

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

Commenced 5.05 pm  
Concluded 8.49 pm

### Present – Councillors

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Cooke Hargreaves M Pollard	Azam Duffy Green Kamran Hussain Nazir	J Sunderland

Observer: Councillor Hinchcliffe

### Councillor Azam in the Chair

#### 40. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

#### 41. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

#### 42. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

No referrals were made to the Committee.

#### 43. STRONGER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN

The Committee considered **Document “X”** which contained the Stronger Communities Strategy and Delivery Plan, produced by the Bradford Stronger Communities Partnership.

Members of various groups making up the Partnership attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Strategy, advising that it had been informed by existing

good practice across the District; that it dovetailed with other strategies; that it went beyond the original remit of the green paper and the narrow confines of the integration agenda; that Bradford's experiences meant it had answers for the wider community and that the strategy would be shared widely across the Country.

The part of the Strategy which dealt with linking schools was explained in detail to the Committee, especially the positive experience of two very different schools within the District which had formed close on-going links to the benefit of both pupils and staff.

A member queried the need for the two schools to meet at neutral venues and asked whether that in itself could cause further division. He was advised that the project had proven very successful and had the full support of both head teachers.

The Bishop of Bradford, who was a member of the Partnership, stated that it was important to make a start on working towards the aims of the Strategy without waiting for other issues such as housing and school admissions to be understood better. He stressed that one of the best places to engage with people was within schools and that, while some issues might be challenging, the purpose of the Strategy was to tackle them.

Members were also advised that the Strategy was an evolving document and that the partnership intended to challenge some of the data that had been used as a starting point. For example, it intended to create a Bradford standard measure for segregation, which took into account the high number of mixed race families within the District.

A member concurred with that view, stating that he wasn't comfortable with the issue of segregation being described in simplistic terms without challenging that view or taking into account the movement of people within the District as new communities became more established and prosperous.

Another member stated that he considered that the issue of cohesion had been identified by organisations such as the Partnership as important rather than by the communities involved. He challenged the Partnership on this point as he noted that the report mentioned only working with registered social landlords when he considered that the issue of getting communities together was more subtle than that. He stated that he considered the issue of class to be important and queried what the report was trying to achieve.

The Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and Communities appreciated Members' challenges, stating that a big issue for the Partnership was understanding poverty and how it affected housing and communities. He stated that the Government considered that communities should be trying to do better than simply get along together. He also explained that he did not expect every strategy explored by the Partnership to be taken forward but that all options would be considered and an evidence based progress report would be brought back to the Committee.



A member expressed some concern that there was a sense of distance between those communities experiencing challenge and those which were not and which were based out of the city centre. He also considered that a major challenge in terms of employment was that of female participation, which he considered to be lagging behind other areas. He stated that getting women into employment and out into their communities changed those communities in a completely different way than did male engagement. He also concurred with the view that Bradford could improve on the Government description of segregation.

The Assistant Director agreed with the concerns expressed about female engagement, stating that a significant issue was the lack of spoken English among some female groups which affected every aspect of their lives and limited their opportunities for social mixing as well as more formal interaction such as health, education and employment.

Members also noted that issues within Document “X” overlapped with the subject matter of Document “W” which was also to be discussed at this meeting, particularly the issue of hate crime.

A member congratulated the Partnership on its success in obtaining funding which would not have come into the District otherwise. However, she did have a concern that some of the projects referred to in the report were short term in nature and that they could take place and conclude without any lasting positive effects for the communities involved. She criticised previous work on this subject which she considered had simply taught communities to consider themselves as victims or had stereotyped them.

In response, the Assistant Director stressed that this was a five year project, with some of the work taking place on a “test and learn” basis. He highlighted that he expected the work to have an end point impact. Partnership members also stressed that it was very important to them to leave behind a legacy and that the strategy must be considered along side all the other work that was also on-going in the District on the issue of cohesion.

