

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 23 November 2021 in Council Chamber, City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 7.15 pm

Present – Councillors

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

Observers: Cllr Ross-Shaw (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport)
Cllr Firth

Apologies: Councillor Mohsin Hussain

Councillor Kamran Hussain in the Chair

57. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interests of transparency, Cllr Cunningham declared that he was an employee of the Bradford Culture Company (minute number 64)

Action: City Solicitor

58. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2021 be signed as a correct record.

59. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

60. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

61. HIGH RISE BUILDINGS

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “I”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide Members with a further update on the Council’s involvement with high rise buildings following the Grenfell Tower disaster.

Officers advised that the Improvement notice in the report under item 2.5 which had been served had since been revoked on 15 November 2021 as building owners had complied with it. They further advised that the Safety Bill contained in paragraph 6.4 of the report had progressed to report stage in the House of Commons.

The report advised that there were two buildings which had been subject to remedial works to remove and replace ACM materials used in cladding. Funding had been granted from Central Government to meet the significant cost to those who would be responsible for replacement in both cases.

An Improvement Notice was served by the Council in January 2019 in respect of Landmark House as fire hazards were identified including the presence of ACM cladding which required removal. This notice was revoked on 15 November 2021 as all the works had been completed.

In respect of the other building (Appleton Point), a Prohibition Notice was served by WYFRS and was still in force and still prevented the building from being occupied. Significant progress had been made and the Council and WYFRS continued to work with the building owner and representatives to monitor the work required.

Further enquiries had been registered to the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities for the Building Safety Fund and the process was being led by WYFRS to work with the nine enquirers.

The Council’s Building Control service was appointed to undertake the building control function for remedial works carried on the nine buildings in question. The work was ongoing

Significant changes had taken place since the previous annual report was submitted to the Committee as both buildings in the district had both remediated and changes to legislation clarified that WYFRS were the lead enforcement body.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. The details of these and any responses received are as below:

- A Member expressed concern regarding national legislation regarding permitted development rights in planning and asked what proactive steps were being taken to reduce the risk of another similar tragedy to Grenfell?
 - Officers responded that whilst they themselves were not Planning Officers that the Housing and Planning teams were working together to comment on and address potentially problematic applications. Officers advised that recent changes to the rules around permitted development relating to space standards and natural light should also improve the quality of developments. Officers also advised that Fire

Safety was dealt with as part of the planning application process as a result of the introduction of new safety regulations. Further changes to building control regulations were expected in 2022

- A Member asked about the sixteen properties documented in the report in section 2.1.2 which had reduced to nine and asked why the number had gone down.
 - Officers advised that it was due to a combination of reasons, such as height of the buildings and some that did not require the removal of cladding. The nine were going through a process of due diligence and may reduce further. For all nine, a building safety audit had been carried out by WYFRS
- How long would it be until the final determination was made in respect of these buildings as residents may have had concerns? Were there any timescales for works to be carried out?
 - Officers stated that the work was governed by central Government and was a long and complicated process as there were numerous stakeholders involved. There were no timescales on schemes that officers were aware of. WYFRS were satisfied with the situation at present.

Resolved:-

That the Committee noted the report and requested that a further update in the form of an electronic briefing be provided should there be any implications for local authorities of the Building Safety Bill following its enactment.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

62. SINGLE USE PLASTICS, PROBLEM PLASTICS AND PLASTIC WASTE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “J”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide an overview to Members on the strategy and plan to manage the use and impact of single-use plastics, problem plastics and plastic waste by the Council and others in the District. The report provided updates on key Government related policy and regulatory reform and reflected the recommendations from the Scrutiny review in 2018.

Since the report was written some key legislation was finalised in Parliament and Officers provided an update on the significant developments arising from the Environment Act which passed into law on 10 November 2021. Legislative changes had implications for materials in addition to single use plastics and it was noted that there was now a dramatic change with some major companies taking back and managing plastic materials and taking a commercial approach to the issue.

The impact on the Council’s progress as a result of Covid 19 affected its response as well as the significant increased use of PPE and the changes in household and

retail use of products, waste and recycling. This was brought to the attention of Members in the context of the report.

The report also contained appendices with details of key matters for Members to be aware of. The Local Government Association (LGA) had been calling for waste prevention to be given equal priority with strategies to increase recycling and continued to lobby central Government.

The report aimed to provide a position of where the Council was in terms of the Scrutiny review and with Government legislation, looking at new activity and development work which would be embedded in the Council's plan.

Following the Officers presentation and overview, Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions or comment. The details of these are as below:

- The quantities stated in 7.2 (Greenhouse Gas emissions Impacts) were queried – was it billions or millions? The CO₂ generated was low in comparison to airports for example. Officers advised that they were focussing on sustainability and there was no single solution.

There was a brief discussion regarding the lack of drinking fountains and where and how drinking water could be obtained by the general public when in the city centre. There was a scheme whereby drinking bottles can be filled in shops so water was available without any health and safety implications and additional waste being generated.

A new plant in Keighley was discussed as one innovation and how collaborations would be key to find the numerous solutions needed to a complex issue. The issue of exporting a large amount of plastic waste from the UK to other countries was also raised and Members were advised that there would be more legislation in 2022 which would put a constraint on the export of certain types of plastic. The emphasis needed to be on minimum waste, maximum re-use and to address contamination which was an ongoing issue. It was expected that there would be further limits placed on licences to export.

A comment was made around re-education and how to address the throw away culture which was a conversation already taking place to reduce waste as well as recycling. It was noted that the Community Champions were doing a fantastic job in schools and local businesses and Members were advised that if there was no local representative in their area then they could help to set one up.

