

# **Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 13 September 2018 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford**

Commenced 5.30 pm  
Concluded 7.07 pm

## **Present – Councillors**

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Hargreaves M Smith	Azam Bacon Duffy Green Kamran Hussain Watson	Ward

Observers: Councillors Hinchcliffe and Tariq Hussain

Apologies: Councillor Simon Cooke

## **Councillor Azam in the Chair**

### **9. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received at the commencement of the meeting but, during consideration of the item in respect of the 2018 Report on People Can (minute 16), Councillor Hargreaves disclosed for the sake of clarity that he was the Chair of the Friends of Russell Hall Park and was a lead member of a group registering interest in the transfer of assets of Victoria Hall.

***ACTION: City Solicitor***

### **10. MINUTES**

**Resolved –**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2018 be signed as a correct record.**

### **11. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

## **12. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no referrals to the Committee.

## **13. WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

Bradford Council's representatives on the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel had been invited to provide a verbal update on the work of the Panel and one of them attended the meeting and gave a detailed verbal presentation. Members had also been provided with the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel Annual Report 2016-17 and information relating to the key responsibilities of the Panel in advance of the meeting to provide context and background information.

The Panel representative advised that the role of Panel members was a strategic one, including holding the Police and Crime Commissioner to account; monitoring how the Police precept was utilised; contributing to the Annual Report and serving on a panel which considered non-criminal complaints.

He advised that all five West Yorkshire Local Authorities participated in the work of the Panel and that there were twelve elected members and two independent members. The Panel also met with HM Constabulary. At the last inspection West Yorkshire Police had been rated "good", primarily for its work on anti social behaviour. The aim now was to achieve an "outstanding" rating. He concluded his presentation by stressing again that the role of Panel members was strategic and that they were not involved with policing matters.

A member commented that he had hoped that the regional commander would attend a meeting to answer questions about funding, especially as a new commander had recently been appointed.

The Panel representative stated that the results of recent recruitment to neighbourhood policing should start to be seen over the next two years. He stressed that returning to neighbourhood policing was a priority.

### **Resolved –**

- (1) That regular updates from the Council Representatives on the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel be requested.**
- (2) That the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to attend a meeting of this Committee to discuss with members key safer communities issues across the Bradford District.**

### ***ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead***

## **14. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE**



## AND IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Previous Reference: Executive, Minute 31 (2017/18)

Members recalled that, in 2017, Bradford Council had invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a peer challenge review. Following on from that, a number of recommendations had been made.

The Chief Executive presented a report (**Document “E”**) which provided Members with an update on progress to date on the Improvement Action Plan which had been presented to the Executive in 2017.

The Head of Policy and Performance attended the meeting and gave a detailed presentation in respect of the report, going through each recommendation made by the LGA and outlining the progress made against each one.

The Chair began questioning by asking for an update on redeployment. He was informed that a significant amount of work was being undertaken with affected staff; that a pragmatic approach was being taken to skills transfer and that vacancies were being referred to the redeployments process at an earlier stage than had previously been the case.

Members stated that the language of the report was not easy to understand and required that plain English be used in future.

A member also commented that the work of the voluntary sector had not been highlighted in the report and asked that a better reflection of that be included in future updates.

A member asked questions in respect of the reserve funds held by the Council and the meaning of the phrases “aggressive approach to commercialism” and “demand management” which were both used in the LGA Review.

The Leader of Council attended the meeting and advised that the Council held a general level of reserves as well as a reserve for schools and that the Council’s Section 151 officer had advised that a £10million general reserve was as low as was prudent. She also advised that the phrase “aggressive commercialism” referred to the Council covering its own costs and making arrangements with its partners in respect of covering costs. The Head of Policy and Performance also advised that the LGA considered that there could be a greater level of policy development review and confirmed that this had increased over the last year.

A member commented on the usefulness of inviting someone from the original peer review to return to the Council to answer questions, particularly as the review contained difficult and unclear language.

Another member then questioned officers about the work the Council was undertaking on apprenticeships, stressing his view that, as well as enabling higher level apprenticeships, efforts should be made in respect of target groups such as people with learning disabilities for whom a level two or three



apprenticeship may not be appropriate but who should be encouraged into employment as much as possible.

In response, members were advised that work was being undertaken with the employment and skills team on pre-apprenticeships and training opportunities as well as expanding the work experience offer within the Council.

The member concerned commented that it would be useful to discuss partnership working with third sector organisations which worked on employment such as the Industrial Services Group.

