

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 9 July 2020 at 4.00 pm, Remote Virtual Meeting

Commenced 4.15pm
Concluded 6.00 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP
D Green Watson Tait Shafiq Salam	Pollard	Griffiths

Councillor Tait in the Chair

Apologies: Cllr Azam, (Chair) and Cllr Kamran Hussain.

74. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

Cllr Pollard for Cllr Bibby.

75. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

76. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020 were signed as a correct record.

77. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

78. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

79. VERBAL DISCUSSION ON COVID19 RELATING TO CORPORATE AND SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Question 1

What is the breakdown on ethnicity relating to Covid-19 deaths. Nationally people from the BAME Community are more likely to die from it, and it will be good to know how Bradford is doing?

Answer

Ethnicity is not recorded on a person's death certificate. This is a national issue and in the Public Health England report on COVID-19 inequalities, one of its 7 recommendations including having ethnicity recorded on death certificates to accurately monitor the impact on BAMES communities

Question 2

Around our reaction to Public Health England's report : The Wellbeing Board is expected to analyse the findings for Bradford, how will the results of this analysis be circulated and is it envisaged that a final report will be done following the final report, breaking down the information into faith and ethnic groups , to be completed in July.

Answer

We are not aware of a requirement for the Health and Wellbeing Board to analyse the findings of the PHE report for Bradford. The council supports the recommendations but they require a broad range of cross District action, for example:

- Mandate comprehensive and quality ethnicity data collection and recording as part of routine NHS and social care data collection systems, including the mandatory collection of ethnicity data at death certification, and ensure that data are readily available to local health and care partners to inform actions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities.
- Support community participatory research, in which researchers and community stakeholders engage as equal partners in all steps of the research process, to understand the social, cultural, structural, economic, religious, and commercial determinants of COVID-19 in BAME communities, and to develop readily implementable and scalable programmes to reduce risk and improve health outcomes.
- Improve access, experiences and outcomes of NHS, local government and integrated care systems commissioned services by BAME communities including: regular equity audits; use of health impact assessments; integration of equality into quality systems; good representation of black and minority ethnic communities among staff at all levels; sustained workforce development and employment practices; trust-building dialogue with service users.
- Accelerate the development of culturally competent occupational risk assessment tools that can be employed in a variety of occupational settings and used to reduce the risk of employee's exposure to and acquisition of COVID-19, especially for key workers working with a large cross section of the general public or in contact with those infected with

COVID-19.Beyond the Data: Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on BAME Communities.

- Fund, develop and implement culturally competent COVID-19 education and prevention campaigns, working in partnership with local BAME and faith communities to reinforce individual and household risk reduction strategies; rebuild trust with and uptake of routine clinical services; reinforce messages on early identification, testing and diagnosis; and prepare communities to take full advantage of interventions including contact tracing, antibody testing and ultimately vaccine availability.
- Accelerate efforts to target culturally competent health promotion and disease prevention programmes for non-communicable diseases promoting healthy weight, physical activity, smoking cessation, mental wellbeing and effective management of chronic conditions including diabetes, hypertension and asthma.
- Ensure that COVID-19 recovery strategies actively reduce inequalities caused by the wider determinants of health to create long term sustainable change. Fully funded, sustained and meaningful approaches to tackling ethnic inequalities must be prioritised.

Question 3

Can we have a breakdown of notified cases and deaths from Covid-19 broken down weekly for the last 3 months.

Answer

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was recorded in week commencing the 24th of February. All confirmed cases are now based on testing in all settings (pillars 1 and 2) and reported via <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>. As of the 4th of July there have been 4,168 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Bradford District.

The first registered COVID-19 death in Bradford District was recorded in week ending 3rd April 2020. Up to week ending the 19th of June there have been a total of 478 deaths registered relating to COVID-19 in Bradford District (source: ONS weekly Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and health board).

Question 4

Since lockdown was announced can we have a list by Directorate of the contracts awarded by the council to external companies and their total value.

Answer

Officers went through detailed contracts document, to answer this question.

Question 5

Can we have a breakdown of excess expenditure by the council on Covid 19 by budget heading.

Answer

In response to this question, Bradford Council officers went through a detailed document which covered the breakdown of excess expenditure by the Council on COVID19 by budget heading.

