impacts of this tragedy had been well documented but in summary it had been reported that the fire started in a malfunctioning refrigerator; fire in flat was extinguished but had spread to the cladding; fire in the cladding spread up the external faces of the building; and, the building had been fitted with external foamed polyisocyanate insulation boards and over that, aluminium composite material (ACM) rain screen for appearance and weathering.

In response to the tragedy, the Government had set up a public inquiry and progressed with a formal review of legislation relating to safety in buildings.

The Building Safety Programme’s work had involved working with local authorities to identify any other high rise residential buildings that could have been clad in ACM cladding. The definition of a high rise building being that it is over 18 metres in height.

The Council had completed returns to government relating to the buildings within the district that are residential, over 18 metres high and faced with cladding.

Following introduction of the report, a question and answer session had ensued:

- What was the way forward to get owners to give samples of material on their buildings?
  - This was the subject area of Facilities Management however if owners refrained from complying then this would be through a legal process;
- Why had it taken a significant time in establishing high rise residential buildings that could have been clad in ACM cladding?
  - It had taken the Council a significant time in recognising buildings with such substances;
- Has the Council had any indication from government when local authorities should commence with investigations?
  - Not at present due to the fact that the whole regulatory legislative system was not fit for purpose. The whole legal system was being reviewed at this present time and fire regulations were too being rewritten;
- What was the timescale for cladding to be removed?
  - Advice was being sought from the Fire Service but the Council had been advised that no information would be released until a further 12 months;
- Had any measures been put in place on an interim basis for any high fire risk buildings?
  - An interim measure would not be a cheap alternative and therefore



- buildings were being monitored on a 24 hours a day basis;
- Had the Council thought on the fact that schools may also be at fire risk?
  - Yes and hospitals were in the Council's radar during the review;
- Why was the formation of new legislation taking a considerable amount of time?
  - The formation of new legislation was a complicated process due to the complexity of law surrounding the whole building and not only the material. This area has never been in the Council's jurisdiction previously and even the government was not entirely clear in regards to new powers of persuasion;
- Is the Council giving feedback to government in relation to the problems encountered?
  - All Councils were sending comments to government on their own individual issues; and,
- If schools were found to have below standard fire hazardous materials, could the Council not take any form of enforcement action due to the safety of children?
  - Housing enforcement powers could not be utilised on schools and it was the Council's focus to work with residents' as a first basis priority.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

Committee and officers stated that it was clear that the framework on recall was not a strong or fit for purpose legislation;

Once a building had been built, a building contractor easily walked away and there was no legal position on anyone to ensure who was responsible for which aspect of a high rise building;

It was clear that there was lack of retrospective powers; and,

The Council was working with the government there was the anticipated formation of a new legislation, but due to the complexity of the review, this would take some time.

#### **Resolved –**

- (1) **That the on going work between the Council and the West Yorkshire Fire Service to address issues with high rise residential blocks across the District be noted.**
- (2) **That the Committee requests an update report in six months time to include details of the impact of the revised Government legislation and any additional demand on resources.**

***ACTION: Strategic Director, Place***



The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “X”**) updated the Committee on progress with city centre regeneration since its scrutiny hearing in March 2017.

The Economic Plans Development Manager introduced the report. Bradford was one of the biggest and fastest growing districts in the UK and a key driver of the wider City Region economy. Business success, jobs growth and an increased evening economy were essential parts of the district’s economy and, while the district had distinct economic areas with different strengths, influences and dynamics, a strong vibrant city centre remained key to a future economic growth.

The City Centre therefore remained a focus for the Council as part of our wider approach to economic growth across the district. Due to its size and scale it was also recognised as a Strategic Priority Area in the city region’s Strategic Economic Plan.

Bradford City Centre was the key location for employment in the district and was home to over 2000 businesses that supported 22% of jobs (one in five of all jobs in the district) generating 31% of the District’s Gross Value Added (GVA).

A question and answer session ensued:

- In relation to the rate of vacancy levels, how did Bradford compare to city centres of other cities and towns?
  - Vacancy levels of shops and inner mall units were difficult to compare like for like due to the varying sizes of cities and towns around the country;
- The Broadway Shopping and Leisure Complex saw a year on year increase in footfall over the main Christmas trading period in December 2017 with 1.5 million visits to the centre. But did this equate to Broadway Shopping and Leisure Complex as being a success?
  - It was not only about the increase or decrease of footfall, but rather the fact whether there was a significant amount of continuous spending. Nevertheless, footfall had increased by 1.5% which was considered a satisfactory outcome;
- What was the anticipated opening date of the Indian street food restaurant, Pappadums?
  - It was believed that the recruiting of staff would commence around Easter 2018;
- Some older buildings would be sold to the highest bidder but companies may not have money to invest into businesses despite purchasing buildings?
  - There were business rate incentives for the purpose of bringing back buildings into economic use. Rate relief schemes would also prevent city centre units to remain vacant for a considerable amount of time;
- How was the monitoring the businesses undertaken when grants were awarded?
  - A contract was drawn up as part of the condition when so that



