

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday, 1 November 2022 in Council Chamber - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 10.35 am
Concluded 11.45 am

Members of the Executive – Councillors

LABOUR
Hinchcliffe (Chair)
I Khan
Ross-Shaw
Ferriby
Jabar
Duffy

Observers:

Apologies:

158. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

159. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

160. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

There were no recommendations to the Executive.

LEADER OF COUNCIL & CORPORATE

(Councillor Hinchcliffe)

161. REPORT ON THE REFRESH OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN 2022-25

The report of the Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Executive
(**Document “W”**) accompanied the refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Plan 2022-25. The Executive was asked to approve the refreshed Equality Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022-25.

The Leader emphasised that this was a diverse district and that to be successful everyone had to be able to work to their maximum potential both within the Council workforce and the wider public.

The Neighbourhoods and Community Safety Portfolio Holder thanked everyone for their work in refreshing the plan. He stressed that equality underpinned everything that was done in the district. He added that the indicator of how well people got on together in the recent Police and Crime Commissioner Survey had increased from 41.7 to 58.1.

Members were advised that the newly formed young people staff network would determine what contacts were needed outside the Council. The input of young people was valued and there were plans to involve them and the Youth Service going forward.

Resolved -

(1) That the refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022-25 be approved.

(2) That the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan progress report be presented to the Executive at the same time as the Council Plan annual and bi annual performance reports twice in the year.

ACTION: Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Executive

162. BRADFORD WEST LOCALITY PLAN 2022-25

As part of the Council-wide programme of 'Strengthening Locality Working', the Neighbourhood Service is working with other Council services and partner agencies, to develop five Locality Plans, one for each constituency that make up the Bradford District. The report of the Strategic Director of Place (**Document "X"**) set out the Bradford West Locality Plan, and the associated Ward Plans, for 2022-25.

It was noted that in developing the plan a listening and engagement process had been undertaken with young people and that the voice of young people ran through the plan.

The Chair of the Bradford West Area Committee stressed that all of the 18 Councillors in Bradford West were actively involved to ensure ownership of the plan by elected members. He noted that all of the councillors had responsibility if an area of the plan which would aid in its delivery. He thanked the Area Committee and noted that members would work with partners to ensure that the plan worked in the community.

The Education and Employment Portfolio Holder thanked the Area Co-ordinator

and the Assistant Director Neighbourhoods and Customer Services for their work fair, balanced and consistent work across the whole of the Bradford West Constituency. He stressed that all elected Councillors understood their diverse communities in their area. He noted that the Locality Plan was a working document which would deliver for the people of Bradford West.

The Neighbourhoods and Community Safety Portfolio Holder thanked all those involved in producing the plan and noted the additional investment in 15 Assistant Ward Officers 5 Stronger Communities Officers.

The Children and Families Portfolio Holder was pleased to note that the Plan reflected all of the issues in the constituency and that it built on strengths as well as identifying issues that needed to be addressed.

The Area Co-ordinator noted that there was a lot of work and investment in Bradford West on Early Help and that the role of the Area Committee was to ensure that all partners were working to the same priorities and information was shared on what was happening in the constituency.

Resolved -

That the Bradford West Area Co-ordinator, accompanied by the Chair of Bradford West Area Committee, presents a progress report to the Executive in 12 months, setting out the progress and achievements made for each of the priorities detailed in the Locality Plan 2022-25.

ACTION: Bradford West Area Co-ordinator

163. QTR 2 FINANCE POSITION STATEMENT FOR 2022-23

The Director of Finance presented (**Document “Z”**) that provided Members with an update on the forecast year-end financial position of the Council for 2022-23.

It outlined the revenue and capital budgets and the year-end financial position based on information at the end of September 2022. It stated the Council's current balances and reserves and school balances.

The Leader noted that the national cost of living crisis was having an impact on all Council budgets nationally and that the Local Government Association had written to the previous and current Prime Minister regarding the £3 billion funding gap in all Councils in the UK which was concerning given that the Chancellor had noted that cuts in public sector funding were being considered. She stressed that Council services kept communities together by providing good services and value for money and if that investment was not forthcoming this would put more pressure on acute services such as the NHS and the Police. She noted that the deficit had been reduced by approximately £10m since the Q1 report and that the Chief Executive and CMT and politicians were working to reduce it further, but that this was a time of great certainty for Local Government finance.

A member of the Opposition Group noted two significant figures, the increase in children in external residential placements which cost on average £250,000 for each placement and that there were 174 agency social workers costing £2m per month. He noted the action that had been taken to employ more social worker from overseas which would reduce agency costs. He added that the Children's Trust would be setting its own budget for the 2023 financial year and stressed the seriousness of the Council's current financial position. He questioned whether the significant use of reserves in one year was sustainable while noting that most other authorities in the same position.

The Leader responded that there was an increase in external residential placements but noted that if a child needed to be looked after the authority had to act regardless of finance. She hoped that the MacAlister review would bring about changes to restrictions that Local Authorities were working with regarding the cost of residential care and agency workers. She noted that all other Councils she was aware of were drawing down reserves and that the Government needed to support local authorities.

The Children and Families Portfolio Holder stressed that referred to the plans to employ social workers from overseas and noted that they would need time to settle and that support would have to be provided to help them to achieve this. She stressed that Government intervention was needed to address the issue that foster carers, social workers and placement providers were able to earn more working with agencies than with the Local Authority. She added that support was needed nationally to stop people affected by the cost of living crisis being pushed into poverty which would have knock on effects for a significant period to come. The Leader noted that the MacAlister review had identified that some residential placement providers for young people were making 30% profit on placement which needed to be addressed by Government.

