

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 21 March 2023 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.30 pm
Concluded 8.40 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	GREEN	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP
Mohammed K Hussain Dearden M Hussain Rowe	Herd	Watson	Elahi

Observers: Councillor Matt Edwards

Apologies: Councillor Simon Cunningham

Councillor K Hussain in the Chair

70. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made in the interest of transparency:

- (i) Cllr Elahi declared that he worked for Horton Housing Association in relation to the item on the Work of the Housing Operations Service (Minute No. 77).
- (ii) Cllr K Hussain and Cllr Mohammed declared that they were landlords in relation to the item on the Work of the Housing Operations Service (Minute No. 77).

71. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes from the meetings held on 31 January and 21 February be held as a correct record.

72. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals received by the Committee.

73. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

74. TENDER FOR "STORES FACILITY MANAGEMENT"

The Strategic Director, Place presented a report (**Document “AA”**) in line with Contract Standing Orders, that provided the Committee with an update on the provision of Stores Facility Management that is currently provided by the incumbent third party Contractor and the need to renew the contract. The Principal Officer presenting the report advised that since the document had been drafted there had been changes and the framework from Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) had expired and had not been renewed. The Principal Officer explained that the context of the report remained the same but due to the framework expiration the contract would go back to open tender.

The Chair of the Committee expressed disappointment that no officers from procurement had attended the meeting to provide information. The Chair asked the Principal Officer to ensure that officers from procurement attend when the report is brought back to the Committee.

A Member noted that Fleet Services were located in Dunstable, Bedfordshire and asked why it was not more local to Bradford. The Principal Officer explained that YPO appoint suppliers who are required to meet criteria, so this was not in the control of officers.

The Committee sought clarity in relation to when the contract renewal process would be completed given that the current framework had expired and not been renewed. The Principal Officer informed Members that conversations were underway with YPO and that the contract would remain in place until September. The Principal Officer assured Members that a report would be brought back to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Resolved –

That the report be noted and that a further report be brought back in light of the information received regarding the expiration of the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) framework.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

75. FLY-TIPPING IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT

The Strategic Director, Place submitted a report (**Document “AB”**) that provided Members with an update on the number of instances and the handling of fly-tipping within the Bradford District. The Senior Technical Officer told the Committee that within the Bradford district, between 2020 and 2022, there had been a 9.4% reduction in recorded incidents of fly-tipping, which was larger than the national average. The Committee were informed that fly-tipping was not a problem unique to Bradford and that authorities nationwide were attempting to tackle the issue. The Senior Technical Officer stated that there had been an increase in high value enforcement actions such as prosecutions and vehicle seizures. Members were advised that new legislation relating to POP's (Persistent Organic Pollutants) would mean that waste must be separated which would impact on clearing fly-tipping and may also impact bulk collection as items would have to be separated which could lead to an increase in price.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and gave the opportunity for Members to ask questions the details of which, and the responses given, are as below.

A Member asked if any extra government funding would be given to the Council to implement the new legislation in relation to POP's and how POP's disposal differed to regular waste. In response the Senior Technical Officer informed the Committee that no extra funding would be received from the government, consequently the funding would need to be found from the Waste budget. It was noted that no consultation had taken place with Waste authorities prior to the new legislation. Members were told that POP's disposal involved incineration using a special extractor fan, the dust would then be incinerated again which would destroy the POP's.

Officers were asked if the policy surrounding waste collection contributed towards fly-tipping, mainly surrounding whether the requirement of permits to use waste sites was helpful. Officers stated that policy reversal would cost more than dealing with the issue of fly-tipping.

The Committee asked about the process of enforcement and whether signs or fines were working to deter fly-tippers and dog fouling. Enforcement officers described the process of enforcement in detail to the Committee and added that wardens patrol hotspot areas and can issue fixed penalty notices.

A Member asked about the best way to report persistent offenders so they can advise constituents who to contact. Enforcement officers told Members that they can contact NSAadmin@bradford.gov.uk but there is a need to maintain a legal threshold and gather evidence to prosecute.

The Chair invited an elected member who was attending the meeting as an observer to ask a question. Officers were asked about the table in section 2.9 of the report (**Document “AB”**) about where cameras were located across the district and why there was a gap in distribution particularly a lack of cameras in Tong. In response officers acknowledged issues around Holme Wood and told

Members that prior cameras had been cut down by residents. The Senior Technical Officer advised that the table only included information about fixed post cameras but enforcement also utilised Viper and Wildlife cameras across the district.

A Member queried whether a link between low car ownership and fly-tipping was acknowledged by officers and stated that if people do not have access to vehicles, they cannot utilise waste sites. Officers acknowledged the link between low car ownership and fly-tipping and commented that it certainly had an effect.

A Member asked about what communication existed between Waste Services and Enforcement Services and expressed the need for better communication between departments. Officers advised that more collaboration would be beneficial and that databases could be shared more.

Members spoke about City of Culture and the need for city readiness particularly for the district to look clean; officers echoed the sentiments of the Committee and stated that the removal of waste was being treated as a priority. Another Member concurred that the opportunity presented by City of Culture was huge and asked for reassurance that Keighley would not be neglected.

