

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 14 October 2021 at 5.00 pm in Council Chamber, City Hall - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.00 pm
Concluded 8.10 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST
Azam Tait Akhtar D Green Nazir	Bibby Riaz	Jenkins

Councillor Azam in the Chair

Apologies: Councillor Arshad Hussain.

31. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

Councillor T Hussain for Councillor Arshad Hussain.

32. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest in matters under discussion.

34. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

35. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

36. BRADFORD COUNCIL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015-21

Bradford Council Human Resources officers explained to Corporate Overview

and Scrutiny Committee Councillors that this report set out the progress made in further developing the Council's approach to developing its workforce.

Members also heard that since the previous report, officers had been developing the Council's People Strategy and Workforce Development Plan. Councils were keen to understand what would happen once the current strategy finished in 2021.

In response, officers highlighted that a new focus and approach had been developed which had also been considered by the Executive. This included:

- A Talent Development 12-month programme;
- Senior Leadership Development Programme;
- Increased funding for Member Development;
- Annual Managers Conference;
- Annual Employee Survey.

Members were concerned to hear that appraisals were still not be carried out at acceptable levels, thought the Council and needed to be, to ensure exactly what levels of support are required by staff.

Members of the Committee also wanted clarification in relation to whether the Council was doing everything possible to provide developmental opportunities for staff.

In response, officers stated that they would provide this information to members of the Committee.

Resolved –

1. This Committee requests that the new Workforce Development Strategy be presented to this Committee in 12 months.
2. That a report relating to the use of agency staff and contracted staff, in relation to the changing nature of their work and developmental opportunities, be presented to this Committee.

(Tahmima Tahir – 01274 436730)

37. ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

Officers from Bradford Council's Human Resources provided Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillors with an update on the Managing Attendance Scrutiny Review, which was considered and approved by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2020.

Members were keen to understand why there had been a decrease in sickness absence across the Council.

In response, officers highlighted that the staff survey highlighted that this was due to staff now working from home and that as a result, there was not as many coughs and colds. Also, officers stated that if staff were feeling a little "off", they

would be less likely to take sick leave, as they are now working differently at home.

Members wanted to know if policies such as Home Working had been refreshed.

Officers responded by saying that a lot of guidance had been issued on Home Working and that some staff preferred to work from home, whereas others were keen to work from the office.

Members were keen for data on sickness absence and comparison with other local authorities to be brought back to the Committee.

Resolved –

The Committee thanked the officers for the work undertaken, in response to the Scrutiny Review recommendations.

(Simon Jenkins – 01274 432978)

38. EQUALITY PLAN 2021-2024 - PROGRESS REPORT

Members heard that on 1 December 2020, the Council's Executive approved a new Equality Action Plan and instructed officers to report progress against the Plan to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The report also covered the key actions and activities undertaken to date to progress delivery of the Council's Equalities Plan and the priorities for the year ahead.

Members wanted to know if the Hate Crime Scrutiny Review recommendations, were taking into consideration.

In response officers indicated that they had taken into consideration the Hate Crime Scrutiny Review recommendations.

Members of the Committee stated that there had been a lack of leadership and not actually representing the ethnic minority communities that the District serves, as well as the language used in the report was still the same in terms of activities that were going to happen and when was something actually going to be delivered. Moreover, members indicated that in future, they wanted quarterly performance reports in relation to Equalities to be presented to the committee.

In response, officers indicated that they were looking at wider participation in recruitment and had seen an increase in diversity in ethnicity and a little increase in senior roles. As well as this officers also stated that they were looking at where posts were advertised and also considering development opportunities from within the Council.

Moreover, members of the Committee stated that equality objectives should not be really needed as they should be a part of people's jobs and that they were

concerned that this was not the case already.

Further to this members of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee were very keen to explore further the financial implications and processes at a future meeting, in relation to the Stonewall Quality Standard.

Continuing on, members of the Committee highlighted that it appeared that a lot of work had been undertaken in this important area, however, there were still no clear outcomes as to how this work would actually benefit the Councils staff and the diverse communities that Bradford Council serves.

Officers responded by saying that they would be creating Equality Champions from staff, to address this.

Councillors said that Bradford Council never really attracted people from South Asian backgrounds into the very senior leadership roles and enquired as to whether they applied and received an interview. Members felt that this was very important and that the Councils workforce needed to reflect the communities that it served.

In response officers from Bradford Councils Human Resources stated that they did not have a good understanding at what stopped people from applying for such jobs and that they tended to use the services of Head Hunting Organisations, that reach a very diverse background.

Resolved –

1. This Committee requests that the delivery of the outcomes, in relation to the Equality Action Plan be presented to this Committee in February 2021.
2. That quarterly performance reports be presented to this Committee.
3. This Committee requests that a report be presented to this Committee in February 2022, in relation to the Stonewall Quality Standard and the process and costs associated with this.

(Khalida Ashrafi – 07816 082796)

39. FIREWORKS SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead presented the draft Fireworks Scrutiny Review

Report to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillors.
Members heard that following on from the Council resolution, the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook an in-depth Scrutiny Review, into the use of fireworks in the District's Neighbourhoods.

In addition to this, the Overview and Scrutiny Leas informed members of the Committee that during the information gathering process a number of key and recurring themes were identified. Such key and recurring themes included:

- Lobbying the District's MP's on noise reduction and stopping the sale of the most powerful fireworks;
- The risk of the use of fireworks to animals;
- Tackling the inappropriate use of fireworks across the District
- More enforcement around pop-up shops selling fireworks;
- Education and Prevention work with communities across the District.

Members were in agreement that a lot of the action in relation to the use of fireworks needs to be undertaken at a national level, however the Council could also be proactive in some areas, such as where there was evidence that people have transgressed, Bradford Council and its partners need to use whatever powers are available to take appropriate legal action. Moreover, it was also felt amongst Councillors that it was important that Bradford Council be seen as taking formal actions against individuals who have inappropriately used fireworks.

Continuing on members also felt that the Council needed to lead a cultural change and trying to adopt a "Festival of Lights", approach.

Furthermore, members were unanimously in agreement that Trading Standards should actually undertake more test purchases of fireworks and that there should be a more effective way of tracking where fireworks have been purchased from when they have been inappropriately used; and for Bradford Council and its partners to explore options in Barcoding Fireworks, so that it can be ascertained where the fireworks have been purchased from.

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillors were in agreement with the key areas identified in the Draft Scrutiny Review report and the recommendations, however members did agree two new recommendations in relation to the test purchasing of fireworks and the barcoding of fireworks.

Resolved –

1. The Committee agreed the findings and recommendations contained within report and also agreed the following additional recommendations:
 - This Committee requests that the Leader write to events venues, reminding them of their responsibilities in relation to fireworks being used by individuals who are hiring their premises for events;
 - This Committee requests that the Executive asks Council officers to undertake legal action with the powers available to them, where there is evidence against those individuals who are inappropriately using fireworks;

- For Trading Standards to undertake test purchases of fireworks;
- That key partners explore the use of barcoding fireworks.

(Mustansir Butt – 01274 432574)

40. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22

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

Furthermore, Councillors also discussed the ongoing detailed scrutiny review relating to Domestic Violence being undertaken by the Committee and agreed that an informal remote virtual information gathering session should be held with Statutory Partners.

Resolved –

Members discussed and amended 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