The Transportation, Planning and Environment Portfolio Holder was pleased to note the investment in the Energy Efficiency Capital Programme in improving the efficiency of the Council estate and providing better value for money from a £2.5m investment.

The Leader called on the Prime Minister and Chancellor to consider the value Local Authorities provided for children and adults and stressed the need for this to be reflected in the financial settlement.

Resolved -

- (1) That the contents of Document "Z" and the actions taken to manage the issues highlighted be noted.**
- (2) That the change to the funding of the Markets and Development of Equity Loans capital schemes, £0.4m and £0.644m annual allocation, from revenue contributions to corporate borrowing be approved.**
- (3) That the following capital expenditure schemes as outlined in section 12.3 and 12.4 of Document "Z" be approved.**

- £0.08m to install additional fencing at West Holme Fields, Ilkley subject to final PAG approval. This will be funded by invest to save borrowing.
- £1m for schemes to be funded by corporate borrowing general contingency budgets rather than revenue contributions.
- £5.384m for the completion of design and development works for the Transforming Cities Project. The scheme is to be funded by short term borrowing prior to reimbursement from WYCA. Regular updates are required to PAG, including details on spend to date, WYCA funding approvals and grant income received.
- £2.5m for the continuation of the Energy Efficiency Capital Programme. This scheme is already included in Reserve Schemes and will be funded by corporate borrowing.

ACTION: Director of Finance

REGENERATION, PLANNING & TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

(Councillor Ross-Shaw)

164. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVIEW

Housing is central to the economic wellbeing and prosperity of the District. The Council has been a major contributor to the delivery of affordable homes in the district over the last decade. Government Guidance published on 14 March 2019 required local authorities to open a HRA where their stock exceeded 200 units. As a result of this change in policy / guidance, the Council put a hold on any future development programme in 2019. As a consequence of the guidance published in March 2019 by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Bradford was expected to account for its housing stock within a Housing Revenue Account.

The Strategic Director of Place presented a report (**Document “AA”**) seeking authority to approve the opening of a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the start of the financial year 2023-24.

The Leader noted that the vast majority of social housing in the district was owned by Incommunities and Housing Associations and that the HRA only related to housing stock held by the Local Authority.

The Regeneration, Transportation and Highways Portfolio Holder noted that the opening of an HRA was a step forward in delivering good quality housing on brown field sites in the district.

Resolved -

- (1) That the work and progress to date that has been undertaken between officers and colleagues in Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) be noted.
- (2) That the opening of a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the start of the financial year 2023-24, be approved (subject to viability and the rent standard being set at a minimum of 5% from 1st April 2023).
- (3) That Subject to Recommendation 2, authority be delegated to the Strategic Director of Place in conjunction with the Director of Finance & IT, as the S151 Officer and in consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport to implement a HRA.
- (4) That a future report be scheduled to approve HRA Business Plan.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Place

HEALTHY PEOPLE AND PLACES PORTFOLIO

(Councillor Ferriby)

165. ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY AND THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

The Strategic Director of Health and Wellbeing presented a report (**Document "AB"**) that introduced a renewed Anti-Poverty Strategy for Bradford and District for agreement by the Council's Executive. It sought the endorsement for the Council's approach to the cost of living crisis including use of the Household Support Fund government grant.

The Leader thanked all those involved in the Partnership in producing the Anti-Poverty Strategy, and thanked representatives from Public Health, In Churches who were in attendance at the meeting and also the Credit Union. She noted that the £20 reduction in Universal Credit had taken £60M out of Bradford District or the most vulnerable.

The Health People and Places Portfolio Holder thanked officers and partners for their work on the strategy. She added that partnership working was essential as poverty reached into all departments and voluntary services. She stressed the need for sustainable funding going forward so that the authority could properly plan services for those most in need. She added that the health impacts of the cost of living crisis would be felt in 50 -60 years. She noted that 78,000 adults were in food poverty and 40,000 homes were in fuel poverty. She went on to point out that there was a 10-year life expectancy gap between the rich and the poor and that those people living in poverty could expect 21 years of poor health. She stressed that if the Council could not deal with the health issues then it would fall to acute services such as the NHS to deal with.

The Education, Employment and Skills Portfolio Holder thanked the team involved in producing the Strategy. He stressed the need for a fair and consistent approach by Government to supporting vulnerable communities and referred to the fact that the authority had only been given a matter of days to allocate the Household Support Fund.

The Leader reported that she had signed an open letter with the Director of Public Health supporting the provision of free school meals for all children.

The Transportation, Planning and Highways Portfolio Holder noted that the Bradford Credit Union had increased its membership in the last 10 years to 9,000 which equated to approximately 2% of the population of the district. He thanked the current Chief Executive Andrew Bowker and looked forward to the Credit Union going from strength to strength in the future.

The Strategic Director Health and Wellbeing noted that the team had been invited to attend the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss their work on supporting children in poverty.

Resolved –

- (1) That the approach to the cost of living crisis set out in the Anti-Poverty Strategy be endorsed.**
- (2) That the Bradford & District Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022 be approved as set out in Appendix 2 to Document "AB"**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Health and Wellbeing

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Executive

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