

Minutes of a meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee held on Wednesday, 19 February 2020 in Committee Room 4 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 6.00 pm
Concluded 8.10 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP
Choudhry H Khan Iqbal Mir	Knox R Ahmed Stubbs Ward	Sajawal

Councillor Stubbs in the Chair

39. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interest of transparency all those who were landlords disclosed an interest in Minute 44.

40. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

41. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions submitted by the public.

42. SAFER ROADS DEVOLVED BUDGET - BRADFORD EAST

The Strategic Director, Place presented a report (**Document “V”**) which sought approval for programmes of safer roads schemes in the Bradford East constituency for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Members were informed that the total Bradford East Safer Roads budget for 2020/21 and 2021/22 was £110,000 per year; the recommended annual split between casualty reduction schemes and community-based projects in Bradford East was £70,000 and £40,000 respectively. However, there was an option to increase the spend proportion on community-based projects when viable casualty reductions schemes programmes had been exhausted. Suggested schemes programmes were detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.

It was reported that due to the timing of funding announcements, previous years Safer Roads programmes had generally been presented to Area Committees in June or July. This had sometimes resulted in there being only 8 months to deliver a full programme of schemes; given the lengthy consultation and legal process required for many of the projects, this had inevitably resulted in a failure to complete programmes on time. In order to ensure timely delivery of schemes, it was proposed to determine a 2-year programme. This also facilitated the potential for a more flexible approach whereby more significant schemes could be funded over a 2-year period.

In response to a Members question it was reported that Appendices 3, 4 and 5 were monitored and updated, older schemes were removed in consultation with Ward Members; a review of the lists was undertaken periodically and some historical schemes that had remained on the lists for a number of years had been retained following consultation with Members; it was also useful to keep some of the schemes on the lists in case other sources of funding becoming available and also provided a checklist of what was needed in the area.

It was reported that the proposed programme of Casualty Reduction Schemes were identified by looking at clusters of recorded traffic collisions.

Members felt that future reports should include information on casualty rates across Bradford East and give reasons as to why certain schemes were chosen over others.

Resolved –

- (1) That the programmes of Casualty Reduction schemes for 2020/21 and 2021/22 listed in Appendix 1 to Document “V” be approved.**
- (2) That the proposed programmes of Traffic Management measures for 2020/21 and 2021/22 listed in Appendices 2 and 3 to Document “V” be approved.**
- (3) That any Traffic Regulation Orders, or any legal procedures linked to the processing of traffic calming measures or pedestrian crossing facilities which are necessary to implement the chosen schemes be approved for processing and advertising subject to the scheme details being agreed with the local Ward Members.**

- (4) That any valid objections to the advertised Traffic Regulation Orders, traffic calming or pedestrian facilities be submitted to this Area Committee for consideration or in the event of there being no valid objections the Traffic Regulation Orders be sealed and implemented and the traffic calming or pedestrian facilities be implemented as advertised.
- (5) That future Safer Roads reports include information on casualty rates across the Bradford East Area which also includes information as to why certain schemes were not chosen.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

Overview and Scrutiny Area: Regeneration and Environment

43. BRADFORD OPPORTUNITY AREA: BRADFORD EAST

The Area Committee was asked to consider **Document “W”** which provided information in respect of the Bradford Opportunity Area in Bradford East.

Members were advised that, as an “Opportunity Area”, the DfE funded a small team to work with Bradford to agree and deliver priorities in improving social mobility. Its work was driven by an Opportunity Area board made up of key stakeholders from across Bradford. This group had identified four priority area to work on:-

- Strengthening school leadership and the quality of teaching
- Improving literacy and oracy, including a focus on parental engagement
- Helping young people access rewarding careers
- Removing health-related barriers to learning

A wide range of activity had been funded and was outlined at Appendix 1 to Document “W”.

It was reported that a wide range of activities which specifically focused on the Bradford East Area was tabled at Appendix 1.

Members were informed that the Department for Education (DfE) published its Bradford Opportunity Area plan in January 2018; with this plan, the DfE committed an extra £6m of funding and a tilting of more national programmes into Bradford until 2020; Bradford had received £4.85m to date with a further £1.4m due before the end of March 2020 (total £6.25m); on top of this, Bradford also received £5.6m in Essential Life Skills funding.

