

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 10 March 2020 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 7.50 pm

Present – Councillors

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

Observers: Councillor Alex Ross-Shaw (Portfolio Holder - Regeneration, Planning and Transport)

Councillor Jamil in the Chair

14. LIBRARIES SERVICE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “BV”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide an update on key proposals for the library service which were subject to a formal public consultation.

When the library service began a review over 12 months ago, it was faced with an agreed saving target of £1.05m to achieve in 2020-21 against a backdrop of a national and local picture that showed a declining use of libraries. The service developed a new service vision, underpinned by a set of principles for what a future library service should be.

If agreed the new library service model would provide the framework to manage a change programme which would focus on individual libraries at a locality level. Where changes were proposed these would be subject to further engagement and consultation with residents and staff.

Research highlighted potential for further additional investment funding by working collaboratively with other Council services and wider stakeholders. This allowed the service to reconsider the approach for future development and a

library service model mapped to local need.

The report also included the summary proposals for the new library service model following consultation with residents, staff and stakeholders with a vision for 2020 to 2025. This was underpinned by the ambition to retain the existing library network with a focus on re-invention to align to community needs. The details of the six components of the proposed model were provided to Members in a document appended to the main report.

Resolved –

That the Committee welcomes the report, and requests that an update report be presented in September 2020, with a representative of Public Health to be invited to the meeting.

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

15. SINGLE USE PLASTICS UPDATE

The report of the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources (**Document “BW”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide Members with progress on Single Use Plastic within the Council. It also detailed the appointment of a member and officer Single Use Plastic champions and recommended that future updates were incorporated into the broader sustainable development agenda. This action followed a single use plastics review and resolutions agreed by Executive and full Council in 2019.

The report provided details of the background of the issue and the steps implemented or in progress to address it. A Single Use Plastic policy was developed with an action plan, provided in a document appended to the main report that showed progress was being made but there was still work to do. Members were also provided with details of the Council’s on-going commitment, demonstrated through obtaining the CIPS Corporate Ethics Standard for ethical procurement and supply chain, the changes made in Facilities Management and YPO both for packaging and food/drink containers.

Resolved –

(1) That the Committee notes the progress on reducing Single Use Plastic.

(2) That the Committee notes the proposed Single Use Plastic Policy and Action Plan.

(3) That an further report monitoring the recommendations of the Single Use Plastic Scrutiny review be presented to the Committee in 12 months time.

***ACTION:* Strategic Director, Corporate Resources**

16. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE HOUSING STANDARDS TEAM

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “BX”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide Members with an update on housing conditions and the work undertaken by the Housing Standards Team (HST) to address them as part of its delivery of statutory functions addressing housing conditions across the district.

The service worked with landlords to ensure compliance with legislation. Wherever possible this was through education and encouragement but the service did use enforcement powers, in line with the Council’s Enforcement Policy, where necessary.

Statistics on the number of notices issued, improved properties and the number of prosecutions for non-compliance.

The Housing Standards Team is also responsible for the enforcement of standards in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), such as bedsits and shared houses that required higher fire safety standards due to the increased risks.

The HST also carried out physical inspections for the Housing Options service for the provision of additional housing in the private rental sector. A triage system was introduced to prioritise service requests that presented the greatest potential health and safety risk to occupants. This pro-active approach allowed additional resources to be directed to enforcement and due to its success, went beyond the initial 6-month trial.

The details of the work carried out were provided to Members and were contained in the report with a breakdown of service requests received contained in a document appended to the main report.

Resolved –

That the Committee notes the report and requests a further update on the work of the Housing Standards team in 12 months time.

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

17. EMPTY HOMES UPDATE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “BY”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide Members with an update on the Council’s empty homes programme of work with particular focus on areas where there was a greater concentration of empty properties. Tackling empty homes in the district contributed towards the issues of housing supply, housing quality and creating neighbourhoods which were clean and where people felt safe.

The report provided Members with background information and statistics that were submitted to the Government showing how many properties were empty and for how long they had been so. The most significant housing portfolio holder in the district was Incommunities Housing Group whose plans were impacting on the

number of empty properties, mainly due to their high rise properties in the city centre. This was temporary as tenants were being relocated in anticipation of the properties being demolished.

Officers dealt with a number of service requests, a breakdown of these was contained in the report and the work carried out to address problematic long-term empty properties.

Resolved –

(1) That the Committee thanks Incommunities for their contribution to the meeting.

(2) That the Committee notes the contents of the report and requests a further update on the work of the Empty Homes team in 12 months time.

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

18. ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “BZ”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide Members and update on energy efficiency in the private rented sector in the Bradford district, excluding Social Housing or owner occupied properties.

Fuel poverty remained a significant issue in the Bradford Metropolitan District. The most recent figures available from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) showed that 13.5% of households (37,767) in the Bradford District were in fuel poverty in 2017, which was higher than the national average of 10.9% and the average in the Yorkshire & Humber region of 10.6%.

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) would apply to all tenancies from 1st April 2020. Under this legislation, there was a requirement for any properties rented out in the private rented sector to normally have a minimum energy performance rating of ‘E’ on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). Landlords would be required to contribute a maximum of £3,500 to improve properties to this level. Where the cost to meet the requirement exceeded this sum, then landlords were eligible to apply for an exemption. Work was underway to support owner occupiers and landlords with loans to have work carried out.

The improvement of housing conditions in the District would have a positive impact on those groups and individuals who suffered multiple disadvantages associated with poor quality and inadequate housing.

Resolved –

That a further update be provided to the Committee in 12 months time, by

means of an electronic briefing document.

ACTION: Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

**19. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019-20**

The report of the Chair of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document “CA”**) was submitted to provide Members with the details of the Work Programme for 2019/20.

Resolved –

No resolution was passed on this item.

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