Question 6

Can we have details of the additional grants allocated by central government and details of where these have been spent?

Answer

Officers provided an update on the additional government support that's been provided by the government to the Council to either distribute to other entities, or help cover the additional costs and losses being incurred by Council run services.

Business Rates Grants – The Council has been provided with £136m of Business Rates grants to pass on to qualifying businesses in the district. At the 18 June £114m had been distributed to over 10,000 businesses. A £6.8m Discretionary Business Support scheme has also been established where the deadline for applications from businesses was 19 June 2020.

Hardship Fund – The Council has been provided with £5.832m of Hardship Fund Grant. This has been distributed at a rate of up to £150 per Council Tax Reduction Scheme recipient. So far over 29,000 Working Age Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimant's bills have been adjusted at a total cost of £4.3m. The remaining £1.5m is expected to be used to provide assistance to new Council Tax Reduction Scheme recipients that are expected as a result of increased unemployment.

Test & Trace – The Council will receive £3.87m to fund the requirements of the local Test and Trace response. The proposal is based on adding capacity to key staff groups so that we can use the whole resource flexibly when needed, and in between the additional capacity can be used to deliver additional warden support. The response required is not straight forward and will likely require a number of different responses depending on local need.

Key things to be considered are:

- Outbreak management capability at a scale that has never been needed before
- Infection Prevention and Control Advice to parts of the system we have not needed to support such as schools, businesses, workplaces, city/town centres
- Ability to produce information and guidance rapidly for different settings and groups as situations evolve and evidence changes
- Coordination of control measures across the district including mobile testing units, mass testing, lockdown in different settings or geographies,

encouragement/enforcement of social distancing and other actions necessary to reduce the spread of the virus.

- Communication and engagement across all sections of our population to increase uptake of behaviours that reduce the spread of the virus, participation in the Test and Trace process and adherence to advice
- Enforcement of new legislation aimed at reducing the risks from COVID 19

It is proposed decisions on utilisation of the grant is delegated to the Director of Public Health / Chief Executive in consultation with the Director of Finance and Portfolio Holder.

Infection Control Grant - £5.2m has been provided to assist with infection control in social care settings. 75% of this has been distributed to Residential and Nursing Care settings based on the numbers of Care Quality Commission registered beds. The remainder will be provided to community care providers (e.g Extra Care and Home Care).

Emergency Section 31 Grants - £30.5m has been provided to help the Council with the additional costs and income losses resulting from Covid-19. All of this is expected to have been used by the end of June as outlined earlier in the report.

High Streets Fund – up to £477k has been provided by government to help the Council support business communities with measures that enable safe trading in public places. The Fund will particularly focus on high streets, as well as other public places that are at the heart of towns and cities gearing up to reopen as safe, welcoming spaces.

Business Improvement District Covid-19 Support Funding – A total of £44k has been paid out to the Bradford (£24k), Keighley (£12k), and Ilkley (£8k) BIDs.

Question 7

Staff have been redeployed from their normal duties, which areas of council; which service have been most affected and which areas are now returning to their day job?

Answer

Employees in services that have been stood down were redeployed to cover in waste collection, admin support in the Mortuary, food bank distribution and driving. These were employees from Sports and Leisure, Museums and Libraries, passenger transport services and some deployment of staff on a daily basis to cover peaks and troughs in essential services from areas that have continued to work but where there has been capacity as their role was not able to be fully operational as a consequence of Covid 19.

Staff working from home in all services were drawn on to undertake shielding calls and provide administrative support for the testing process. Staff have also supported bereavement services. As services resume opening of the Household Waste Sites employees have also been utilised to assist in traffic management.

Question 8

Have the council carried out a full risk assessment for staff and the public for each service to allow a return to work?

Answer

A Safe Recovery Process to Reinstate Council Services

- Before a service returns to operation it must have reviewed its existing risk assessments or developed new ones to ensure staff and members of the public are kept safe in respect to Covid-19. These must be undertaken in consultation with trade unions and staff. Services are at various stages of recovery and to support services return a 'Safe Recovery Process' has been implemented ensuring that managers are clear on what is required and where to get help and support. Risk assessments will be multi-faceted and not only include a service perspective, but a building/workplace perspective as well as taking into account individual employee aspects (when individual employees may be at greater risk because of their ethnicity, or other factors). Risk assessments have been or will be produced for each workplace to enable us to issue a COVID-19 Secure notice in line with government's guidance.