It was reported that by the end of August 2020, Bradford schools would have been direct recipients of over £9m additional funding since the start of the Opportunity Area programme.

Members were informed that the Opportunity Area investment had totalled £12m (from 2017 – 2020) through a grant from the Department for Education; this

included in excess of £6m for the main Opportunity Area grant (with an extra £500K committed in summer 2019), in excess of £5.5m for Essential Life skills funding with the remainder made up of support from national partners and prioritised funding for other government initiatives; this investment had been across the entire Education sector in Bradford and not all of the funding had passed through the Council, with grants awarded directly to schools for some activities and programmes.

Members commented on a number of issues which included:

- What measures were in place to assess the outcomes of the various projects and whether the money was being used for what it should be?
- What trends in improvements were being seen?
- There was a discrepancy in the information presented in Appendix 3; needed up to date local information.
- Needed to see information on what was being undertaken to ensure the programmes were sustainable.
- In terms of the Essential Life Skills funding it was difficult to see from project to project what the money was being spent on; the allocation to schools was not explained fully.
- Don't feel the projects were targeting the right areas; there were parts of Bradford East that did not have a Youth Centre and young people were meeting in McDonalds; needed to target funding where it was needed.
- More could be undertaken in relation to after school support and working with parents.
- How did the projects engage with parents where language was a barrier?
- In terms of School to School Support the schools that were being funded already had a surplus budget; focus should be on schools and areas that needed support; money was not being targeted to where it should be.
- How did the programme engage with parents and specifically with fathers; needed a whole family approach.

In response to Members questions it was reported that:

- Any funding that was provided had conditions attached to it in terms of how it should be spent.
- In terms of outcomes each school had targets such as the Ofsted improvements required, improving exam results, confidence in staff, better SEND support etc.
- Trends varied, school improvement was not a rapid process; 5 schools out of 11 had improved; one school was inspected only a week after the support had been put in place; schools that had been inspected 5 months into the support all improved; some schools were seeing clear improvements while others took longer; the outcomes being seen were positive.
- Officers were working on a sustainability tracker since the suggestions made at the last Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee of ensuring some activities were sustainable when the Opportunity Area funding finished.
- A breakdown of where money had been spent in relation to the Essential Life Skills funding could be provided to the Committee.

- Work was being undertaken with primary schools on how they worked with parents more effectively; Essential Life Skills Funding was available to all schools.
- Support was provided to 26 schools across Bradford to improve results and support better opportunities for pupils and teachers, the programme did not look at what resources a school had but where they were in terms of level of improvement.
- There was work being undertaken to engage parents such as the Ravenscliffe Community Association holding a variety of activities to help parents upskill.
- Funding for Year 4 of the programme had been confirmed.

Resolved –

- (1) **That the programme progress be noted.**
- (2) **That a further report be submitted to this Committee in a years time which includes:**
 - **evidence of outcomes and steps being taken to make the various projects sustainable**
 - **how the project engaged with parents where language was a barrier**
 - **how the programme was engaging and involving fathers**
- (3) **That future reports include an updated Social Mobility Index.**

Action: Strategic Director, Children’s Services

Overview and Scrutiny Area: Children’s Services

44. HOUSING STANDARDS

The Strategic Director, Place presented a report (**Document “X”**) which provided members with an overview of the work of the Housing Standards and Empty Homes and Loans Teams undertaken in the Bradford East Area.

It was reported that in 2018/19 the service received 648 service requests relating to housing standards in the Bradford East area, the majority of which were from the private rented sector. This was a 20% increase on the number received in 2017/18, which was higher than the increase across the whole District, which was 15%. Appendix 1 provided a breakdown of those service requests received in 2018/19 by ward.

Members were informed that the main legislation enforced by the team was the Housing Act 2004. This legislation came into force in April 2006 and used the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as the prescribed method of assessing a house’s condition. Under the HHSRS officers were required to ensure that each property was assessed against 29 separate hazards. Using the assessment tool hazards were categorised as either Category 1 or Category 2

hazards. Details of the 29 hazards assessed using HHSRS were provided in Appendix 2.

