

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 26 October 2021 in the Banqueting Hall - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 6.55 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Kamran Hussain Cunningham Dearden Hussain	Heseltine Herd Felstead	R Ahmed

Apologies: Councillor Nussrat Mohammed and Councillor Rachel Sunderland

Councillor Kamran Hussain in the Chair

51. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest received in matters under consideration.

52. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2021 be signed as a correct record.

53. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

54. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

55. WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW - PROGRESS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “G”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide Members with an update on the progress of the twenty-six

recommendations following the scrutiny review. The Water Management Scrutiny review came about as a consequence of the widespread and severe flood events of 2015 and was endorsed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2017.

It was agreed by Bradford Council that an in-depth scrutiny review was carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of the Council and its partners in dealing with the flooding that affected the District. Following discussions with Councillors and Officers, it was also agreed that water management would be looked at and a review would be carried out by The Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The terms of reference for the scrutiny review were agreed in April 2016 and 6 key lines of enquiry would be carried out under which the reviews' recommendations were made.

The Water Management Scrutiny Review included 26 recommendations with the resolution passed that a report would be brought back to monitor the progress made against each one.

Recommendation 7 and 26 were deemed complete as at November 2020 and it was further resolved to report back again 12 months further on in 2021.

In 2020, water management in the District was once again put to the test with a total of over 900 flood incidents reported.

In early 2021, several storms caused further disruption hi-lighting where processes to combat the effects of flooding had improved and where further work was needed.

Officers provided an overview of the progress and work being carried out under the recommendations including involvement of communities in flood prevention and two projects – the Begin project which was in its final year and the work carried out at Esholt to reduce risk to 20 properties and how the scheme could then be utilised in other areas of the District.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments, the details of which and the responses received are as below:

A Member asked about the cost of flood prevention in new developments which was to be borne by the developer and how it looked in real terms. A specific site flood risk report was the subject of a discussion between Members as concern was raised in relation to accuracy of this and conceivably other reports. The situation had changed since 2015 and the Member stated that there were problems associated with both local river systems.

Officers responded to say that they were surprised that the report was so far adrift and that recommendation 3 suggested that retrospective assessment and inspection was undertaken by the developer.

The Member was concerned that there appeared to be some issue with the accuracy of the data and the calculations made and requested access to the data

if possible. Officers advised that climate change allowances were set by the Environment Agency (EA) and the weighting applied to calculations was dependant on the river in question. Larger allowances were being added in flood zone 3 and when sites for development were being allocated in the Local Plan, 50% was being added on subject to other factors. Officers had not seen the data for the specific development that was the subject of the discussion and would need to see the data. They would make the request for it to be shared.

The Chair reminded Members that it was not appropriate to discuss particular planning applications and that the one highlighted had not yet been submitted for consideration.

A Member stated that it was good to see urban drainage in the report but there was not a great deal of attention being paid to retro-fitting, the consequences of grass verges being damaged by irresponsible parking and paving over garden areas to provide additional off-street parking.

Officers advised that they were trying to empower communities with some that gravitated towards support but whilst they support retro-fitting, it was difficult as there were a number of organisations involved e.g. utilities providers.

Members further commented:

- that there needed to be education around shared spaces and paving over surfaces
- better messaging and understanding as gardens were vanishing, with contributions and measures such as retrofitting on the Councils and Members own properties
- sandbags as flood management tools were labour intensive and had limited effectiveness, would like an explanation of mobile barriers, what they were and how they worked and could they be considered further. Mobile barriers could be more effective when people were affected rapidly
- leaky dams – turn into torrents very quickly

Officers advised that it was difficult to prevent loss of drainage areas on residential properties as there was little or no control over what property owners do to their own property front and rear spaces and it was difficult to challenge as Officers were not present when works are carried out.

There was a considerable market for temporary flood barriers and this had been discussed with emergency planners as we did not currently have any. They could work in some areas but would not be applicable for all.

A Member asked about Tiptop Playing Field which was being eroded into the River Aire, and whether this was a matter for the EA. Officers confirmed that it was the responsibility of the EA and that it was already being investigated but had no further details.

Officers were asked if the subject of mobile barriers could be brought back to the Committee at a later date and were advised that Drainage and Highways teams were already looking into the matter and would discuss it with Members outside of the meeting. The issue of water being diverted was also part of the overall problem as it diverted to the wrong place on occasions.

The Chair requested that mobile barriers be discussed next year.

A Member again, raised the issue of loss of drainage when extensions to residential properties were constructed. He then went on to ask if the water that drained away was being utilised e.g. as hydro-electricity.

Officers advised that small extensions effected the situation cumulatively and that drainage was factored in using SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) and conditions addressing the issue as much as possible through existing planning policy. A scheme was investigated approximately ten years ago on the River Aire but was deemed not viable. Officers will go back to the EA to see what options would be available.

Again, the Member asked about drains in older properties stating that they may not be sufficient by modern standards and was it being investigated.

Again, the Chair urged Members to avoid making generic comments and statements in relation to Planning.

It was agreed that further advice on this subject in relation to the Committee's remit be sought.

A Member asked about a pilot scheme in Addingham using residential SUDS and whether it included existing properties, it would be interesting to see more ideas which could feasibly be incorporated into Planning policy. Officers advised that reducing the impact of flood reduction to reduce run off had already been looked into and there were plans to produce a residential SUDS guide which they would endorse if successful.

A Member commented that any solution needed to be easy and cost effective to implement.

A Member asked if any work had been done in relation to the land bank discussed in the report under recommendation 17 in terms of modelling work to prevent flood events and engagement with the farming community etc. Officers advised that national mapping was available already to view on the Government's website – GIS system assessed all constraints of sites, including land use etc. Work was underway in co-operation with Leeds to pinpoint potential areas for flood risk management.

A Member asked how collaboratively the local authority areas worked together to bid collectively and commented on the ring fencing of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding so that it was spent where needed.

Officers advised that the rules relating to CIL were changing and that infrastructure investment would not be as anticipated and that the local authorities worked a great deal collaboratively along with WYCA to look at funding opportunities.

A Member asked what were climate change allowances and how did they work and was advised that they were set by the EA but were not funding, they were

simply measurements/calculations.

A Member stated that understanding of the whole catchment basin was needed based on historical information. Officers advised that data was sent off to the EA to ensure accuracy.

The Chair suggested a site visit to flood alleviation and catchment schemes for Members so that they would have a better understanding of the situation around water management. Officers agreed that this would be arranged.

Resolved –

That a report which provides an update on all the Council's water management and resilience initiatives and also includes information on flood alleviation equipment available to communities be presented to the Committee in 12 months.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

56. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

The report of the Chair Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document "H"**) was submitted to provide Members with details of the Work Plan. There was a brief discussion around the contents.

No resolution was passed on this item.

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.