

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 6 December 2022 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.35 pm
Concluded 7.35 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	GREEN	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP
Kamran Hussain Cunningham Dearden Hussain Rowe	Davies		Elahi

Apologies: Councillor Chris Herd and Councillor Anna Watson

Councillor Kamran Hussain in the Chair

41. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interests of transparency, the following declaration were received.

Cllr Davies declared that she was a volunteer library worker.

Action: Director of Legal and Governance

42. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2022 be held as a correct record.

43. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

No referrals were received.

44. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

45. MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES SERVICE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “P”**) was submitted to the Committee to provide an update on progress within the District’s Museums and Galleries Service, forward plans, regional context, current challenges and opportunities including an update on the transformation work undertaken since the last report November 2021.

As part of the 10-year strategy spanning 2022-2032 and launched in January 2022, the strategic priorities and new vision for the Museums and Galleries Service to develop the service as part of the Council’s wider cultural ambitions.

The new vision statement is as below.

“Our unique buildings and collections enable the people of Bradford District to tell their own stories. We work with our communities and partners to develop and care sustainably for our shared heritage so that everyone can learn, find their voice, create, be ambitious, connect with others and better understand their place in the world.”

Following the decline in visits during the Covid-19 pandemic, the numbers of visitors were increasing indicating a strong public confidence in the service and a steady recovery. In addition, following a successful application to the Arts Council England (ACE), Bradford would join the National Portfolio from 2023-24. The funding from the NPO award would enable the transformation of the Museums service making them more representative of the local communities. The report included how the service would engage with the local community, identifying its target audiences and how it would develop community exhibitions and programmes.

Officers summarised the main points from the report with school visits recovering well but identified their aim to bring children into museums with a target set at 100% for a visit to at least one site. Members were updated on the Museum’s collections management and the more judicious approach to additions. The digital engagement gained during the pandemic would be maintained and the service would continue to host apprenticeship placement opportunities. The success of the Kickstart programme contributed to trainees progressing into full employment and Bradford had also won an award. In addition, BM&G volunteer gardeners won the Sustainability Starts Award as a result of the work done at Bolling Hall. These and other volunteer projects would contribute towards the Year of Culture 2025.

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

- A Member asked how the city centre museum was progressing and was advised that there were 4 strong potential museum sites but there was no additional information. The project group was starting to focus on 2025 but

it was important that there would be an offering for visitors who came during the year

- A Member asked if the strategy was being accelerated in light of BD25 and was advised that there was a focus on museums to show the District's legacy for the year of culture
- A Member stated that there was low ethnic minority representation in more senior roles on a national basis and was there a plan to include minorities in roles such as curator and giving opportunities to learn the necessary skills. Officers advised that some progress had been made in workforce diversity but acknowledged the point made about the level of roles filled. New staff would reflect the local community and work was underway to commission young artists and contractors from localities
- A Member questioned the number of sessions carried out at Bolling Hall as the number was considered to be quite small. Officers stated that the location was small so fewer sessions were possible but a review was being carried out of the engagement programme
- Some considered museums to be serious and Members asked if there were any opportunities to make them more appealing to children. Officers responded and said that they wanted repeat visitors and to host popular exhibitions. A relationship needed to be developed with audiences
- A Member asked if funding for Museums could be used to help schools get to them and could funding be used to house the city centre museum by using an existing council building. Officers advised that workshop costs were kept down but funding was not used for transport costs. Work was being carried out to improve early years' cultural development with a commitment to provide low cost or free programmes
- The District's Industrial Heritage was not presented in a 'joined up' way and Members were advised that it was a big piece of work being done to connect them up
- Members asked about the District offer in support of health and wellbeing and were advised that it was another strand of the strategy as the value of mental health was recognised.

Resolved –

That a progress report be submitted to the Committee in 12 months' time.

Action: Interim Strategic Director, Place

46. LIBRARIES UPDATE

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document "Q"**) was submitted to the Committee to provide Members with an update on progress of the implementation of the new vision and model for Bradford Libraries that was agreed at Executive in March 2020.

The vision set out to develop a 21st century library service providing a core library service that was flexible and would enable the service to enhance the quality of life for people and communities. It would be inclusive, vibrant and supportive of wider district priorities enabling users to learn, engage and remain connected to their communities with locally focussed outcomes.

The service was severely impacted by the pandemic and delayed implementation of the vision and the numbers of users. Officers were expecting that they would see a 65% recovery by the end of 2022 which was in line with national figures.

Officers gave Members a summary of the report in relation to the work carried out, funding details including the innovative work to win external funding and to take part in a national pilot scheme, the investment in IT and to help children become school-ready with auto enrolment when registered at birth.

The new vision and model would be rolled out with plans for each library in place by April 2024. Officers also advised that investment was made by the Public Health department as it would enable people to connect and engage in health services.

- A Member stated that there was no ethnicity or cultural classification and asked if it had been improved
- Junior engagement theatres – considered by Members to be important
- Libraries and museums needed to provide access to theatre and culture
- Theatres and media were still considered to be for white, middle class people

Officers responded to the above comments and agreed that libraries should be integrated, safe spaces.

