

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 9 October 2019 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.35 pm
Concluded 8.25 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	GREEN
Jamil Berry Mohammed Kamran Hussain	Heseltine Herd	R Ahmed	Love

Observers: Councillor Sarah Ferriby

Apologies: Councillor Joanne Dodds

Councillor Jamil in the Chair

1. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interests of transparency, Cllr Berry disclosed an interest in item agenda 5:- Improving health and wellbeing through green space and green infrastructure with a focus on areas of high deprivation, as his wife was employed by Better Start Bradford.

2. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

3. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

4. **IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH GREEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH A FOCUS ON AREAS OF HIGH DEPRIVATION**

The joint report of the Strategic Director of Health and Wellbeing and the Strategic Director of Place **Document “Q”** provided an update on the use of green spaces in the District.

In 2018 the Committee agreed that the next report should focus on what is happening locally to increase and improve local green space, and to make access to green spaces easier for more people. The Committee also requested a particular focus on the more deprived areas of the District after a 2018 local study showed that some urban parts of Bradford have relatively green streets compared to similar urban areas, but on average have fewer green spaces for leisure and play (Ferguson and colleagues, 2018). There are some notable exceptions where urban areas have large, well maintained award-winning parks.

The appendix to the paper was a piece of work prepared by the “Born in Bradford” service, which brings together evidence around the things that enable people to use spaces and the things that act as barriers to people.

The Council manages 36 public parks (270 hectares) which is comparable with many other local authorities. The District has 109 wooded areas or woodlands with over 850 hectares, which is below the national average. The Council has 100 recreation grounds as well as cemeteries and memorials spaces, and moorlands. There are various strategies that relate to this issue, namely the Play Space Strategy, the Sports Facilities Strategy and Cycling Strategy.

Following the presentations Members discussed a number of matters, including:-

- On the subject of “playful snickets”, officers highlighted the areas around healthy places in the Local Delivery Pilot will identify two or three snickets to work on, adding that it is not a district wide plan.
- As regards bidding to the Heritage Fund for refurbishing parks. The park strategy group are looking at which parks are going to be the most successful in order to determine which bids be submitted.
- Officers explained that the Local Delivery Pilot is working with children aged 5 to 15 across ten wards in the District, with the aim of improving and increasing their physical activity levels. They are in the process of developing their programme which has four discreet project areas within it. They are developing plans that are based on the engagement work they have done.

Concern was expressed about relying heavily on the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot, as Sport England are currently consulting on how funds should be allocated, as they are running eighteen months late in delivering their own projects. Officers responded that they had met with Sports England the summer and staff are now in place.

Concern was also expressed that some of the EU funding may end, and

members questioned whether any contingency plans were in place. It was explained that within Public Health there is an understanding that the funding is secured if Britain leaves with a deal, and where Bradford is part of a partnership, as far as possible, that will continue if the bids are successful as most of the bids have been developed through partnership of eight or nine European cities. The uncertainty is if there is no deal.

A question was raised regarding the future support to voluntary organisations. How are we working with the voluntary sector to create the sort of engagement seen in other areas to be successful.

Officers explained that they started developing plans with the National Governing Bodies, then expand discussions to other local organisations including GP surgeries along with colleagues in Public Health, to look at how non-sporting people can be encouraged to use the facility. Management will not be through a traditional Council management model.

A Member stated that recent studies show that people that live in inner city areas have a shorter life expectancy due to health inequalities and asked what was being done to tackle those health inequalities. What links are being made with the NHS.

Officers responded that the Public Health Team works very closely with the NHS regarding life expectancy studies, adding that there will be a report at the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24 October 2019 looking at the spending that was just mentioned, and will list all the programmes. Members of this Committee are welcome to attend that meeting.

In addition it was reported that the measure in the Public Health outcomes framework is to increase physical activity in our green spaces. Work has already started looking at what information to capture and how the impact on public health outcomes across the Council is measured, to maximise opportunity.

A Member expressed concern that the cycling strategy appeals to those who want to cycle as a form of recreation, but doesn't appear to address the issue of people cycling to and from work.

A Member asked what the Council was doing to promote footpaths and countryside (along with other activities such as climbing) from a health perspective. Officers said this query would be fed back to the "Living Well" service.

On the subject of removing barriers a member stated that it may not be realistic to provide wet weather gear and transport for people to access the countryside, and queried where the funding would come from. Officers responded that the point about wet weather gear and transport was reported by an organisation as evidence of what they actually do. The open space audit is currently looking at issues engaging with people around facilities that they want to see in green spaces and open spaces.

Officers added that they have been working with the LDP in Peel Park and agreed the design for the new play area which is specifically for children to play and get

muddy. The LDP will provide footwear and transport to get the children from the inner city out to the open spaces. It is about changing the perceptions of play facilities.

A member expressed concern that charging people to park in these areas was putting a barrier in place. If the Council want to encourage people to visit these places, we should not be charging for parking. This makes things difficult for people operating on a budget.

Resolved –

That the Committee welcomes the report and requests that an update be presented in 12 months, detailing specific projects and their outcomes.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

5. WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW- PROGRESS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment and Waste Management Overview Scrutiny Committee undertook a scrutiny review into water management across the District following the devastating winter 2015 floods. The review was endorsed by the Environment and Waste Management Overview Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 4th July 2017.

The Water Management Scrutiny Review produced 26 recommendations and it was resolved that a report would be made in the following twelve months to monitor progress against all the recommendations contained in the review. At the meeting in October 2018, it was again resolved by the Regeneration and Environment Overview Committee that an update report would be presented in a further 12 months.

The Strategic Director of Place presented a report **Document “R”** provided an update on the progress made against the 26 recommendations in the last 12 months.