A Member asked if numbers of Viper and Wildlife cameras were available and if cameras were collecting enough evidence to result in prosecution. Officers told Members that they had recently invested in more Viper cameras but current figures of how many cameras were positioned across the district in total were unavailable. Officers added that fly-tippers had targeted rural roads which made it difficult to prosecute due to the difficulty of capturing the moment when waste was discarded as although cameras were positioned across the district there was no blanket coverage to capture all incidents. It was also noted that some authorities had published CCTV images online in a campaign to identify fly-tippers and this was being explored. The Committee agreed that perpetrators should be identified and prosecuted.

Officers were asked about how often fixed position cameras were moved and the turnaround period from when the public first contact enforcement officers. The Senior Technical Officer told the Committee that fixed position cameras were rarely moved as they acted as a preventative measure and deterred further fly-tipping. Enforcement officers told Members that on average the turnaround period was 7-10 days, but verminous waste or asbestos would be dealt with quicker.

A Member raised concerns in relation to Little Horton and told officers about various street cleans that had been carried out by residents on unadopted streets and asked if anybody could take responsibility. Officers informed the Member that legally the streets were unadopted, so the Council did not maintain those streets, the importance of trying to alter behaviour however was acknowledged.

The Committee asked if there were any visits to schools to educate children about litter and waste, in response officers told Members that COVID had made things difficult, and some schools remained resistant to visitors.

Resolved –

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

Action: Strategic Director, Place

76. ACTIVE TRAVEL; SCHOOL STREETS AND PLAY STREETS

The Strategic Directors of Health and Wellbeing, Children's Services and Place submitted a report (**Document "AC"**) that provided Members with an update on School Streets projects and the development of a Play Streets approach within the Bradford district. The Senior Public Health Specialist who attended the meeting told the Committee that the report was an update from the previous year. It was highlighted that the aim of the scheme was to improve safety around schools and build activity into the journey to school. Members were told that 9 schools had piloted the scheme but since December 2022 5 had withdrawn and did not want to continue. The Senior Public Health Specialist stated that funding had been confirmed from the Active Travel fund which would allow a further 5-6 schools to be piloted. The Principal Engineer in attendance explained that schools in areas of high deprivation and poor air quality would be prioritised and there was currently a shortlist of 10 schools.

The Committee asked why 50% of schools did not continue and if reasons had been gathered, officers told Members that schools were contacted, and evaluation was offered.

Members questioned how the pilot schools were chosen, the Principal Engineer explained that a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system was designed and that measured how easy the scheme would be to implement, for example schools where it would be difficult would be designated Red. Officers added that the RAG list could be shared with Members.

One Member talked about one of the pilot schools within their own ward and told the Committee that initially the scheme had been very unpopular, and parents were unhappy but as time passed attitude towards the scheme improved. Officers acknowledged that engagement was important.

A Member asked about how the voice of the child was taken into account in light of Bradford becoming a child-friendly city. Officers advised that child consultation would be involved more in the future as it could be beneficial to listen to child perceptions but acknowledged that historically it had not been done.

Resolved –

That the report be noted and that a further report be brought back in 12 months' time.

Action: Strategic Directors of Health and Wellbeing, Children's Services and Place

77. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE HOUSING OPERATIONS SERVICE -

HOUSING STANDARDS TEAM AND HMO TEAM

The Strategic Director, Place presented a report (**Document “AD”**) that provided Members with an update on housing conditions and the work of the teams to address inadequate conditions. The Head of Service for Housing Operations gave a brief summary of the report and told the Committee that in the 3 years since the last report several additional regulations had been introduced.

A Member asked about the main differences between the private and social sector. The Private Sector Housing Manager told the Committee that social housing required less involvement and most activity was from the private rented sector.

Members of the Committee raised concerns that statistics could be misleading as the report showed low figures, but constituents had raised numerous issues. A Member told officers that they were aware of 85 cases in their own ward where social housing was in disrepair and suggested that there was a disconnect between Housing Options and Housing Standards. The Senior Housing Needs Manager described how contacts were recorded on the system but admitted uncertainty if everything was recorded. It was added that it was possible that issues may not be recorded and passed to the relevant department by the Customer Contact Service. Members expressed the need for more efficient communication and suggested that it would be beneficial to review the issue further.

A Member asked about the process if a tenant raised an issue or a service request, and the Private Sector Housing Manager gave a detailed summary of the process that would be followed and the possible routes to ensure landlords comply with housing standards.

Officers were asked if inspections took place randomly or only after a complaint was raised. The Private Sector Housing Manager told Members that the work was mainly reactive although a programme of proactive inspection does take place by ward.

A Member noted the lack of figures and statistics in the report from Incommunities and asked if officers knew anything about this. Officers told the Committee that they were unaware of statistics for Incommunities. The Committee added that a report from Incommunities would be useful to provide the Committee with information about their own service.

The Committee recalled a case in Rochdale where a child had tragically lost their life due to damp and mould and asked officers if education was taking place across the district in light of this and more specifically how damp and mould was dealt with. Officers told the Committee that work was underway on an awareness programme to educate people about the dangers of damp and mould. Members were informed that an Environmental Health Officer would inspect and assess any reported hazard in relation to damp and mould. Officers added that a pilot to provide 50 properties with humidistats was underway and there was scope to expand this further.

Resolved –

That the report be noted and a further update on the work of the housing standards team be presented to the Committee in 12 months' time.

***Action:* Strategic Director, Place**

78. WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme was briefly discussed.

Resolved –

That the Committee's forthcoming review of private sector housing be expanded to include consideration of public sector housing provision, homelessness and the Council's Customer Contact Service.

***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