

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 12 March 2020 in Committee Room 3 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30pm
Concluded 7.15 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP
Azam D Green Kamran Hussain Watson Tait	Goodall	Griffiths

Apologies: Councillor Naveed Riaz

Councillor Azam in the Chair

66. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

There were no alternate members.

67. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

68. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted to review decisions to restrict documents.

69. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

70. UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources submitted a report, (**Document “AF”**), which examines the progress of and future plans for the roll out of Universal Credit, its impact and the arrangements in place to support residents.

Members heard that Universal Credit for working-age claimants has gradually been introduced across the Bradford District since November 2015. As at December 2019, 30,588 working-age residents were claiming Universal Credit.

Members were keen to understand the level of additional support that was being offered to the most vulnerable groups in the District.

In response, officers stated that the majority of vulnerable groups across the Bradford District would not move onto Universal Credit, until the end of the migration and would also receive a more personalised service.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members also wanted to know if there was a link between Universal Credit and homelessness.

Officers replied by indicating that work capability assessments were being undertaken, with regards to people making a claim for Universal Credit and that discussions had taken place about getting people back onto Housing Benefit and providing budgeting related advice. Officers stressed the importance of making contact with the customers first.

Members were concerned about the support being provided for vulnerable groups, particularly with people who also have addictions such as drugs, alcohol and gambling.

Continuing on, officers stated that this was an issue and that more work should be done in this area, in conjunction with partner organisations. However, officers highlighted that if somebody has an addiction, this can often be brought to attention when the person visits the Job Centre.

Members also questioned the training that was being provided to Libraries and other Council contact points across the District, in relation to providing advice on Universal Credit and Information Technology assistance.

Officers indicated that they had advertised Libraries as being available for online access to Universal Credit applications. However, officers stated that they had purposely not reached out to Library staff about providing specific advice relating to Universal Credit, as they wanted to focus on their own staff to advise people about Universal Credit.

Resolved -

This Committee requests that a report be presented to this Committee relating to the implementation of Universal Credit, across the District, to also include the support being provided to vulnerable groups.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Finance

71. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PREVENT STRATEGY IN THE BRADFORD

The Strategic Director of Place submitted a report, (**Document “AG”**), which

outlined the approach to delivering the approach to delivering the national Prevent Strategy in the Bradford district and highlights work that has taken place over the last 12 months.

Prevent is part of the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy, CONTEST. It focuses on early intervention through strategies which reduce the likelihood of individuals supporting a violent extremist ideology or becoming terrorists.

The aim of the Prevent Strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from all forms of terrorism, by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Members were keen to know how many projects were being delivered across the District, in relation to the threat from Far Right Groups.

In response to this, officers indicated that this year the focus of their work was on Far Right Groups and one project was currently being delivered.

There was considerable discussion around the training being provided in schools, in particular making students aware of the issues to be aware of.

In response to this, officers highlighted that a considerable amount of training was being undertaken in schools, training teachers on how to have those difficult conversations with students. The Prevent Education Officers were also, providing assistance to teachers.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members also made some general observations about the they would be keen to understand who the people of interest to the Prevent Strategy are, along with doing a full review of the value for money being delivered by the Prevent Strategy for the Bradford District.

Resolved –

- (1) This Committee requests that the independent review of the national Prevent Programme be presented to this Committee in September 2020, as soon as it is available after its publication.**
- (2) That the outcomes against the projects being delivered as part of the Prevent Strategy for the District be presented to the Committee.**
- (3) The report should also include the details of the Social Value of the projects being delivered as part of the Prevent Strategy for the District.**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Place.

72. PROGRESS REPORT ON PEOPLE CAN

The Strategic Director for Place submitted a report, (**Document "AH"**), which provided an update to members relating to the progress of People Can, together with information on projects and key outcomes on issues identified by our

communities, using a wider linkage to Council and partners information and communication channels.

Members heard that “People Can” is an open invitation to our communities, neighbourhoods, villages, towns, individuals and organisations that make up the District to work together to do things differently, discover how we can all make a difference to our lives and the places we live in. It is a District wide approach that succeeds through collaborating with the Community Voluntary Sector, (VCS), the business community and citizens.

Members were very keen to explore the activities that have been undertaken by People Can and whether Bradford Council could not have undertaken these activities, as this was not included in the report. Furthermore, members felt that People Can was a brand under which activities were being placed.

Members felt that this was a list of activities that Council was doing, which were activities that were core Council function.

In response officers highlighted that People Can was a facilitator, in developing and supporting communities to undertake such activities. The aim here was to trying to seek a more volunteering effort across the Bradford District. Despite this, officers did acknowledge that that some of the activities undertaken through People Can had already happened.

Members also stressed that they had previously requested to officers that the added value and social value be included in a future report, but it had not been included in this report.

Furthermore, members indicated that there was already a lot of similar work happening across the District, with neighbours voluntarily assisting each other.

In addition to this, a member also indicated that People Can had undertaken activities in their ward and it did help the communities in that area and value had been added. It was also suggested that this particular approach could be used across the Bradford District.

There was considerable discussion amongst members as to whether Bradford Council should continue to fund People Can or other similar programme. Members felt that there was a plethora of branding, with no mention of Bradford Council, along with People Can programme being able to demonstrate added value.

Resolved –

This Committee requests that a detailed report be presented, specifically focusing on the added value of the People Can Programme across the District.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Place

73. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK

PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead presented the work programme.

Members discussed the work programme and made amendments.

Resolved –

That the work programme be kept under review.

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