Council Buildings:

- Risk assessments have been or will be produced for each workplace to enable us to issue a COVID-19 Secure notice in line with government's guidance.

Risk Assessment Process

- Over the last few weeks /months of the pandemic the Occupational Safety Team have been working with a number of services, schools with the development and amendment of risk assessments (Covid-19). This work is on going and will continue for the foreseeable future. They are keeping an informal record so they can track this work.
- To date this service has reviewed and offered improvement feedback on 40 Covid-19 related assessment documents they have received. These assessment documents range from a service, activity/task specific to a whole school and some of these documents have up to 25 pages of information to be considered.

It should also be noted that since March 2020 one safety adviser has been working with and supporting Waste Services, reviewing their RA and safe working processes which is approx. 50 documents.

As part of the recovery process responding to changes in Govt advice that Assistant Directors are responsible for prioritising their services/projects into batches and progressing the decision making and risk assessments accordingly so that appropriate decisions can be made about service returns and future building occupancy. Services will be consulting locally with the unions on risk assessments via OJC level 2/3 and/or other locally agreed arrangements.

Question 9

We are aware through reports of increase in domestic violence during the lockdown period, can we have data on recorded cases and what provision has been put in place to support those victims during this pandemic?

Answer

Survivors of abuse often do not report incidents to the police and therefore relying on police data alone only provides one measure of domestic abuse.

The current areas that are experiencing the increased demand are the specialist services. There is no comparable data for last year as the service in its current form did not exist but the referrals to the service are around 50% higher than the referrals at the start of March. Our specialist service that offers counselling to rape and sexual assault victims has a waiting list that is at a historical high.

There is an increase in serious offences are raised by the police, services and children's services. The specific evidence that is the case can be seen in our MARAC data which show that the average cases subject to a multi agency discussion were an average of 61 cases each month but over the last two month have been 85/89. A case has to be high risk to be heard at MARAC.

Our specialist services also reports 'an increase of around 25%, more high risk cases and more complex cases requiring additional support. Mental and physical health of clients has been adversely affected during lockdown, with 2 attempted suicides.'

A big factor at the moment is that the risk of a surge in demand as lockdown is released. This is substantiated by the following issues:

- International trends from countries that have already progressed further in lockdown release
- Victims being triggered from historical incidents
- Factors that link to prevalence in domestic abuse being present – substance misuse and financial hardship.
- An increase in children witnessing abuse which will start to be seen as schools reopen
- Cases not progressing through caseloads to recovery due to the systems not operating e.g. court cases/ move on from refuge

The domestic abuse partnership has been active in providing the following response during Covid:

- Produced a response and recovery plan at pace.
- Moved to weekly MARAC meetings to meet increased demand.
- Have moved to remote ways of providing specialist support to victims whilst the police have continued to provide their normal crisis support.
- Have produced a communication strategy and draft campaign.
- Have operated its response through a three meeting structure: 1) Services; 2) Communication and 3) Protection/MARAC Governance group.
- Have submitted and secured bids to funding opportunities made available by the Government.

- Have submitted a financial request to Council Executive and started discussion with partners around jointly funding initiatives.

Question 10

Hate crime has also reportedly increased during the pandemic, can we have data on this and what has been done about the rise of hate crime during this period?

Answer

The Covid-19 period has seen incredible bravery, compassion and true dedication from health and other key workers. Unfortunately, it has also unleashed opportunities to spread fear, distrust, prejudice and hatred. There have been posts on notoriously extremist-friendly platforms like Telegram, 4chan and Gab linking the coronavirus to racist and anti-semitic slurs and memes.

Nationally, in the early stages of the pandemic the rate of hate crimes against Chinese people between January and March was nearly three times that of the previous two years, according to data released by UK police forces. This was only replicated in Bradford district to a limited degree - reassurance calls to the University concerning Chinese students indicated no incidents, however, we are aware of at least one incident of abuse aimed at Philipino staff from the Bradford Royal Infirmary.