A member commented on the five year nature of the plan, comparing it to the fact that matters could change completely in as little as three and a half months and wondered if the timing was appropriate. He also queried the lack of mention of sports in the report as he considered this was a good way to encourage cohesion. He was advised that the Partnership considered this to be a good time for this type of work, considering the current national agenda and that the District was involved in a local delivery pilot on work around sport.

A member also noted that, as some projects were time limited, it would be necessary to make robust decisions about what was having a positive impact as it would not be possible to address all issues. He stressed that the workplace was important for integration and highlighted that older people of different communities had worked alongside each other in Bradford for many years.



The Assistant Director agreed that it would be important to be smart about investing in projects and that dynamic assessment would be utilised to assess projects before they concluded.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That Document “X” be welcomed and the good work that is being undertaken be acknowledged.**
- (2) That this Committee requests that progress against the Stronger Communities Strategy Delivery Plan be provided in twelve months time.**
- (3) That the progress report include focus on the outcomes of projects being delivered as part of this programme.**
- (4) That the report highlight the positive outcomes from “Test and Learn” so that work which has not been successful is not repeated.**

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

**44. BRADFORD DISTRICT SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT AND DELIVERY PLAN**

The Strategic Director Place presented a report (**Document “W”**) which provided details of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) performance report for the twelve months to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The report also presented the annual CSP delivery plan.

A member challenged the content of the report, considering there to be a disconnect between the priorities within it and the priorities of his constituents. He expressed concern that the credibility of the Police would be adversely affected by this and also had concerns about the use of data within the report, citing that there was only one reference to burglary but that far more reference was made to hate crime. He considered that such priorities needed to be reconsidered and gave a personal example of extreme violence against a family member which he considered had not been investigated properly.

In response, a representative of the Police stressed the seriousness of the impact of hate crime. She also highlighted that violent crime did not necessarily have to result in injury to a person to have an impact. She undertook to discuss the example given by the Councillor privately. She also concurred that crime such as burglary had an impact on people’s lives and stressed that a lot of work was being done to make people feel safer.

The Chair also stressed how much hate crime affected people’s lives and stated



that it should not be belittled. He highlighted that hate crime was increasing nationally.

A member noted that improved the reporting of crime may have the unintended effect that targets to reduce crime were not met. The Police representative agreed that data was difficult to manage and that it could sometimes appear contradictory.

Another member returned to the issue of hate crime as compared to other types of crime and expressed concern that the public felt that not enough was being done to resolve crimes which were not hate crime related. In response, the process of investigating burglaries was explained and it was stressed that, while such crimes were very distressing, they were not of the same nature as hate crime which was an attack on an individual simply for who they were. It was also noted that hate crime often had a high element of violence involved.

Members noted that this report contained some extremely important topics and considered that it would be worthwhile examining those separately and in greater depth.

Members also recounted examples of hate crime and abuse via social media which had resulted in very serious impacts on people's lives and stressed that it was an important topic which should not be considered less significant than other types of crime.

In response to a question regarding the impact of crime on mental health and anxiety, members were advised that how crime was dealt with depended on individual circumstances. The process of making an impact statement by victims of crime was explained as was the restorative justice process which had proven extremely beneficial. It was stated that there was no routine pathway for mental health support.

A member suggested that publicity could be given to the conviction of prolific offenders, including to those who may have been victims of that individual, in order to give comfort that such an individual was no longer operating in an area.

A member explained her concerns in respect of this report and young men who lived in an environment of low level crime and who had little prospect of meaningful work to take them out of that situation. She considered that this group of youths were excluded from growing and maturing and that it was a significant issue for the City to deal with. Member colleagues and the Police representative concurred with those concerns and considered that the issues of behaviours and relationships should be meaningfully challenged.

A member then turned to the issue of the anti social use of motor vehicles and was advised that it was already on the work programme for consideration at a future meeting.

**Resolved –**



- (1) That a schedule of scrutiny reviews into the areas raised in Document “W” be developed.
- (2) That the above schedule include a detailed scrutiny review into the effectiveness of Bradford Council and its partners in addressing hate crime across the District.
- (3) That the above schedule include a detailed scrutiny review into the effectiveness of Bradford Council and its partners in tackling domestic abuse across the District.
- (4) That this Committee requests that quarterly electronic performance reports be provided, with the opportunity to raise any concerns which may require addressing.

