

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held remotely on Tuesday, 19 January 2021

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 7.40 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN
Kamran Hussain (Chair) Berry Dodds Lintern Mohammed	Heseltine	R Ahmed	Love

Observers: Councillor Sarah Ferriby as portfolio holder for Healthy People and Places, Councillor Ross-Shaw, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport and Councillor Kevin Warnes

Apologies: Nicola Hoggart, Julia Pearson and Councillor Chris Herd

Councillor Kamran Hussain in the Chair

28. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

No Alternate Members present.

29. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest received in matters under consideration.

30. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2020 be signed as a correct record.

31. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

32. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted to review decisions to restrict documents

33. COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

The report of the Interim Strategic Director, Place (**Document “O”**) was presented by Professor Irani from the University of Bradford to the Committee to provide an overview of the Bradford District Economic Recovery Plan. The Economic Recovery Board developed the plan and consisted of members from the University of Bradford, public and business community as well as education and voluntary sectors.

The aim of the plan was to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the District's economy and included the actions needed to be taken from now and over the following two years to accelerate economic recovery.

The pandemic has been both a health and economic emergency with some sections of the community being affected disproportionately. The Council has played a critical role in providing grant funding to businesses and the plan needed to be implemented alongside the existing economic strategy to address the economic challenges facing the District.

The plan was presented to the meeting of the Council Executive on 5 January 2021 and among the resolutions made at the meeting, was that the Economic Partnership took a lead role in taking the recovery plan forward to inform and support the District's approach to economic recovery.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions, the details and responses for which are as below:

- What were the key outcomes and how would the economy improve at ground level?
 - Professor Irani stated that it would be at the operational level, e.g. issuing grant funding with tangible opportunities for investment. In terms of strategy, it was a long term project and much depended on getting funds. It would also be transformational. For example, making Bradford a Learning District with skills development to attract new industries or to create new ones. Local procurement which would support Bradford businesses. Access to work, access to opportunity by upskilling and moving people into better skilled industries and to create and support new and emerging sectors.
- The Chair asked what was new and what was different this time from this report.
 - In response, Professor Irani stated that there would be new opportunities to take advantage of and the final recommendations from the report reflect the actions that the Board wished to see implemented and supported. The aspiration was to reduce carbon emissions and support services to support this ambition. He also stated that the Council should show a positive example and lead on this in its procurement. To procure locally and environmentally friendly products and services. The business support mechanism, which had been led by Barclay's was already in place with

resources deployed but not effectively enough and these had not been communicated as well as they could have been.

- One Member stated that the connectivity in the report brought loose ends together and was pleased with the work carried out over the 5 months.
 - Professor Irani also stated that John Allan, Vice President of the CBI was impressed with the aspiration of the plan which had been shared with his colleagues on the National COVID Economic Commission.
- A Member stated that the plan was a significant document and might be challenging for the man in the street to access and understand it fully. He asked what influence was there on appointing the Board who would then be tasked to implement the completed plan and on the input on writing terms of reference. He also stated that now the report had been written, it needed to be put into action and not just put away and forgotten.
 - Professor Irani stated that the report would need to be re-drafted for the 'lay person' and that the terms of reference would be picked up by The Bradford Economic Partnership Board. The Chief Executive of the Council was already working on formation of the Board and a Chair was being sought. Some work could be started straight away with key performance indicators and performance management would be the key to success. The type of work that could be carried out would depend on funding.
- One Member stated that they were concerned that the actions in the report would not be taken forward and could be diluted by the new Board but as the report lacked targets.
 - Professor Irani stated that it should be the job of the new Board to set tangible targets and should be subject to normal governance methods.
- One Member stated that it was a fantastic report but the local economy in Bradford West was night time focussed and would need to be built upon as these were relied upon. Resilience needed to be built in, with school leavers not able to secure predictable grades – this needed to be built into the strategy. The plan needed a lot of 'buy in'. There was nothing in the report about the up and coming 'silos' of people
 - In response, it was stated the aim was to try and give people the opportunity to move out of the fast food industry as there was a high number of unemployed young people, above the national average in addition to underachievement within the BAME communities.
- A Member stated that the report was very detailed and aspirational and represented an opportunity to re-set the economy and re-skill the workforce but wanted to know where the necessary funding would come from.
 - In response, it was advised that the Local Authority had directed funding to facilitate the plan being strategically embedded and that there were various pots of money available such as from the imminent devolution and as we know what our priorities are within

our 5 year strategy, we could apply to central Government as our ambitions were aligned. The Interim Strategy Director, Place further stated that the proposal had strength of purpose and put Bradford ahead of other areas and needed to be applied across sectors, not discounting the private sector. The District was good at partnering across both private and public organisations and could build and shape our economy as we came out of COVID. New growth proposals were needed but we could apply for funding as part of devolution and from central government because of this plan.

