

Minutes of a meeting of the Bradford South Area Committee held on Thursday, 27 January 2022 in the Banqueting Hall - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.00 pm
Concluded 7.30 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	GREEN
Dodds S Khan Thornton Warburton Wood T Hussain	Bibby	Edwards

Apologies: Councillor Majowski (Bradford South Independents)

Councillor Dodds in the Chair

60. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

61. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 be signed as a correct record.

62. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

63. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions submitted by the public.

64. PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN & ADULTS AT RISK OF EXPLOITATION

The Chief Executive's Office submitted a report (**Document "R"**) which provided an update on the contemporary strategic response to all forms of exploitation of children and adults at risk of exploitation and how partners from The Bradford Partnership – Working together to safeguard children and the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board work to drive continuous improvement and to hold agencies to account for their work on this subject. The report also outlined the challenges presented to the partnership following the global pandemic.

It was explained that this was the annual report to the Area Committee, having been considered by the Executive and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and that it brings the Area Committee up to date as to what we are doing as a Partnership, with a greater emphasis on the response to all forms of exploitation. As a word of caution, it was emphasised that the figures relied upon in the report were just a snapshot of the situation and that they were subject to continuous change.

During the discussion, the questions, together with the responses are set out below:

In response to a question on the recently published CSE Thematic Review and the progress that had been on implementation of the recommendations therein, it was stressed that the majority of them had been acted upon, however recommendations relating to the criminalisation of young people and therapeutic support still required some work.

In relation to a question on children who were missing, how many of those were the subject of grooming/CSE as well as criminal exploitation, it was stressed that there was a strong correlation between missing children and CSE and that in Bradford good inroads had been made in reducing the number of children missing, through intervention measures. Further information could be provided to Members on this aspect.

A representative from West Yorkshire Police commented that it was important to prioritise high risk cases in tackling CSE as well as looking at patterns of behaviour, with missing children being a factor.

In response to a question on how medium and high risk were differentiated, it was explained that a screening tool looked at risk factors in relation to vulnerability, as well as the application of professional judgement of partners. Therefore, though there was a methodology, identifying risk was a fluid process, where good judgement had to be applied.

A Member stated that Bradford was a place of sanctuary, where there was large asylum/refugee community and this particular group faced particular issues, given their vulnerability, were open to exploitation, and she ascertained what interventions were in place to help this particular group. In response it was stated that this group was very much included in the fight to tackle exploitation, in all its forms, but that he was happy to look at this data again and provide additional details. It was stated that the Police employed an officer dedicated to working with new and emerging communities. In addition working alongside the hate crime coordinator, specific issues affecting this community were picked up.

In response to a question on the work done around breaking the cycle and the statistics around the numbers helped, it was stressed that although a lot of intense work is done, individuals could relapse and take a step back, and vulnerability and risk could not be eliminated entirely.

A Member raised specific concerns around the data set out in the report, with some areas showing very high numbers of children at risk from CSE. In response it was stated that the data has to be seen in context and as a snapshot of the situation at any given time, however officers were happy to provide a more contextual analysis around the CSE data and children that were missing, where possible.

It was also explained that within Bradford South, the intervention and work of the Youth Service had been crucial in reducing the number of children being exploited and this preventative work should be acknowledged.

Further examples of the sterling work done by the Partners was given to Members, and it was:

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be welcomed and that officers and partners be thanked for presenting a detailed report and responding to Members' questions.**
- (2) That this Area Committee is committed to working closely with partners to continue to raise awareness of exploitation of both adults and children.**
- (3) That a further report be presented in 12 months' time.**

ACTION: Chief Executive

Overview and Scrutiny Area: Children's Services

65. LIBRARIES UPDATE REPORT

The Strategic Director Place submitted a report (**Document “S”**) which provided an update on Bradford Libraries Service since the previous report to this Committee about Libraries, in March 2019. It summarised the new vision and model for the Service, adopted by Executive in March 2020, and how this is being implemented, with a particular focus on the Bradford South area.

A positive new Vision and Model for the service was agreed by Executive in March 2020, following extensive local public consultation. This saw a reduction in the savings requirement for the service, based on libraries offering a wider range of services to meet local priorities. Implementation of the new model had been delayed by the pandemic but is underway, with Wibsey Library in the Bradford South area being one of the pilot libraries. The model was also being aligned to the Council’s developing ‘Localities’ approach.

During the discussion, a Member thanked officers for the work done in Wibsey Library during the pandemic and that the library was at the heart of the community; however she expressed some concerns around the maintenance of the building and how the services at the library could be extended in consultation with local people. In response it was stated that a number of issues had been identified with the building such as issues with the flooring and outside lighting visibility and they were being addressed. In addition there was a focus to develop the library to make it more of a flexible space for community use and this will be looked at in due course.

In addition there was a concerted effort to work with partners to improve the offer across all libraries as well as raise public awareness.

A Member raised concerns around the access and staffing issues at Wyke Library. In response it was stated that the access issues had improved and that in terms of staffing, there was an existing issue around cover and the use of casual staff, particularly during the pandemic, and this needed addressing going forward.

The Chair stated that more information was required on library usage and that certain libraries like Great Horton only opened for six hours a week and this was far from ideal. In response it was stated that information on usage could be made available to Members and that the Library service was also actively looking at recruiting additional volunteers, as well as extending opening hours.

It was highlighted that a number of events were planned in the district as part of the engagement process and the Service was keen to work with ward officers on how this could be rolled out effectively.

A Member also expressed concerns about the ongoing closure of Holme Wood Library due to refurbishment and that some sort of alternative provision should be looked at.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be welcomed and noted, and that in the meantime Members be provided with data on library usage in Bradford South.**
- (2) That a further report be presented in 12 months' time.**

ACTION: Strategic Director Place

Overview and Scrutiny Area: Regeneration and Environment

66. LOCALITIES UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

The Area Office is leading on an engagement process across Bradford South. The Bradford South Area Coordinator submitted a report (**Document “T”**) which gave Committee members the opportunity to discuss relevant issues to include in the process.

The Area Coordinator explained that an engagement event was planned in June which would further inform the Localities Plan.

At the December meeting of the Area Committee, the following were raised and will be included in the Localities Plan:

1. Avoidable deaths of young men and developing preventative approaches
2. Locality approaches to dealing with Domestic Violence and learning from the IDVA in Buttershaw on how to improve support across the Area
3. Dealing with inappropriate use of Quads and Nuisance Motorbikes
4. Improving the identifying of people who may become vulnerable during inclement weather conditions to offer appropriate support when necessary.
5. Dealing with young people throwing stones.

Additional issues had been identified for consideration and they were set out in Section 3.2 of the report.

A Member stated that it was important to acknowledge that ward issues were picked up in developing the Plan as they differed from ward to ward.

A Member stated that issues around education, employment, environment were the bigger issues, however speeding and parking issues affected peoples quality of life and therefore actions had to be ward specific.

A Member also stressed that addressing the issue of those Not in Employment, Education and Training were crucial in solving issues around anti-social behaviour.

Resolved –

That the Area Coordinator take the additional comments/suggestions made by Members in developing the Bradford South Localities Plan.

ACTION: Bradford South Area Coordinator

Overview and Scrutiny Area: Corporate

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Bradford South Area Committee.