***ACTION: Strategic Director, Place/Overview and Scrutiny Lead***

#### **45. BRADFORD DISTRICT ANNUAL PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2017/2018**

The Committee considered **Document “V”** which presented key achievements, future challenges and areas of focus of the Bradford District Partnership in delivering the priorities of the District Plan (2016-2020).

Members praised the report for its informative nature and improved presentation but considered that it would be useful for this Committee if issues were examined in more detail. They acknowledged that issues were also presented to other Overview and Scrutiny Committees but would wish to see headline issues reported to them and to have data explained in more detail.

In response to a question in respect of empty and derelict properties, members were advised that Bradford had a record of good practice in terms of working with the owners of empty properties to encourage them back into use. There were also measures such as loans to improve properties which were in poor condition. It was stressed that the empty homes team was extremely persistent in pursuing empty properties and had recently concluded a case which had taken a decade to resolve. Members were advised that an officer from the team had recently been awarded the Empty Homes Practitioner of the Year award. They were also reassured that owners of such properties were not abandoning them, so Council Tax was continuing to be paid, rather than they were mothballing them until the rental market improved.

Members then turned to the issue of Universal Credit and the support which residents may need and were advised that the Revenues and Benefits Team would lead on this issue and that officers shared their concerns about the increase in debt that people experienced as they transferred to the new system. Members were assured that as much preparation as possible was taking place within the Council’s Advice Service. They were also informed that the topic was



included on the Committee's work programme for a future meeting.

**Resolved –**

**That a further annual report be brought in 12 months time.**

***ACTION: Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Executive***

**46. BRADFORD COUNCIL'S EQUALITY OBJECTIVES ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT (JULY 2017 TO JUNE 2018)**

The Assistant Director for the Office of the Chief Executive presented a report (**Document "U"**) which provided the Committee with its annual update on the delivery of the Council's equality objectives (2016-2020) and which covered the period July 2017 to June 2018.

A member queried how the objectives had originally been set and was advised that they had been established in 2015 after a period of consultation with key stakeholders such as this Committee, Strategic Directors and the voluntary sector among others. The member noted that it was crucial that the Committee was provided with all relevant information and flagged up the recent concerns expressed by the Childrens Service's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of this issue.

Members queried the number of children in care who had entered into apprenticeships and were advised that they would be provided with that data after the meeting.

Members expressed some concern that outcomes or, in respect of long term projects, milestones were not included in this report. They also noted that some of the language used in the report was difficult to understand. Officers took those comments on board for future iterations of the report.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That this Committee requests that its members be engaged with as part of the consultations for re-designing the Council's equality objectives.**

**(2) That a progress report be provided in twelve months time, including a focus on the delivery of key outcomes.**

***ACTION: Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Executive***

**47. ANNUAL REPORT FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2017-18**



The Chair of the Committee presented a report (**Document “Y”**) which contained the Draft Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2017-18.

Members noted that the example given in respect of the workload of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was not appropriate and should be removed.

**Resolved –**

- (1) That, subject to the amendment of the part of the report referring to the workload of Children’s Social Care Services, the proposed Annual Report be adopted.**
- (2) That the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2017-18 be referred to Council for consideration.**

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

**48. WORK PROGRAMME**

Previous Reference: Minute 31 (2018/19)

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (**Document “Z”**) which set out the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2018/19.

In respect of the resolution passed at the last meeting of the Committee requesting that a detailed report be presented on the financing of Children’s Social Care, the Chair reported that he had recently attended a meeting of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and had been reassured that future reporting on the matter was sufficiently robust that this Committee need not scrutinise it further. Members considered that, although their colleagues would be examining matters in detail, it would be appropriate for this Committee to continue to monitor the issue and that it could be addressed at the next quarterly review.

No resolution was passed in respect of this item.

***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

