

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 19 November 2020 at 4.00 pm in Virtual Remote Meeting

Commenced 4.00pm
Concluded 6.30 pm

Present – Councillors

| LABOUR | CONSERVATIVE | LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Azam D Green Kamran Hussain Watson Tait Shafiq | Riaz Pollard Sullivan | Griffiths |

Councillor in the Chair

Apologies:

106. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

Cllr Pollard for Cllr Goodall.
Cllr Sullivan for Cllr Bibby.

107. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

108. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

109. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

110. QTR. 2 FINANCE POSITION STATEMENT FOR 2020-21

The report provided Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members with an update on the forecast financial position of the Council for 2020-21.

Also examined in the report is the latest spend against revenue and capital

budgets and forecasts the financial position at the year end. It states the Council's current balances and reserves and forecasts school balances for the year.

Members were concerned at the difficulty in recruiting Children's Services Social Care Workers at Level 3, with 55% of the workers being on agency terms and conditions and why the posts could not be recruited to substantively.

As well as this members also highlighted that even though improvement were being made in the OFSTED Improvement Plan, but that the risk rating for this should be much higher in Bradford Councils Risk Register.

Officers agreed that they would review the risk rating for the OFSTED Improvement Plan and recognised that it was a challenge to recruit to Level 3 Social Care Workers, but they were looking to bring in new staff and getting the numbers of agency staff down will take time. Furthermore, members heard that officers were working to reducing the numbers of agency staff numbers, that pre-dates the OFSTED Inspection two years ago. Officers also explained that other Local Authorities who had received an inadequate judgement from OFSTED, were also struggling to recruit Level 3 Social Care Workers.

Members wanted further clarity on the Library development plans, relating to the IT infrastructure and financial resilience. Officers said that they would provide this information to the Committee.

Member asked where the extra £100k was coming from for the Legal Social Care Team. In response, officers said that this money was from Government Grants.

There was some discussion relating to the current stock level of Personal Protective Equipment and members heard that Bradford Council was still holding significant levels of stock, which had been provided by the local resilience fund, the Department for Health and Social Care and the stock that Bradford Council has bought.

This Committee requests that officers consider reviewing the risk judgements relating to the Children's Services OFSTED inspection.

(Andrew Cross – 01274 436823)

111. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2021-2025

The report summarised Bradford Council's Procurement Strategy 2021-2025 and was seeking the support from Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee Councillors.

Officers said that the Procurement Strategy was a key document that outlined the Council's procurement aims over the next four years. Members also heard that the Procurement Strategy was an enabler strategy for the Council Plan within the priority area of a Well Run Council.

Members also learned that the strategy was not intended to be a service

improvement plan for Procurement Services, but an outward facing document which shows the Councils intentions, in relation to the procurement function over the next four years.

Members were keen to understand that as there as the Council had been without a Procurement Strategy for a number of Years, had this caused any disadvantage to how the Council undertook procurement. In response, officers indicated that there had been no adverse affect, how the Council had undertaken Procurement.

However, a Councillor then stressed that Bradford Council did actually have a Procurement Strategy and had one since 2011, which had also been reviewed. Councillors were concerned, as it appeared that the Councils Procurement Strategy had not been followed.

Furthermore, Corporate Overview & Scrutiny members also felt that the Strategy was a statement of fundamental aims, rather than set out how procurement activity would be undertaken in a co-ordinated manner across Bradford Council. In addition, member were also keen to understand how Bradford Council included local Small Medium Enterprises, by simplifying the contractual values of procurement contracts.

In response Bradford Council Officers emphasised that they were trying to ensure that all procurement officers and professionals in the Council were operating in the same way, in terms of compliance and assessing risks and outcomes.

(1) That the Procurement Strategy be supported.

(2) This Committee requests that at its meeting in January 2021, officers present the progress being made against each of the five key deliverables within the Procurement Strategy.

(Ian Westlake – 07971 540171)

112. STRONGER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN

The report measured the progress against the Stronger Communities Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members had previously requested that reports focus specifically on the outcomes and evaluation of projects being delivered as part of the integrated communities programme.

Members were keen to understand how the COVID19 vaccine trials were progressing with BAEM communities.

Officers responded by saying that there was a low rate of take from the BAEM communities, in the COVID19 vaccine trials.

Members wanted Officers to provide them with an update on Community stars and the work being undertaken to protect youngsters, who are also at risk of exploitation.

Officers responded that there nine categories of awards and once shortlisting has been undertaken, the list will go out for public voting. Furthermore, Bradford Council Officers also indicated that there was cross organisational and department work ongoing to protect children.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members said that some projects had been completed, but questioned if ongoing evaluation was taking place, or if the evaluation took place at the end of the project. Members also stated that in relation to traineeships, there was no provision for supporting people with disabilities.

In response, officers highlighted that project evaluation reports were considered by the Stronger Communities Board Partnership. Officers also stressed that they would look into providing support to people with disabilities.

Councillors were in agreement that in relation to the COVID19 vaccine trials in communities, there should be more co-ordination between officers and members, to improve the service that is being delivered.

- (1) The Committee would like to thank all the ambassadors for the work they are undertaking in their communities.**
- (2) The Committee requests that the evaluation against the projects being delivered, be presented to this Committee upon their completion in 2021.**
- (3) That a further report be presented in 12 months, focusing on key outcomes against the work being undertaken.**

(Ian Day – 01274 433507)

113. BRADFORD DISTRICT SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT AND DELIVERY PLAN

The report provided Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members with the details of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) performance report for the 12 months to 31 August 2020 and also presented the annual CSP Delivery Plan.

Members discussed that Domestic Abuse had risen as a result of the COVID19 lockdown. Furthermore, Bradford Council Officers did confirm this and that there had been a significant rise, 60% increase in Domestic Abuse cases as a result of the COVID19 lockdown. In some hotspots, members heard that panels had been put together to tackle the issue.

Similarly members also indicated that Hate Crime has also increased.

Officers replied that there is a Police and Hate Crime Panel, that would also help focus efforts to address Hate Crime across the District. As well as this, there is also the Hate Crime Scrutiny Review that Corporate Overview &

Scrutiny Committee is undertaking, which is looking at addressing Hate Crime across the District.

Members were in agreement that the Safer Communities Partnership Performance Report and Delivery Plan, should be considered at least twice a year, to keep an overview of performance.

That Safer Communities Partnership Performance be presented to this Committee, at six monthly intervals.

(Michael Churley – 01274 431364)

114. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The report included the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2020-21, as well as the list of unscheduled topics.

The work programme also contained details of the scrutiny reviews, that the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, is currently undertaking.

Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee members discussed and made amendments to the work programme.

Members considered and agreed to keep an overview of the work programme.

(Mustansir Butt – 01274 432574)

Chair

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

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER