

# **Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 15 November 2022 in the Council Chamber - City Hall, Bradford**

Commenced 5.35 pm  
Concluded 6.40 pm

## **Present – Councillors**

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	GREEN	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP
Choudhry (alt.) Mohammed Kamran Hussain Hussain Rowe Shafiq (alt.)	Herd	Watson	Elahi

Apologies: Councillor Simon Cunningham and Councillor Marcus Dearden

## **Councillor Kamran Hussain in the Chair**

### **34. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received in matters under consideration.

### **35. MINUTES**

**Resolved –**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2022 be held as a correct record.**

**Action: Director of Legal and Governance.**

### **36. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no referrals received by the Committee.

### **37. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

### 38. **ECONOMIC STRATEGY OVERVIEW**

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “M”**) was submitted to update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress to deliver the Bradford District Economic Strategy 2018-2030 and the subsequent Bradford District Economic Recovery Plan 2021-2023. It also provided an update on initial steps towards a new Economic Strategy and Implementation Plan delivering a sustainable and inclusive economy that works for everyone through an overarching approach focused on Clean Growth.

The report provided a brief update of the current economic conditions following the Covid -19 Pandemic and reflected current global economic turbulence, which set the context for the delivery of current strategy and plan.

Officers summarised the main points giving an overview of its content and background information relating to the post Covid recovery plan.

The report also provided details of the important progress in delivering key elements of the strategy including Bradford Live, Darley Street Market, Keighley and Shipley Towns Fund bids, the Hall Ings Road scheme, One City Park, Skillshouse and the successful bid to become UK City of Culture in 2025.

In response to the impact of the pandemic, the Council in collaboration with the University of Bradford formed the Bradford Economic Recovery Board. The Board brought a diverse and inclusive group of Council and business leaders together alongside partner organisations and key stakeholders to guide the development of the Bradford District's Economic Recovery Plan which was published in early 2021.

Headlines on actions discussed in the report included both immediate and aspirational interventions with actions to address key areas of opportunity. More comprehensive details were also provided in appendices submitted with the main report.

An explanation of the plan for an Economic Strategy and Clean Growth Implementation Plan (2023-2030) to direct the district towards high growth with a perspective on investment and commercial opportunities was also included for Members information.

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 remit/role of the Economic Partnership Board or its equivalent and was advised that it was a partnership group with oversight and consultative role on strategy and comprised a mixture of public sector and business leaders.

Officers were then asked what resources were available to the Board and was

advised that financial resources were minimal. The Chair was supported to attend meetings in order to promote the District to central Government and wider businesses.

Members asked about the quality of jobs available as employment levels were increasing despite the pandemic. Officers advised that they did not have data with enough details to answer as it was sourced from ONS and DWP. Officers stated that they would find out what data could be made available and informed members that there had been a reduction in the number of zero hour contracts as less workers were available. Work was mainly lower paid so improving skills to improve the quality of jobs was needed.

Members asked what else was being done apart from job coaches and Maximus to skill or upskill the workforce and were advised that more information was available and would be provided.

The question of how looked after children and their families were benefitting from the Business Enterprise Fund support given to Morrisons was asked. Officers advised that funding was maximised to create opportunities and Morrisons was one example of this. Looked After Children was a priority area and work was carried out to support care leavers into apprenticeships and provision of additional support during participation in some employment or training programmes.

What were the challenges to the Local Authority in the future and what were the strategies to overcome them? Officers stated that there was a widespread concern regarding a recession in view of the Chancellor's Autumn announcement with business already feeling the strain. Preparations for the short term were already in place and the authority was working to provide services with longer term aspirations. Examples of these were regeneration, affordable housing, skills levels, growth sectors (green economy) and a focus to generate new, well paid opportunities. Measures would be put in place to support residents such as key infrastructure.

A Member asked about access to work and skills development and what was in place if someone was already in employment citing the frustration at the lack of information and support available. Officers responded that there was a rising problem of in-work poverty and the range of information and support needed to be made available. The Corporate Centre would be requested to ensure that information and support were made available on the Council's website and that it was publicised. There were also 2 programmes being worked on with a decision on funding due imminently, to develop programmes on upskilling in conjunction with local businesses and could be tailored to meet individual and business needs.

In relation to clean growth and the target for net zero by 2038, Members asked if there would be any further developments that increased carbon emissions and whether they would be refused if not deemed 'zero'. Officers stated that the goal was clean growth with carbon offsetting and mitigation. They then summarised some of the projects that were underway including park and ride schemes, the clean air zone, a district heat network and the hydrogen plant etc.

