

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 22 July 2021 at 5.00 pm in Council Chamber, City Hall - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.00pm
Concluded 7.30pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP	INDEPENEDENT SOCIALIST
Azam Tait D Green Dearden	Riaz	J Sunderland	V Jenkins

Councillor Azam in the Chair

Apologies: Councillor Akhtar.

6. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

Councillor Dearden for Councillor Akhtar.

7. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest in matters under discussion.

9. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

10. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

11. FULL-YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Officers from Bradford Councils Chief Executive Office, presented the report to

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members and highlighted that the report provided a summary of the high level achievements of the authority as well as performance in the last year.

Officers emphasised that the municipal year 2020-21 was far from usual with all Council activity being dominated by the response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Officers also covered some of Bradford Councils key achievements over the last year and are included.

Members indicated that previous reports had contained information relating to crime and safety and this report did not contain such information. In response, Officers indicated they could present this to the Committee at a future meeting.

Members also enquired about whether the Business Rate relief was over and above.

Officers indicated that the Business Rate relief was over and above the COVID Support Grant and that Business Rate relief was allocated to people who were eligible.

In response to member's questions about how many businesses had closed due to the COVID19 pandemic, Officers indicated that they did not have figures in relation to business closures, however the food and hospitality sector had been severely affected by the pandemic.

Moreover, members were keen to explore the use of foodbanks across the District, during the Pandemic and Officers confirmed that the use of foodbanks across the District had increased, as well as youth employment increasing significantly.

There was considerable discussion relating to children and obesity between members of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and officers, in particular relating to the characteristics that contribute to it, such as deprivation, the environment and diet, with all agreeing that this was complex.

Members were in agreement that the effectiveness of the approaches being used to address child obesity needed to be considered by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved –

1. That a further performance report be presented to the Committee which specifically focuses on:
 - Housing;
 - Jobs;
 - Crime and Safety.
2. This Committee requests that the Health & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee considers a detailed report on childhood obesity across the District and the effectiveness of approaches being used to

tackle childhood obesity.

Action: Strategic Director, Corporate Resources
Public Health Director

(Philip Witcherley – 01274 431241)

12. FINANCE POSITION STATEMENT FOR 2020-21

Officers from Bradford Councils Finance section, informed member of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the report provided members with an update on the year-end financial position of the Council for 2020-21.

Members also learned what the latest spend against revenue and capital budgets and the financial position at the year end was. Bradford Council's current balances and reserves and school balances for the year were also covered.

Members of the Committee were keen to understand why there was a continued overspend in Children's Services and what approaches were being used to address the overspend in this service area.

In response Officers indicated that finances could not be put ahead of a child being at risk. However, officers did acknowledge that they should be reviewing child placements, in terms of their suitability. Moreover, Officers also highlighted that a major review of the budget spend in Children's Services was required.

Members enquired about the recruitment drive in Children's Social Care to increase the number of permanent Social Workers to improve the service and reduce the number of agency staff, with the net increase in permanent staff only being eight.

Officers indicated that this was due to some staff not staying with the Council for less than one year.

Officers were not able to respond to member's questions in relation to the underspend in the Early Years' service, so Officers stated that they would provide this information to members of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved –

The Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviewed and commented on the 2020-21 Finance Position Statement.

Action: Strategic Director, Corporate Resources.

(Chris Chapman – 01274 433656)

13. QTR 1 FINANCE POSITION STATEMENT FOR 2021-22

Bradford Councils Finance officers explained to member of Corporate Overview

and Scrutiny Committee, that this report examined the latest spend against revenues and capital budgets and the forecast year-end financial position based on information contained in the Quarter 1 Financial Position Statement.

Officers also covered key areas relating to:

- The forecast outturn of the Council's revenue budget;
- The forecast financial impact of Covid-19;
- Proposals for the utilisation of any remaining COVID Emergency Grant alongside Council reserves to support investment in social and economic recovery;
- An update on Council Tax and Business Rates collection;
- A statement on the Council's reserves including movements;
- An update on the Capital Investment Plan.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members were keen to explore the situation in relation to the Hanson School.

In response, Officers indicated that discussions with Hanson's School are ongoing, as to whether they school stays under the control of the Council or converts to an Academy.

Members were concerned about the Economic Plan and whether the actions contained within the Economic Plan were still relevant and also whether the actions could also be RAG, (Red, Amber, Green), rated.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members were keen to consider a real live analysis of the risk register in operation. For instance, members suggested that one live case that members could consider as part of the risk register is the recent closure of the Valley View Home Closure in Children's Services; in particular, focusing on the identification of risk, how this happened and actions being taken to address this.

Resolved –

The Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee requests that a report be presented to this Committee in relation to the use of the Corporate Risk Register as a live example in relation to the recent closure of the Childrens Care Home in the District, to also include reasons for this happening and identification of risks.

Action: Strategic Directors, Corporate Services and Childrens Services.

(Mark St Romaine – 01274 432888)

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item relating to the Council's Insurance Contract on the grounds that it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if they were present, exempt information within Paragraph 3 (Finance or Business Affairs) of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), would be disclosed and it is considered that, in all circumstances, the public interest in excluding the publication of the report.

It is in the public interest in maintaining these exemptions because it is in the overriding interest of proper administration that Members are made fully aware of the financial implications of any decision.

15. THE COUNCIL'S INSURANCE CONTRACT 2022 TO 2027

The Director of Finance submitted a report **(NOT FOR PUBLICATION) DOCUMENT "D"**, which updated the Committee on the Council's Insurance Contract.

Resolved –

1. The Committee considered the report and endorsed the use of the YPO or CCS framework to procure a new Insurance Long Term Agreement from 1 April 2022 and also requests that Officers explore the costings in relation to cover for COVID.

Action: Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

(Mark St Romaine – 01274 432888)

16. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Overview & Scrutiny Lead presented the Draft 2021-22 Work Programme for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and also discussed the topics which had yet to be scheduled, as well as the progress against the recommendations that the Committee made in 2020-21.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee members discussed, amended and agreed the 2021-21 work programme for the Committee.

Resolved –

The Committee amended and agreed the Draft Work Programme and included Customer Services into the 2021-22 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