

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 18 October 2022 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.35 pm
Concluded 7.35 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	GREEN
Mohammed Kamran Hussain Hussain Rowe Walsh Wheatley	Herd	Watson

Apologies: Councillor Simon Cunningham, Councillor Marcus Dearden and Councillor Noor Elahi

Councillor Kamran Hussain in the Chair

25. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

26. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interests of transparency, the following Member declarations were received:

Councillor M Hussain was a member of the Yorkshire regional Flood and Coastal Committee (Minute Nos. 30 and 31).

Councillor C Herd was a Member of Airedale Drainage Commissioners (Minute Nos. 30 and 31).

Action: Director of Legal and Governance

27. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 be held as a correct record subject to a change to minute no 17 to read that prior to becoming a Councillor, Councillor Cunningham was party to a tenancy at Oastler Market (on behalf of Bradford Civic Society).

Action: Director of Legal and Governance

28. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

No referrals were received.

29. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

30. BRADFORD BECK PILOT STUDY

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “I”**) was submitted to the Committee as the annual update on the work undertaken within the catchment since the previous report in September 2021.

The Friends of Bradford Becks update report was also provided as an appendix to the main report with the work undertaken during the year along with details of pollution incidents reported to the Environment Agency (EA) during the year.

Officers summarised the reports and highlighted some of the foci including work done on sustainable drainage, catchment of storm water to reduce the volumes going into sewers including the focus on sustainable drainage in particular.

Other highlights included:

- Increased work in partnership with Yorkshire Water to reduce flood and discharge
- Habitat improvement schemes
- Naturalising Bradford Becks (by-passing culverts etc)
- Progress on works feasible under permitted development
- Improvements to access to the Beck, to encourage better use
- Dealing with blockages
- Enhancement of water systems in Horton Park
- Work on the re-modelling of Bradford Becks as part of strategic flood risk assessment work

The representative from the Friends of Bradford Becks then addressed the Committee and provided highlights of the work undertaken over the previous 12

months. They also asked for assistance to request fencing on Yorkshire Water land to tackle an ongoing flytipping problem at Hunters Park Avenue. Details of clearance work completed at Bull Greave Beck were also included in the Bradford Becks report document which was appended to the main report.

The representative from FOBB raised the issue of ongoing water pollution by sewage. Yorkshire Water was recently fined for a major pollution incident in 2018. FOBB found that pollution was still continuing and was working with Yorkshire Water to locate and rectify sources.

A bid was put into WYCA for natural flood management measures for 3 projects in the Bradford District for which business cases were being prepared for funds to be drawn down once formal approval was received.

As Bradford Beck was not a main river, the Environment Agency were not taking responsibility for it. The Chief Executive of the Council had been approached and an update on progress was requested.

Several other matters of interest were mentioned, including the opportunities that the City of Culture 2025 may present, restoration of Horton Park Water courses, pollution hunting, raising awareness of Bradford Becks and what support the Scrutiny Committee could provide, such as writing to Yorkshire Water regarding the erection of fencing as previously specified.

Members were then given the opportunity to comment and ask questions, the details of which and the responses given are as below.

A Member asked about the current condition of the beck following the pollution event in 2018 which killed all the fish and invertebrates. The representative from FOBB stated that the fish had returned due to improvements made downstream. He further stated that its' condition was considered as chronic rather than catastrophic but sewerage and industrial pollution still needed eradicating.

A Member asked if there was an ambition to get to a 'good' ecological status and what would that mean. The representative from FOBB advised that the Beck would never be completely natural and referred Members to the first page of their report where the ambitions of FOBB were listed.

A Member asked which Committee would have discussed making the Beck a main river as the issue had been raised with the Chief Executive of Bradford Council. The representative of FOBB stated that this had not been specified and needed further discussions as it was a complex issue.

The question of using security cameras to tackle fly tipping was raised. Yorkshire Water were deemed approachable to request the fencing previously discussed and FOBB were asked if it had been requested. The Member also asked whether the Beck could be fished. In response, the representative from FOBB stated that cameras were used at outfalls but not for tackling fly-tipping. Fishing was possible from the bank between Canal Road and Dock Lane but there were no angling clubs with fishing rights. The Assistant Director, Place was in attendance and confirmed that a request for cameras would be submitted to the relevant Council Officer.