A Member asked how much of our plastic was ending up on a ship bound for a third world country and where was it ending up. Officers advised that it depended on what plastics were being referred to. There was a local contract in place with Martins in Leeds who 'flake' plastics and sell it on in the EU and UK. There was a potential market for re-use but management of quality and contamination was a factor as high contaminants required water to clean material before being processed. The market for high quality chipped plastic was expanding and needed monitoring but in the context of what could be managed at kerbside collection.

A Member asked about getting more information and background on how we

were influencing the district to make improvements in a 'young' city. Officers advised that younger people already knew a lot and that recycling advisors were out daily to engage with residents. The possibility of processing waste food into bio-energy was being investigated as a potential capital programme but needed a considerable volume for it to be viable. Some help was available from central government and funding could be applied for. The viability of the bio-energy market needed to be researched further and would likely require working collaboratively or in partnership for it to be worthwhile. There also needed to be a balance when contracts were issued to the private sector for plastics processing to ensure that we could keep up with innovations and not be limited by contract length.

Members and Officers discussed the various end products using recycled materials both locally and nationally which would need further research. During the previous scrutiny review a company was discovered who used recycled materials to produce the same thing over and over again.

A Member asked about the trade waste recycling scheme and how it was being advertised. Officers stated that there would be a briefing note to provide information on how more customers were being approached.

A Member also asked about waste segregation from city centre bins and was advised that it went through a separation process also.

Members and Officers who took part in the previous scrutiny review were thanked and were asked to have regard to the 14 recommendations in the report.

Resolved:-

That a further report that includes consideration of the points raised at the meeting be presented in 12 months.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

63. MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES SERVICE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document "K"**) was submitted to provide an update on the Briefing Note that was sent to the Committee on 9 January 2020. The report contained details of progress within the District's Museums and Galleries Service, included future plans, the regional context, challenges and opportunities as well as updating Members on the transformation work undertaken since the previous report.

Officers provided details of activities undertaken during the COVID pandemic and how it had addressed the limitations by increasing and developing digital interaction. A recent funding grant had been awarded in the summer of 2021 and allowed the service to deliver on marketing reviews, to create a model of Covid safe events, improvements in facilities, training needs analysis, assist in the project to create a young, more diverse volunteer pool, digital plans for branding and a website as well as creating additional café space for Covid compliance and a new community space at the Bradford Industrial Museum.

Further funding bids were still in the pipeline at the time of writing the report including for NPO from the Arts Council which had national quality standards and prestige but was difficult to obtain.

Activities reported on also included the re-opening of 3 out of 4 museum venues in the District in the summer of 2020 which compared favourably in comparison with the district's closest neighbours and was well received. A wide range of community engagement activities were also undertaken to create exhibitions and collaborations with Mind the Gap theatre and Keighley Pride which it was hoped would create possibilities for communities to tell their stories in the District's Museums and Galleries providing a new direction for the service.

Digital content had also been developed during 2021 with 21 new online exhibitions. Social media, Visit Bradford and the website provided a platform to feature exhibitions, collections, events and family activities alongside other new digital content.

The report also provided details of engagement with schools and families during the lockdown and restrictions with a featured 'Just for Schools' day on Tuesdays with a very popular, blended learning offer.

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

There were clusters of ethnic minority communities in Bradford West and it was very important that the whole District was aware of its history, what engagement was being done with hard to reach groups?

Officers advised that there was a range of community projects such as listening to stories, providing comfortable environments, using local volunteers and members of communities who worked in the museums service who were from more diverse backgrounds, and invitations to Young Ambassadors being made. There was a photographic exhibition (Belle Vue collection) which reflected diversity and more diverse art collections and artists would be featured. The 'Island to Island' community project had a Caribbean focus with members of the community sharing their stories amongst different generations. Activities were also set up using gazebos outside of museums as a more subtle approach to museum visiting alongside numerous community displays across the service. There was also an aim for those who worked in museums to be from a wider range of backgrounds so that visitors would be more comfortable speaking to them. Subject to government funding, young people would work across the service as part of the 'Kickstarter' initiative.

Officers were asked if they were confident that they would meet the criteria for NPO funding and were advised that the service was in a much better position than before the pandemic. The Arts Council was interested in change and quality with a focus on BAME and children being a major focus. The pandemic had helped with the preparation process for bidding and, provided the bid was of good quality the District was in a good position to be successful.

Members also noted a comment relating to budget cuts and asked if the savings

targets for 2021/22 were likely to be achieved. Officers stated that, generally, the service was still operating at 30-50% but they were trying to build their way back. It was anticipated that it would take 12-18 months to be fully operational and then to grow, but Officers were positive about the outcome despite the position being volatile still, so the question could perhaps, be answered more accurately in 12 months' time.

There was a brief discussion about the format of digital engagement with videos called 'Inspire me to' created to support visits by schools and families that Officers considered the best offer combination. Discussions with the University of Bradford were also underway in relation to a community video.

The Chair requested a Briefing Note to provide an update on what's happening in City Hall with museums and artists being invited to become resident.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the report and the positive work that is taking place in the Museum and Galleries Service be noted and that a further update be presented in 12 months.**
- (ii) That the direction of travel and the proposal to bid for National Portfolio Organisation status from February 2022 be endorsed and the importance of the Museums and Galleries Service in the City of Culture 2025 Bid be noted.**

Action: Strategic Director, Place

64. WORK PLAN

The report of the Chair, Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document "L"**) was submitted as the updated version of the 2021/22 work plan.

There was a brief discussion to update and remind Members relating to upcoming agenda items.

Resolved:-

That the Work Programme 2021-22 continued to be regularly reviewed during the year.

Action: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

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.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER