

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 22 October 2020 at 4.00 pm in Remote Virtual Meeting

Commenced 4.00pm
Concluded 7.00 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP
D Green Kamran Hussain Watson Tait Shafiq	Riaz	Griffiths

Councillor in the Chair

Apologies: Cllrs Azam and Bibby.

98. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

Cllr T Hussain for Cllr Azam.
Cllr Pollard for Cllr Bibby.

99. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

100. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

101. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

102. THE RELOCATION OF HER MAJESTY'S CORONER'S OFFICE (HMCO)

The report updated members on the proposed relocation of the relocation of Her Majesty's Coroner's Office (HMCO) and associated cost implications, prompted by concerns relating to the present accommodation in the Magistrates' Court.

Members heard about the proposed relocation of HMCO to alternative and independent premises in Little Germany and to update on the financial

implications of technical design development. The existing premises, co-located with the Bradford Magistrates' Court are not fit for purpose and do not comply with current Health & Safety and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), requirements.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members sought clarification on the costs and particularly if the total budget part of the renovation.

In response Bradford Council officers highlighted that there were no proposals for this, but that there was a cost to the separate buildings and that Coroners would have the main part of the building and that minor modifications had to be made to make the lift accessible from the tenants side. Members also learned that additional work would also be undertaken to the heating and hot water supply.

Members commented that the building had been transferred from Bradford University in 2016 and it looked like less rigorous surveying had been undertaken, to identify the work that needs to be done. Members were concerned about this.

Officers replied by saying that the form Digital Health Enterprise Zone Building, (DHEZ), had transferred to the Council at a nil cost, contributing to the DHEZ project. Furthermore as a result of working practices and COVID19, there was an increase in costs. The design team are reflecting the current climate and are also looking at the costs at each evaluation and will reporting to the Councils Project Board; which will demonstrate why costs are high.

Furthermore, members were concerned about the professional fees which were 10% and questioned if there was internal expertise to undertake this work.

Officers indicated that using benchmarking data, the figure of 10% for professional fees, as an average one. Members also hear that all schemes were commissioned internally first, to establish if there is professional capacity internally, to carry out the work.

Councillors were still uncomfortable and said that a decision was made in July 2018 to purchase the freehold property for development of a new HMCO at a total cost of £2.35m and then a year later, to have three courts instead of one. Officers indicated that the re-acquisition was seen as a good investment and income generating opportunity.

Councillors questioned the original pot of money of £2m allocated for this in the Council Budget and why there was now extra cost. Why had no provision been made for this extra cost, in the original budget?

Officers were not able to answer the questions and Councillors requested that an officer should provide them with an answer on this matter.

Councillors unanimously agreed in that the original Business Case in 2018 omitted finance and IT costs and that there was also no revised Business Case submitted to the Executive in 2019. It was felt that realistic costs needed to be included in all Capital Projects Business Cases.

(1) The Committee supports the authorisation by the Executive on 6

October 2020 to award additional capital funds to meet the current budget deficit and authorisation for the Strategic Director Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Leader, to take all necessary decisions to implement the decision.

(2) That the comments raised by members be considered as part of this procurement exercise.

(3) That Officers should provide more adequate and robust Business Cases to the Committee in future.

(Ben Middleton – 01274 439607)
(Imran Khan – 01274 432618)

103. BRADFORD COUNCIL'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015 - 2021

The report provided Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Councillors with an update relating to the Bradford Council's Corporate Workforce Development Strategy 2015-2021. This was the recommendation from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 October 2019.

Members also heard that the 2015 Hay report made eight recommendations which were used to inform the Workforce Development Strategy and programme of work. An initial report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 August 2015, presented a set of recommendations made in the Bradford Council commissioned Hay report, which were aimed at assisting the Council in its strategic workforce development and talent management, in particular to improve workforce performance and productivity and to remove any unjustifiable barriers to progression.

Members were concerned that Performance Appraisal was at 48.2% and that this was not satisfactory. Furthermore, members indicated that this was a key issue in the Hays report leading to professional development and were keen to understand why performance appraisal was low across the Council.

Members agreed that it looked like that we did not actually know how many staff were getting appraisals and the appraisals that were being done, they were in different formats.

Furthermore, members also sought clarifications in relation to the deadlines, for when performance appraisals needed to be undertaken.

In response Bradford Council said that the delays were as a result of COVID19.

However, Councillors said that this has been an issue for some time and

that COVID19 could not be blamed for this.

Members were keen to understand:

- How many apprentices secured full time employment with Bradford Council or external?
- For traineeships, was there internal or external funding available?
- What was the funding decision on the levy format?
- In relation to learning and development, what percentage of staff receive training from the training budget, who are not senior officers?

Officers replied by saying that they did not have the information, but that they would provide the this information to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee members.

Members agreed that there needed to be a review of the Central Training Budget and that more needed to increase the number of performance appraisals being undertaken along with encouraging participation in level 1 apprenticeships.

- (1) This Committee requests a review of the Central Training Budget be undertaken as part of the budget process for next year, to ensure that mandatory training is separate to other training needs.**
- (2) That consideration be given to encourage participation in level 1 apprenticeships, to open up opportunities.**
- (3) This Committee request that officers seek to increase the number of performance appraisals being undertaken in the Council.**
- (4) That a further progress report be presented to this Committee in 12 months.**

(Anne Lloyd – 01274 437335)

104. MANAGING ATTENDANCE SCRUTINY REVIEW

The draft report contained the findings from the Managing Attendance Scrutiny Review.

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead explained that during the informal information gathering sessions for this scrutiny review, it became clear that there were a key number of key recurring issues that had arisen during the scrutiny review and were centred around, long term sickness absence; advice from HR Plus and Sickness absence cases relating to Mental Health and Training.

Members were keen to explore the Departmental sickness absence figures, together with a breakdown of agency spend on staff to cover for sickness

absence. This information was to be circulated to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee members.

Members felt that this was a good report and incorporated the key issues that were highlighted by participants, during the informal information gathering sessions. Subsequently, Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee members agreed the key findings and recommendations contained in the report.

That the Committee adopts the findings contained within the Managing Scrutiny Review Report.

(Mustansir - Butt 01274 432574)

105. 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 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