- One Member stated that, as a parent of 2 young children, that the library had been very useful and asked about an exit strategy for the city centre library site. Officers advised that the lease would expire in 2026 and were planning to explore the options. They would like to see it form part of the work for BD2025
- In relation to projected visitor numbers, A Member asked if the numbers could be higher than forecast due to provision of warm spaces and was advised that they were projected so may be higher than expected
- A Member raised the issue of libraries opening as per their advertised hours and whether relief staff were available – they also asked how it was being managed and would it improve. Officers agreed that the situation was not ideal and recruitment was being carried out following an injection of funding which was helping to improve the service. Some small libraries were staffed by volunteers only so they were vulnerable to some opening time issues
- A Member asked about whether the service could be an off-shoot of 1 City Park as an example of a possible option and was advised that a range of options were being explored including ‘pop-ups’ during transition
- A Member raised concerns regarding the upskilling of some staff and whether they would be able to undertake new roles. Officers advised that duties should be within existing capabilities as the new aspects of their role would be at a basic level to sign-post visitors and raise awareness of services
- A Member asked if Ward Officers would be based or accessible in libraries and Officers confirmed that it aligned with locality working with re-structuring to form hubs

Resolved –

That the report be noted and a further update be presented in 12 months' time.

Action: Interim Strategic Director, Place

47. JU:MP PROGRAMME

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “R”**) was submitted to the Committee to inform Members of the progress made by JU:MP and other strategic developments taking place as part of Active Bradford (a partnership of agencies from across the Bradford District).

The focus of Active Bradford was to target residents who were either inactive or low participants in sport, who tended to be from those on low incomes, people with disabilities and some women and girls from some ethnic minority groups. Active Bradford was successful in being selected by Sport England as one of 12 local delivery pilots named JU:MP.

The report provided information on the scheme's status and details of its 15 work streams with the ultimate goal of helping children and families move and play more in the long term which would lead to improved health and wellbeing for future generations.

Whilst the programme was funded up to 2025, discussions to extend the work were taking place to share research and development learning as well as best practice with other local authorities with the assets created by the JU:MP team allowing the programme to be sustainable beyond the existing funding provision.

Officers presented their report and stated that it aimed to increase physical activity, not just via sports as they reported that one third of adults do less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week. Delivery was carried out via 'Born in Bradford' and was a solution focussed approach to work with families. A summary of the delivery model was given which consisted of 8 neighbours with JU:MP groups and 14 Connector programmes. Some examples of groups involved were given but officers stated that secondary schools were hard to engage with. Officers reported that 17 mosques and madrasas were taking part as well as the formation of a girl's cricket teams programme.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions and comment, the details of which and the responses given are as below. The Chair and some Members from two Area Committees also attended the meeting and were allowed to address Officers through the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

- A Member asked which mosques and madrasas were involved in Keighley. Officers advised that they were working with Inner West and Inner East sites but there was a proposed roll out in 2023 which would include Keighley
- A member asked what was being done to empower communities to

identify more green spaces and to engage with JU:MP partners. Officers advised that they were working with partners with the funding sitting with the Council and that they would want to consult and then map out areas to use. They wanted to engage with communities from the outset and to provide mobile play facilities

- A Ward Councillor and Area Committee Chair stated that local Councillors should also be engaged but this was not continuing to happen and queried how funding was allocated. Additional costs, caused by inflation, of earlier projects had a knock on effect that resulted in a reduction in funding allocated to a particular area. Ward Councillors stated they were unaware of this and asked who had made the decision on the level of funding. There was also a concern raised regarding the suitability and experience when awarding projects via tender. Some funds were held by Manningham Housing and some concerns raised that the money was not being disseminated down; the issue of accountability was also raised. Members also asked who was on the Board of JU:MP. Officers advised that accountability concerns were discussed at Board meetings and they ensured that a formal tender process was followed. Representation from neighbourhoods came together to make collective decisions.
- A Member asked whether Connectors were giving good value for money as they had been running since 2019. Officers acknowledged the question and advised that research would provide the answer which would then be analysed. They were satisfied that the Connector programme was working to engage children and families
- The Chair of the Area Committee then asked about social marking and the use of a company called Magpie and asked officers why this particular company had been selected as they were not based in the District. Officers advised that they had a good reputation and were working across the region and were doing a good job. Some 9000 families had been signed up although the numbers were not completely accurate as they were estimated based on a simple formula. Officers offered to provide information regarding the profiles used for targeting purposes and gave 2 examples of organisations or projects who had used Magpie.
- A comment was then made by a Member that Magpie had not achieved their target and that they were not confident that Bradford was getting the best value for money. They also commented that they felt the report did not give a detailed picture of what activities Connectors were doing

Resolved –

That a further report be submitted to the Committee in January 2023 to include additional details of expenditure and use of funding.

Action: Interim Strategic Director, Place

48. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The report of the Chair of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document “S”**) was submitted to provide details of the Work Programme for 2022-23.

Resolved –

That the updates discussed be noted and the Work Programme continues to be reviewed regularly during the year.

***Action:* 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