It was reported that In 2018/19 the most frequently scored hazards in Bradford East were Fire, Electrical Hazards and Damp and Mould. This was broadly in line with the frequency of hazards across the District, except that the proportion of Electrical Hazards was higher and Excess Cold (which is one of the top three hazards District wide) was lower.

Members were informed that During 2018/19 for properties in Bradford East:

- The Housing Standards Team served 302 notices requiring works to be undertaken.
- Housing conditions were improved in 317 properties.
- Housing conditions were improved in 131 properties where children aged 0-18 years were.
- 2 prosecutions were taken for non compliance.

Members made the following comments:

- What was classed as a high risk property?
- What methods of prosecution were used on landlords who failed to take action?
- How was the Service made aware of empty properties?
- Was the focus on properties that were empty for longer than 6 months?
- A number of properties that became long term empty posed being used for fly tipping.
- There were hundreds of empty properties that could be looked at.
- What type of property gave the most problems?

In response to Members comments it was reported that:

- A property was assessed as high risk depending on its condition, length of time it had been empty, the landlord not taking action when requested and owners not engaging with the Service.

- The methods used by officers included utilising appropriate products from the full range of options available to them to try to encourage owners to bring their homes back into use but in some cases they had to use the ultimate sanction against uncooperative owners – compulsory purchase. Since 2010, the service had compulsorily purchased 35 properties and voluntarily acquired 39 properties. There were a further 20 cases currently

on going where the Council was attempting to acquire properties, 12 of which were through compulsory purchase and 8 were through voluntary acquisition. 3 of the properties subject to compulsory purchase and 1 of the properties subject to voluntary acquisition were in the Bradford East Area.

- The Service became aware of empty properties through various methods such as service requests from members of the public, Members, Council Tax Data; the Service used both reactive and proactive methods.
- The Service focussed on properties that had been empty for longer than 6 months; some properties took longer to sell which were not a concern; reasons why properties were left to become long term empty could be many and varied and detailed investigations were often necessary to identify legal ownership of properties before any action could be undertaken.
- The Service worked with Environmental Protection where properties were being used for fly tipping.
- The Service investigated empty properties that were causing problems; not all empty properties were in a poor condition; there were lots of incentives available to get people to bring their properties back into use.
- Terrace houses in a densely populated areas caused the most problems due to proximity of neighbours; ex local authority estates and properties that caused anti social behaviour such as fly tipping.

There was a short discussion on the actions available if owners did not pay the Council Tax on empty properties.

Resolved –

That the report be noted and a progress report be presented to the Committee in 12 months time.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

Overview and Scrutiny Area: Regeneration and Environment

45. COMMUNITY ACTION BRADFORD AND DISTRICT

Members were asked to consider **Document “Y”** which provided an overview of Community Action work undertaken across the area.

It was reported that Community Action helped voluntary and community groups to start up, grow and develop. As the needs of groups changed over time, Community Action also helped groups change, reduce activities or close when needed. The voluntary organisation support officer role involved helping groups with good governance and explaining how to raise funding including, but not limited to, applying for grants. Typical enquiries also included questions about

employment/ volunteer issues, financial management, marketing and business planning.

Members were informed that Community Action supported, enabled, developed, represented and informed the community in a wide variety of ways. It offered operational support in setting up and sustaining a voluntary or community group; it managed funded to offer support in finding and applying for funding; it managed DIVA Bradford to advertise job vacancies, events and room hire for organisations; it offered a range of training opportunities for organisations, staff and volunteers.

The organisations supported in the Bradford East Constituency were reported in Appendix 3 to the report.

In response to a Members question it was reported that not all groups were proactive in coming forward for advice from Community Action; some obtained funding through the lottery and did not keep in contact, others came when their funding had run out.

It was reported that the majority of the work was undertaken with small organisations.

In response to a Members question it was reported that the Laisterdyke Hub had links with the BD3 area to help small organisations.

There was a discussion on whether some of the organisations supported had become sustainable.

Resolved –

- (1) That the information in Document “Y” be noted and welcomed.**
- (2) That the work Community Action do to help voluntary and community groups be welcomed and that all volunteers be thanked for the valuable work they do across the District.**

Overview and Scrutiny Area: Corporate

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Bradford East Area Committee.

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