The report stated that only 14% of rivers were judged as 'good' and 36% of rivers were damaged as a result of water companies discharging human waste in the waterways. Members asked if there had been any improvement as these levels related to 2019 and 2020 respectively. The representative from FOBB advised that there was no improvement.

Members asked about the types of engagement used and were advised that these comprised of school visits and Science fairs but access was difficult as FOBB was made up by volunteers who had limited availability. It was suggested that engagement could take place as part of schools' other offsite activities but investment was needed to resource representatives to attend.

Resolved –

- 1. That The Friends of Bradford's Becks and the Strategic Director, Place be requested to work jointly on studies and proposals.**
- 2. That The Friends of Bradford's Becks be invited to report back in a year's time.**
- 3. That this report be noted and that the ongoing collaboration between officers and the Friends of Bradford's Becks be supported.**
- 4. That the Committee express Bradford Council's support and appreciation to Friends of Bradford's Becks for the work to tackle pollution, promote community engagement and restore and improve the beck and its catchment.**
- 5. That a report considering the issue of main river status for Bradford Beck be presented to the Committee within 12 months.**

Action: Interim Strategic Director, Place

31. WATER MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document "J"**) was submitted to the Committee and presented Members with the annual update of the Water Management Scrutiny Review to report on the progress made on the 26 recommendations for work undertaken during the year. The majority of the original recommendations were deemed as satisfied. The report presented, updated the work on all the Council's water management and resilience initiatives and details of the flood alleviation equipment available to communities.

Officers provided summary information relating to recent flood events, with details of properties and highways affected and rainfall levels that occurred. An overview and explanation of the capital flood risk programme was provided to support the details circulated in a document appended to the main report. Officers stated that work was still ongoing with the EA to address these matters. The information

provided showed projects completed and those that were planned, and identified where the EA was involved.

Officers stated that a draft of the local flood risk management policy would be submitted following public consultation and would be designed for use over the next 6 years. Property level resilience was explained to Members and how it could be funded via grants to ensure better protection for homes. Water quality improvement would be supported by the increased use of technology and data to tackle pollution and to carry out a survey of Bradford Becks using scanning equipment.

Members were then given the opportunity to comment and ask questions, the details of which and the responses given are as below.

A Member stated that global temperatures were forecast to rise and preparations would need to be made, and asked at what point the discussions for this would take place. Officers advised that the model used to mitigate against floods for the last 20 years included a 40% addition to rainfall estimates. These were from EA estimates who set climate change allowances, so modelling was done with the estimates already factored in.

A Member asked if drones were being used and also stated that residential resilience needed to be ensured by residents themselves such as installation of pumps. Officers responded to both issues and stated that 4 pilot schemes were underway in cooperation with the University of Bradford. Two Council Officers were being trained to use drones to carry out laser and visual inspections, however, drone flight times were limited. The Flying High challenge had also seen the Council selected to take part but this was not followed up. In relation to flood resilience, flood packs had been created for communities and to help residents help themselves. These were still available and Members requested to see a sample of their contents.

A Member asked about raising awareness of owner's responsibilities when water courses ran through private properties and had any enforcement powers been used. Officers advised that they do their best to raise awareness of liabilities with information and guidance on the Council's website as well as targeting specific communities. Enforcement powers had been used but issues did not usually progress as far.

Members asked whether issues arose on private or commercial land and who managed disputes over responsibilities. Two Council Officers carried out visits to advise residents.

An emergency planning team was already established for Baildon and a Member from Shipley requested the same for their area and asked who they should liaise with to develop an emergency plan. Officers advised that they should contact the Emergency Planning Team at the Council and provided the relevant contact information.

Resolved –

That a report which provides an update on the progress of the Council's water management and resilience initiatives within the District be presented to the Committee in 12 months.

