

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 18 March 2021 at 4.00 pm in Virtual Remote Meeting

Commenced 16.00
Concluded 18.00

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP
Azam D Green Watson Tait Shafiq	Bibby Riaz K Green	Griffiths

Councillor in the Chair

Apologies: No apologies

14. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

There were no alternate members.

15. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest in matters under consideration.

16. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

No request to remove the restriction on a report or background paper was made.

17. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

18. UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The report examines the progress of and future plans for, the roll out of Universal Credit and the impact of COVID19, along with the arrangements in place to support residents.

Bradford Council officers explained to members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Universal Credit was first introduced in the District

towards the end of 2015, replacing six existing benefits and tax credits, (often referred as legacy benefits) for working-age claimants.

Members were keen to understand if any groups had been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Officers stated that they were not aware of any groups that had been negatively impacted by the pandemic. The biggest impact of the pandemic has been that more people across the District were now unemployed.

Members sought clarification that the number of people receiving Universal Credit had changed, due to people losing their jobs and that as we move out of the pandemic and things got better, with people moving back into work, would the levels of Universal Credit decrease?

In response, officers indicated that would be the case, as more people would move back into employment.

Members were keen to explore homelessness and whether the rules on eviction would stay the same and also whether there would be any effect on the ongoing local housing freeze.

Officers stated that as they did not know yet if and what impact the local housing freeze would have, they would respond to members at a later date.

Resolved –

- (1) That a further progress report is presented in 12 months, with continued focus on the impacts of COVID19.
- (2) This committee requests that in relation to Universal Credit a report be presented in 6 months which focuses specifically on the homelessness, effects of the local housing freeze and the new mediation scheme.

Action: Strategic Director, Corporate Resources.
Strategic Director, Place.

(Martin Stubbs – 01274 432056)

19. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PREVENT STRATEGY

The report outlined the approach to delivering the national Prevent Strategy in the Bradford District and highlighted the progress being made in the last twelve months against the District Prevent Action Plan.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members commented on the projects being delivered as highlighted in the appendix and stated that they were not actually outcomes, but outputs and that describing what a project is, did not make it an outcome. Furthermore, members indicated that this is an issue that members had raised before.

Continuing on, members also indicated that it was disappointing that there were no project outcomes identified and these needed to be clearer.

Furthermore, members also stated that there needed to be more than just one quote from a member of the public, to ensure that this work was worthwhile.

In response, Bradford Council officers stated that this was due to the structure of submission for these projects.

Members commented that there was a level of distrust about Prevent in communities and whether there had been any engagement with communities relating to Prevent.

In response, Officers highlighted that they had not organised a questionnaire on this, as it was a significant task to get a representative sample. However, Officers did say that they undertake some dialogue with communities, but these had not been recorded or actioned.

Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee members requested that they be provided with information, which clearly shows the numbers of people who have participated on these projects.

Members also requested that their views and comments be requested, so that those could feed into the National Independent Review of Prevent.

Resolved –

- (1) This Committee requests that the Independent Review of the National Prevent Programme be presented to this Committee in September 2021, or as soon as it is available after its publication.
- (2) That more detailed outcomes against the projects being delivered as part of the Prevent Strategy for the District be presented to the Committee.

Action – Strategic Director, Place.

(Ian Day – 01274 433507)

20. 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.

Councillors were seeking clarification over the work the Committee had

undertaken, in relation to Gambling.

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead explained the work that had taken place on relation to Gambling and said detailed information would be circulated again to members of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved –

Members considered and commented on the 2020-21 Work Programme.

Action: Overview & Scrutiny Lead

(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