A Member asked if the department was liaising with large providers of accommodation in the District, to see if when they are undertaking major refurbishments of their estate, they could take some of the grey water to use on site or put it into a sustainable drainage system. Officers replied that through the planning process, with pre planning enquiries, the Development team advise on what water management measures could be effective, however, it is challenging retro fitting sustainable drainage systems.

A question was raised in relation to natural soak away – are the Council actively looking at sites within the District. Officers responded that this was the case and the Harden Moor scheme is an example of the type of work that was taking place.

A Member asked if any work was taking place further up the valley to reduce the amount of water before it reached the Bradford District. Officers responded that this issue is dealt with as part of the catchment wide approach that they operate, adding that when they develop their schemes they work closely with the

Environment Agency.

A Member expressed concern in relation to the inspection of sustainable drainage features, and queried why if conditions are placed on developers to include certain features in their schemes, the department aren't checking them, rather than trusting that the work has been done. Could anything be built into the charging policy?

Officers responded that if there are problems with schemes, they go out and inspect. They have reduced resources and it is about trying to use those resources to best effect. They are not aware of any issues around this subject that have occurred within the last two years.

A question was asked as to why the Shipley type gullies needed replacing. Officers responded that the design of the gullies was supposed to prevent smells coming back up, although they have now been found to be less efficient in allowing water to drain away, therefore replacements were required.

Resolved –

That the Committee receives a report back before the end of October 2020 which monitors progress against the recommendations contained within the Water Management Scrutiny Review, that are yet to be completed.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

6. CULTURAL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Strategic Director, Place submitted a report (**Document “S”**) detailing the significant recent successes and ambitious plans for culture through to 2030, including the bid to become UK City of Culture 2025.

The report gave Members the opportunity to input to the brief for development of a new Cultural Strategy in light of these successes and plans.

The report also gave Members an overview of work and achievements in the cultural sector since the last time Culture was reported to the Committee.

It was reported that the Arts Council investment in the District has seen a significant increase, with an extra £2m received.

Officers explained that “Creative People and Places” is an Arts Council programme which is a community led activity. It has a 10 year vision with activity likely to start within communities early in the new year.

A Member stated that it was important that the vision is bold and reflects the rich cultural diversity of the City, and it could also be a great opportunity to resurrect the Bradford Mela. Officers replied that some work had been undertaken looking at how the Council might revisit something similar.

A Member asked how elected members can shape and steer how the Council engages with the public regarding this offer. Officers responded that there is a

real commitment from the Council to try to enable communities to have a say in developing the Cultural Strategy.

A question was asked in relation to the reference in the report of the 12 most deprived wards and stated that we should work across the whole of the District. Officers clarified that the Cultural Strategy will be District wide, and the 12 wards are the areas of the CPP programme that focus on the residents with least opportunity.

Members felt that it was important to engage with “non users” and ask what they understood culture to mean, and asked if the Arts Council only funded projects and programme that fit their definition of Culture. Officers replied that the Arts Council definition is beginning to shift as they are recognising and embracing a wider range of culture. The development of the CPP programme is about having conversations about what culture is.

A Member expressed concern about the £1.4 million cost, and suggested this may be a “gamble” as we may not be successful with the Capital of Culture bid. Officers clarified that the actual amount of funding that was going towards the capital of Culture bid was £545,000 and was an investment, rather than a gamble. In addition, pay back from this investment could start as soon as they begin to develop the bid.

Resolved –

(1) That officers be requested to consider the comments of the Committee when developing the Cultural Strategy 2020-2030.

(2) That a report on the City of Culture bid be presented to the Committee in March 2020.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

7. PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) UPTAKE AND INCREASE THE EV CHARGING NETWORK

The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources submitted a report (**Document “T”**) giving an update on the work undertaken to date and future proposals to promoting electric vehicle (EV) uptake and increase the EV charging network within the Bradford district.

A Member queried whether the work with the street lighting replacement scheme was “future proof”. Officers replied that they were currently investigating options as to how the scheme would work, adding that there was a great deal of new technology coming through and it needs to be considered what is best for the district.

A Member asked how Councillors could help connect providers with locations for charging points. Officers pointed out that, the company that won the tender is contracted to own, operate and maintain the charging points, and will liaise with the Council about proposed locations, as we need control over where they are sited. It is expected that within the next 18 months there will be a considerable

expansion in the numbers of charging points offered by both the Council and other providers.

A question was raised regarding whether every parking space should have a charging point if we anticipate that there will only be electric vehicles around by 2040. Officers explained that the battery capacity of cars was increasing all the time, so in future there should not be the requirement to charge vehicles as often.

It was asked how much the charging point scheme had cost the Council. Officers replied that there was no cost to the Council, the only expense had been an officer's time, and part of that time had been funded by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Going forward it is expected that there will be a small income stream from the charging points for the Council.

A Member asked what changes were being made to the Council's transport fleet. Officers responded that the Fleet Team were currently looking at which vehicles could be converted.

A question was asked regarding how long vehicles can park in a charging bay. Officers responded that rapid charging points charge a vehicle in roughly 30 minutes, so a high turnaround of vehicles is required. There is a blanket parking order for the whole District that stipulates the length of time certain charging points can be used. Enforcement staff can ticket overstayers and also non-electric cars, that are parked in charging bays.

Resolved –

That the Committee welcomed the report and the progress made to date.

Action: Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

8. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019 - 2020

The report of the Chair of the Regeneration & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document "U"**) invited Members to consider the Committee's Work Programme for the 2019-20 municipal year.

Members agreed that an additional meeting of the Committee should be added to the calendar.

Resolved –

That the Work Programme 2019-20 continues to be regularly reviewed during the year.

Action: Scrutiny Officer

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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