We have seen a rise in hate crime and work has been commissioned to understand this and a report will be shared in due course once the detailed analysis has been completed.

Pandemics can intensify fears of “the other,” and exacerbate racist myths about foreigners being diseased or unclean. Some far right groups appear to be cheering on the virus, hoping it will spread to predominately non-white countries, such as those in Africa. Other extreme groups regard the virus as some form of divine retribution against Western countries.

The protests following the brutal death of George Floyd in America, along with a high profile national debate on race and racism have re-focused attention on the level and nature of racism in the UK. For many, this has triggered levels of anxiety based on experienced and systemic racism. Increased tensions resulting from this along with fringe far right groups seeking to push back are likely to have impacted on hate crime figures both locally and nationally.

Since the pandemic and lockdown started the Police Hate Crime Team and Bradford Hate Crime Alliance have worked closely together to identify the most vulnerable victims of hate crime. Where appropriate they have conducted joint visits to ensure an effective wrap around service for victims.

A significant proportion of hate crime cases revolve Bradford Hate Crime Alliance have played a pivotal role in supporting the local response of the Black Lives Matter movement. Offering routes for legal protest via online Zoom meetings and supporting lines of communication between minority groups and district leaders.

The Police held an Independent Advisory Group meeting in June with a range of

members of the public. This focused on issues relating to hate and racism allowing members of the public to have their voice heard at a senior level in the Police.

National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2020 takes place between Saturday 10th October and Saturday 17th October 2020. Planning has already started taking place to run a high profile set of events that will be equal or better than last year's successful programme.

Question 11

What challenges has the Survive & Thrive partnership realised in supporting victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence during the pandemic, how have available resources been targeted and what will need to happen when lockdown restrictions are lifted to give victims the support they need?

Answer

The overarching challenges for specialist services are that whilst in quarantine with an abuser, the impact on victims is leading to devastating outcomes, with homicide rates doubling nationally and risk escalating. Survive and Thrive have heard from survivors how Covid-19 is being used by the abusers to control and abuse them, reducing their ability to access support services. In BAME communities this can be even more challenging due to the additional barriers faced.

Key Challenges for the elements of support for victims and children are (See question 4 in relation to perpetrator work):

- Preparing for the potential surge in survivors coming forward as measures are lifted.
- An increase of around 25%, more high risk cases and more complex cases requiring additional support.

Question 12

How are perpetrators of domestic abuse being worked with during the pandemic and how will this develop post Covid19?

Answer

The Survive and Thrive commissioned service operate The Maze Project which is Bradford's Behaviour Change Program. They are currently continuing to offer assessments for those referred into the behaviour change service, this is completed using both a self-assessment from the client and a video call wherever possible. They are also undertaking one to one work and have developed mini groups on Zoom with a view to increasing both numbers of attendees and groups per week. They have also implemented an out of hours telephone service for those who are currently using the service, previous clients and those across the

district who are concerned about their behaviour towards their partner.

Bradford is currently piloting a MARAC Navigator approach to working with victims, perpetrators and couples. The aim of this service is to reduce the numbers of repeat incidents of domestic abuse, particularly targeting those who are disengaged with services and where there is a complexity of need.

We are keen to offer a more intensive support to those where both the perpetrator and victim have support needs that mean they are to some extent co-dependent. The service is based in The Bridge Project and they have continued to offer face to face service delivery by implementing the following good practice model of creating method statements for safe systems of work, compliant with PHE guidance, that are routinely updated. This covered the following 3 key areas to ensure modified delivery could continue. This covered 3 key areas. 1. Office base for Key Workers 2. Transportation of clients using the mini-bus 3. Undertaking out-reach activity.

Probation services have continued to manage offenders including those who have been convicted of a domestic abuse offence although they have moved to a model predominantly focused on providing support virtually.

There have been some key challenges to working with perpetrators in this period.

- It is extremely difficult undertaking behaviour change work whilst a couple are living together during lockdown as creating the confidential space is problematic.
- Lockdown has created a sense of a shared experience and survivors are reporting improved relationships. The perpetrator is sighted fully on the survivor's whereabouts giving a sense of control which will be lost as lockdown eases.
- Clients do not have access to unlimited data/WIFI and this can make contact difficult.