**Resolved –**

1. That the contents of this report be noted.
2. Officers be thanked for their informative report.

**Action:** Strategic Director, Place

## 39. CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT UPDATE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “N”**) was submitted to the Committee and provided an update on key environmental delivery programme following the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in 2019.

Five ‘flagship’ projects were identified by the Council which were the expansion of the electric vehicle (EV) charging point network and increased numbers of electric vehicles, the delivery of a district heat network (which could potentially offer savings for the Council and partners on the cost of heating), utilising the opportunities offered by hydrogen, increasing renewable energy and electricity generation on the Council’s estate and a reduction in energy consumption from street lighting. The report updated Members on the delivery of these as well as other environmental and climate developments deemed significant.

Officers advised that the Council’s carbon emissions had reduced by half and a report would be presented in relation to the recently launched Clean Air Zone. They further advised that the increase in the number of EV charging points throughout the district in terraced streets and areas with limited or no off-street parking would be expanded by providing neighbourhood charge points which were installed but had not yet been commissioned. The Council had already introduced electric vehicles into its fleet, including a refuse collection vehicle and was developing proposals for charging infrastructure to be installed to facilitate a change to electric vehicles (cars and small vans) an EV leasing scheme for staff was also being developed.

In addition, in order to achieve reductions in heating costs and emissions further an application for funding to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) was made which would be used along with a contribution from the Council to connect 6 council buildings to a cleaner District Heat Network (DHN). Whilst the procurement of land was started by the Council, the facility itself would be developed by the private sector.

Other projects hi-lighted included the upgrade of street lighting to LED which was completed by approximately one third. Possible solar park sites were being looked into and a domestic energy retro fitting scheme to enable residents to improve energy efficiency in their homes was just one element of the gain share programme in wave 1 of the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan.

Officers also advised Members that the Council was working with partners to develop a hydrogen production facility. A HyBradford facility would also enable tankered transport of H2 and piped supplies to key organisations within a 1km radius.

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

Members asked if the hydrogen that would be produced was green and as it would be blended into the natural gas supply, how it would be used. Officers advised that it was green and a profitable use would be for vehicles with the facility acting as a fuelling site. Costs were equivalent to diesel so the only additional cost would be the acquisition of vehicles to use it. There was also a brief explanation of other potential uses if not for vehicle fuel.

A Member asked how hydrogen was made and how much was needed to run a bus. Officers provided a brief summary of how power could be generated to use in an electrolyzer to separate the hydrogen and oxygen from each other in water. There were different categories of hydrogen fuel based on the source of electricity used (e.g. whether from re-newable or fossil fuel sources).

A Member commented that hydrogen fuelled vehicles may not be as effective and could struggle with the topography of the district.

A Member asked how many vehicles were operated by the Council in light of the replacement of 27 and how long it would be before they were all swapped. Officers advised that the Council ran 450 vehicles, replacements were on order but there was a 6 month wait for delivery. Changing vehicles would depend on the natural replacement cycle as the fleet aged.

A Member asked how the charging points were being managed as assistance was difficult to obtain when there was a problem. Officers advised that an EV Officer was tasked to chase the relevant companies for service.

There were questions raised about retro-fitting to housing stock as the cost per house equated to approximately £11,000. Members asked what was carried out for this amount of money. The Officer present was not in possession of the details requested but Members stated that they needed to know what work was carried out.

In relation to the District Heat Network scheme, if usage was to change, a Member asked if there was a 'plan B' and when a decision would be made on the planning application. Officers advised that a decision would be made either at the end of the year or early in the new year. Details of what was proposed was shared with Members and that a feasibility study had been carried out. If successful it could be further rolled beyond the city centre. There were lots of ideas being considered.

#### **Resolved –**

- 1. That the Committee notes the progress made on delivering a sustainable, clean growth District.**
- 2. That a further report be presented to the Committee in twelve months' time**

**Action: Strategic Director, Place**

**40. WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23**

The report of the Chair of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document “O”**) was submitted to provide Members with the latest updated work programme. The Lead Scrutiny Officer advised Members of the changes to the schedule of reports and about the additional meeting in January 2023. Changes would be reflected in the programme document as circulated to Members.

**Resolved –**

**That the Work programme 2022-23 continues to be regularly reviewed during the year.**

**Action: Lead Scrutiny Officer**

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