A member then queried how apprenticeship placements were identified and was advised that all posts below band eight were being converted to apprenticeships in consultation with managers. It was stressed that this would be a huge culture change for the organisation but that young people had a great deal to bring to the workplace. Members were also advised that there were departmental champions for the apprenticeship scheme and that it could also be an opportunity to “upskill” current staff. They were informed of current work that was underway to provide apprenticeships such as that in Building and Technical Services and the plans to recruit ten new apprentices to one of the neighbourhood teams. Altogether there were 221 active apprenticeships, of which 110 were existing placements, 55 were new starts and 56 were in schools. Work was underway to promote opportunities to care leavers more actively.

A member queried how the process of increasing the level of apprenticeships was being managed in the context of maintaining levels of department performance and was advised that it was a challenge but that previous experience had shown that it was manageable and that managers had the opportunity to have input on filling their own teams. It was also noted that higher level apprentices usually had some degree of work experience.

Members were also advised that an apprentice was defined by the fact that they were paid the apprenticeship salary and that they spent 20% of their time in “off the job” learning that would lead to an apprenticeship qualification. Where the apprenticeship levy was used to up-skill existing staff, the skills learned on an apprenticeship programme could give staff the confidence to progress which created flow overall and in turn created new opportunities for young people.

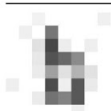
It was stressed that there was no conflict between the redeployment process and the apprenticeship scheme as vacancies were considered for redeployment first.

#### **Resolved –**

**That a further progress report be presented in six months time, focussing on progress made against the peer review recommendations.**

***ACTION: Chief Executive***

#### **15. 2018 REPORT ON PEOPLE CAN**



Previous Reference: Minute 19 (2017/18)

At its meeting held on 28 September 2018, the Committee had received a report on the Local Government Association Peer Challenge Review and had asked for a progress report focussing on People Can and engagement.

The Chief Executive presented a report (**Document “F”**) which outlined some of the wide range of work undertaken in the last twelve months around the People Can approach and principles.

The Assistant Director Transformation attended the meeting and made a detailed presentation in respect of People Can, highlighting that it helped the Council deliver services and that it was key not to smother the initiative with process and policy. He explained the change in co-ordination activity which had seen the Neighbourhood Service resume its role and drew to members’ attention examples of the activities which it was intended would be undertaken in future.

A member expressed concern that the development plan seemed not to include engagement with the public and stressed that this was a crucial element to the success of People Can across the District. An officer involved in the co-ordination of People Can agreed with that concern and stressed that recognising what people were already doing would inspire others to become involved.

Members also expressed concern that People Can should not be viewed as the Council being prescriptive and that opportunities to include small schemes such as winter gritting and community libraries in the People Can initiative were being missed. They considered it important that such small schemes be well supported. They also considered that the People Can website could be included on the Council app.

Members went on to stress that People Can was much more than litter picks and community clean ups and considered that the ward officer role could be better connected with the development of community projects.

In response, officers agreed that the website could be linked to the app and drew members’ attention to the fine balance between Council support and being prescriptive. The celebration of work other than community clean ups was already underway and an example of student awards was given to show this. The need for all departments to engage with People Can was stressed as was the need to make interaction between the Council and community groups much simpler.

The possibility of Council staff also being People Can participants was discussed as they comprised a large cross section of the wider community and it was agreed that a major objective going forward was better support for small groups as well as more recognition of the good work that was already underway.

A member expressed concern that the People Can initiative meant that groups which had been in operation for some time were now being subsumed within a project which had no meaning for them. He also expressed reservations that essential services may be left to volunteer groups to provide, especially in areas



such as Early Help and Prevention.

He was advised that the ethos of People Can in such areas was not the replacement of professional services but was intended to enable independence among service users to enhance the services they received.

A member also asked about the best way to involve young people and youth groups and was advised that the Youth Service and stakeholder groups could be consulted for their views.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That a report giving details relating to People Can projects and activities be presented to this Committee in six months time along with key outcomes for each project and activity.**
- (2) That the report also include how the People Can activity is being co-ordinated across the Council.**
- (3) That officers be requested to look at community development as part of the core People Can Development Plan.**
- (4) That officers be requested to explore the integration of the People Can website with the Council app.**

***ACTION: Chief Executive***

**16. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair of the Committee presented a report (**Document “G”**) which included the work programme for the Committee for 2018/19.

Members discussed the possibility of including a report on the work of West Yorkshire Joint Services at some point in the future.

**Resolved –**

**That a report on West Yorkshire Joint Services be added to the Work Programme**

***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.**

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