Future Plans:

- The new Domestic Abuse strategy will have a strategic theme 'We intend to hold perpetrators of violence and abuse to account and target support to reduce future risk'
- The direct support work will continue and a further part-time post will be built into the Early Help Pilot.
- The Domestic Abuse Communication Strategy will have a campaign that will help more people recognise the signs of their abusive behaviour and how they may be able secure support to change their behaviour.
- The Covid Response Request for Domestic Abuse contained an ask of £168,000 towards perpetrator work.

Question 13

What have been the policing and community safety issues across the District and how have they been addressed?

Answer

The Covid-19 Pandemic has seen the need for community safety agenda to

increasingly support public health requirements related to the lockdown and social distancing protocols.

There has been a requirement to deploy Police Officers proactively to uphold the Covid legislation which did result in a significant increase in calls for service relating to breaches. Where Officers have done this it has been undertaken utilising the 4 'E' approach of Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce, with clear focus on the first three 'E's'.

Council staff have been redeployed to areas of high need to provide advice, guidance and, where necessary, take measures to minimise close social interaction. For example, a cohort of Council staff from the Safer and Stronger Communities Teams supported the Council for Mosques at Scholemoor Cemetery for two months to deliver burials safely.

In addition, Police and Council engagement teams have supported faith communities to meet requirements under the Covid legislation during religious celebrations such as Easter, Vaisakhi and Ramadan/Eid-ul-Fitr.

West Yorkshire Police has seen similar challenges to other large organisations. A number of officers and staff have been required to either isolate or shield in line with guidance over the last 3 months which, at times, presented resourcing challenges. However, from the outset as a District the Police were aware of the potential impact and to mitigate this, set up a Contingency Planning Team. This team was able to ensure all areas of Police operations were effectively resourced to enable demand to be met and the impact on communities minimised.

As a Force, the Police embraced technological opportunities ensuring Officers and Staff who were not able to attend work were able to work remotely. They rolled out the use of Telephone Witness Statements which enables witness statements for criminal offences to be taken remotely when certain criteria is met. This not only reduces contact but is a more efficient and effective way of undertaking this core task.

There has been an increase in crisis calls for service linked to Mental Health Issues and Sec 136 Mental Health Act cases, likely as a result of emotional pressures, anxiety and isolation caused by lockdown. Through effective partnership working we have pooled resources and a dedicated mental health professional has been provided by Bradford District Care Trust to work with a Patrol Officer on both early and late shifts seven days a week to respond to these calls, ensuring both an appropriate and proportionate response to those in crisis.

We have seen changes in crime patterns over this period for example from April to date:

Total crime is down by 2568 offences:

- is 103 less victims of Robbery;
- 270 less victims of Burglary Residential;
- 586 less victims of vehicle crime and;
- 578 less reports of theft from shop.

We have seen increases in other types of demand for example Drugs Offences

have increased by 216 offences over this period. However, this is due to more proactive focus to our Policing deployments over this time.

Resolved -

That officers be thanked for attending the meeting and providing detailed responses to Members questions.

ACTION: Director of Finance/Strategic Director Place/Strategic Director Corporate Services/Director Public Health

(Chris Chapman – 01274 432124)

(Steve Hartley – 01274 434747)

(Liz Barry – 01274 431565)

(Ian Day – 01274 433507)

(Martin Stubbs – 01274 432056)

80. RESOLUTION TRACKING 2019-20

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead presented to members the progress that has been made against the resolutions passed by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, during the 2019-20 Municipal Year.

Members commented on the progress made against the recommendations and also made suggestions as to how progress against recommendations made by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee could be presented in the future.

Resolved –

That Members discussed and commented on the outcomes in relation to the recommendations made in 2019-20.

ACTION: Overview & Scrutiny Lead (Mustansir Butt – 01274 432574)

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

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead presented the work programme.

Members were in agreement that the ongoing detailed scrutiny reviews into Managing Attendance, Fireworks and Hate Crime should be completed. As well as this, members felt that the Domestic Violence Scrutiny review should commence upon the completion of these scrutiny reviews, particularly in light of the rise in domestic violence cases during COVID19.

Members discussed the work programme and made amendments.

Resolved –

That Members discussed and agreed the Committee's Work Programme for 2020/21.

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