Action: Interim Strategic Director, Place

32. IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH GREEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place and Strategic Director, Health and Wellbeing (**Document "K"**) was presented to the Committee to provide an update on the use of green spaces in the District aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of residents, especially those living in areas of deprivation. The report was last presented in 2019 and the update provided an outline of the current position, opportunities and challenges.

The report contained contextual information and evidence to support the benefits of green spaces including Twohig-Bennett and Jones, 2018 and Foué-Le Gall, 2020. Outcomes from national surveys carried out before the pandemic were also included, indicating that people living in more urbanised areas, with less access to green space had reduced life expectancy. This was further associated with BAME communities as these were more likely to live in this type of environment.

The report also detailed the benefits to the physical environment such as flood risk reduction, improved air quality, reduction of the impact of urban heat and reduced noise nuisance.

Officers summarised the main points from the report stating that quality of space as well as quantity was important for both young children and their communities with small, good quality spaces being just as beneficial (Born in Bradford research findings).

Officers went through statistics of the green spaces and leisure facilities provided and managed by the Council and summarised the type of work being carried out in cooperation with 'Friends of' and other groups to bring activities into parks e.g. brass bands etc. There was a brief discussion around some staffing levels, specific site facilities and forthcoming investment for a new play area.

Members were then given the opportunity to comment and ask questions, the details of which and the responses given are as below.

The Chair asked about the amount of funding for the sports pitch investment programme and where and how it was being spent or would be spent. Officers advised that a total budget of approximately £15 million from a variety of sources including land sales and grants was allocated and indicated that the next phase of work related to a second all weather pitch, improvements to existing natural (grass) pitches plus cricket nets and cycling facilities which were due to be discussed, although specific costs were not available to share with the Committee. A funding meeting was due to take place in the days following the Committee meeting. Officers further explained that the 3 district hubs would be

targeted for improved facilities with work then moving on to neighbourhood levels and to then filter down to individual sites. Work would continue with national boards to bring in funding for individual clubs and schemes.

In response to accessing funds and access to Surestart centre facilities, Members were advised that work would be carried out with groups or individual bodies and the matter of local children being able to access facilities at Surestart locations would need further investigation.

Members asked how they could submit requests for individual sites and were advised that discussions could take place with individual Ward Members.

In relation to safe access to parks, were alternatives being sought, such as heat pumps to create lighting, or to be sold on? Officers advised that alternatives were always considered and had already looked into ground sourced heat but this was unable to be progressed. It was feasible on land not used as pitches but there were other, additional factors including potential damage to trees/roots to consider. In relation to anti-social behaviour and damage to parks and facilities, work was being carried out with West Yorkshire Police but there were no plans to light parks. CCTV was not effective but designs for vandal proofing and lack of places to hide were being explored.

The question of funding allocation resulting from residential developments was raised and how it was being spent and where. Officers agreed to discuss individual queries outside of the Committee meeting.

The benefits of green spaces as reported from Born in Bradford was raised and Members asked if it was considered when resources were allocated and whether equal opportunities to benefit from them were considered. Officers stated that fixed play spaces or simply a place to go was factored in with new ways to deliver these being worked on to provide the best facilities possible. Discussions around individual sites and improvements to them could also be discussed directly with officers outside of the meeting.

Members asked about progress being made on street trees and tree planting as there had not been a recent update provided. Officers advised that a massive amount of tree planting had been completed, the team involved was small however, and street tree planting was a more complex process. More detailed information would be sourced and provided.

When asked about the Wyke Sports facility, Officers clarified that there would be a 'soft' opening in November 2022 with an official event in the Spring of 2023. They also confirmed that the whole area next to the Marley site would be developed.

Resolved -

That Officers be thanked for an informative report and for the work and initiatives undertaken.

Action: Interim Strategic Director, Place

33. WORK PROGRAMME - 2022/23

The report of the Chair of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document “L”**) was submitted to provide the latest version of the Work Plan for 2022-23. Members discussed the schedule with the Chair and Lead Scrutiny Officer in relation to a report on the upcoming City of Culture status in 2025.

No resolution was passed on the Work Programme 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.

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