- A Member stated that young people were moving out of the area to find work and asked how new businesses could be attracted to the District, how could Ward Councillors engage constituents and also asked where funding would come from.
 - In response, Officers advised that there were 4 sources of funding: Local Authority, Devolution funds, private sector funding and central Government funding.
- One Member stated that there was an opportunity to re-set and it was appropriate to be bold but felt that further education had been neglected and this could lead to massive opportunities being missed. 'People needed to be taken on a journey to achieve a green and health economy' and expectations needed to be shifted
 - In response, Professor Irani agreed and stated that the region needed to be committed to support an Institute of Technology which would be led by colleges.
- The Chair stated that the Committee was very supportive and hoped the new Board would move the proposal forward.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanks Professor Zahir Irani and the Economic Board Members for this crucial area of work.**
- (2) The Committee considered and commented on the approach to the Economic Recovery and the accompanying Bradford District Economic Recovery Plan.**

Action – Strategic Director, Place.

34. CULTURAL STRATEGY 2020-30

The report of the Interim Strategic Director, Place (**Document “P”**) was presented to the Committee to provide a briefing to Members on the work in progress on the development of a new 10 year cultural strategy for the Bradford District. The plan was initiated at the start of the first COVID lockdown in 2020 which needed to be more transparent. COVID hampered engagement and the consultation process. The proposal represented a 10 year commitment and

would be a living document which would be checked and updated every 2 years to see what was working and to check the impact. The approach to the project was unique and needed to be more agile, current and ambitious – for and of Bradford. Research had been commissioned to support the bid for the City of Culture 2025. The Plan needed to be owned by the creative sector in the District to enable cultural work to take place. The plan proposed would still be followed regardless of the outcome of the City of Culture bid and had 10 ambitions. Resources and opportunity needed to be spread across the District to make the best of what was available and that the sector needed to be sustainable. There were lots of single person businesses and the aim was to provide opportunities to work in creative industries locally.

Work needed to take place to show young people and parents that creative jobs were sustainable and bids were being prepared for inclusion in international events and thought was being given to other creative events. The plan had targets set on deliverables and strategic ambitions which would last for 10 years.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions the details of which and the responses given, are as below:

- A Member asked why Bradford's cultural provision was not evenly distributed as stated in the report submitted and wanted to know what the gaps were and how they were being addressed.
 - In response, Officers advised that the educational offer varied and some schools were doing better than others as some had other priorities. There was a strategy from the Arts Council to engage where there was a low level and a lack of opportunity to be involved in cultural activity. A Creative People and Places Programme was in place (10 year initiative) and recognition was given to the Council's own grant programmes, however these had not been reviewed for some years. There would be a new set of grant programmes from April 2021 which would be more accessible. There appeared to be correlation between lack of engagement and poverty which the Arts Council were focussed on addressing.
- A Member asked for confirmation of the 'LEAP' project
 - Officers confirmed that it was a £3.5 million investment but it had a long way to go and was structure to try to work across the district, covering 6 wards in 4 years and 12 wards over 10 years in order to get real change and longevity.
- If the bid for the City of Culture was not successful it was hoped that the 10 year plan would be continued.
 - In response, Officers advised that the City of Culture was at the mid point and there was a need to talk about legacy. There was a plan in place to continue and ambitions remained in place. Guidelines for the City of Culture bid would be followed and the application would be submitted before the end of 2021 – it was hoped that the outcome would be known by March 2022

Members made the following comments:

- Members were pleased to see that cultural activities for the BAME community were on the map with a cultural provision being created and recognized
- The response from Bradford to COVID was powerful and effective
- Involvement for people at grass root levels with a hope that it would filter through to local communities and make better use of assets
- Schools were a good place to develop and there was a need to enthuse young people, attract participants from a broader part of the community and explore the reasons for non-participation
- Disappointment at the lack of funding with so much going on, so much talent which was not known about. There was a need to raise awareness to celebrate ourselves.
- The report was a great one and it was a good time to launch it, especially in light of the COVID lockdown.
- There was a need to concentrate on integrating young people

Resolved –

(1) The Committee requests that progress against the targets in the Culture Plan, be presented to the Committee in 12 months.

(2) That a briefing note relating to the Arts Council Strategy be circulated to members, when available.

Action – Strategic Director, Place

35. WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21

The Committee had a discussion around the work plan (**Document “Q”**) to continue to oversee and review its content.

Resolved –

The Committee commented on the work programme and requested that a report relating to Winter Gritting Maintenance be presented to the Committee in Autumn 2021.

Action – Overview & Scrutiny Lead

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.