Council had access to ensure that the businesses were operating the same equipment and people still had jobs;

- What had been the life expectancy of business that had received grants?
  - Around 90% of businesses were still operating successfully;
- What continuous action was being undertaken to tackle problems such as anti social behaviour?
  - Individuals guilty of such behaviour were prosecuted; and,
- How was begging tackled?
  - This was a wide West Yorkshire Strategy and Bradford was concentrating on hot spot areas. Officers were able to enforce Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) on those who were found to be begging;

During the discussion, the Committee and officers drew attention to restaurants on Leeds Road and Great Horton Road, and that although the city centre being the core of the city, there was nothing special to pull people into the heart of the city as opposed to restaurants outside of the city centre. Bradford city centre was still lacking something special and different to offer its visitors. At least 20% of shop units were vacant, the footfall was very low and people complained that Bradford had a unclean city centre. Shoppers were bypassing Bradford in order to shop in Leeds due to the variety of everything in the city centre. In response to comment, the 1.5 million footfall figure was for Broadway Shopping and Leisure Complex from October to December 2017, In relation to the comment of uncleanliness, an enforcement company would be taking on the role of ensuring the public refrained from throwing litter on the streets and officers on the streets would be issuing financial penalties. Councillors and officers all played a part in promoting the city and at present the perception may not be perfect for some due to lack of some services brought on by restrictive budgets. The media continuously focused on negative coverage of the city centre and therefore shoppers were receiving mixed messages.

#### **Resolved –**

**That the report be welcomed and the Committee requests an update report in 12 months on progress with the city centre regeneration.**

***ACTION: Strategic Director, Place***

## **49 CITY CENTRE MARKETS REFURBISHMENT PROPOSALS**

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “Y”**) updated Members on the refurbishment proposals for the city centre markets.

The Chair invited the Markets Manager to introduce the report to the Committee. He stated, in order to take the market proposals forward the Council undertook a comprehensive tendering exercise in June 2017 to appoint experienced consultants to design and deliver the markets project.



The Council invited submissions from lead consultants who could provide or build a multi-disciplinary team to cover a broad range of tasks to include, but not be limited to, Project Management, Architectural Design Services, Quantity Surveying, Structural Design, Mechanical & Electrical Design, building works supervision.

A question and answer session ensued:

- What was the position with the ex Morrisons Supermarket building?
  - There were plans for demolition;
- What were plans by the Council for shops that were outside of the Oastler Centre?
  - There would be a transitional allocation process within a scheme but at present was too early for an analysis as there would be a consultation process with all traders;
- Would there be any form of assistance for traders during the allocation process?
  - There would be some form of financial incentive for businesses;
- Were the empty units (previous Marks and Spencer building) on Darley Street large enough to house all the food stalls that were operating in the Oastler Centre at present?
  - Yes and there were plans to house all the hot food stalls on the upper floor;
- Was the Council subsidised for working with Arndale Centre?
  - The Council wished to work with Arndale Centre and wished to establish long terms proposals;
- The loss of Ostler Centre would eliminate car park space. Would provision be made elsewhere for the loss:
  - The Oastler Centre car park provision was only one level and other parts of the city centre could accommodate the loss of provision. On the positive, intentions of relocating businesses to Darley Street would be pulling businesses into the heart of the City as opposed to the present upper side of one part of the city;
- Did the Council have any control over private car parking prices?
  - None whatsoever. These were private businesses and the Council had no say towards the costing of the car parks;
- Would the closing of Oastler Centre and relocation of businesses cause a loss of revenue for the Council?
  - Exercising of revenue was yet to be carried out by the Council;
- What was in mind for housing following the demolition process?
  - This was unknown at present; and,
- When would the master plan for the top of the city centre Oastler Centre area be released?
  - The plan had only just begun and not completed as yet.

**Resolved –**



The Committee welcomes the report and requests an update report in the next municipal year prior to the tendering of the project

***ACTION: Strategic Director, Place***

50 **REGENERATION AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18**

The report of the Chair of the Regeneration and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document “Z”**) presented the Committee’s Work Programme 2017-18.

**Resolved –**

**That the 2016/17 Work Programme continues to be regularly reviewed during the year.**

***ACTION: Overview and 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 (Archive).**

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER

