

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee adjourned on 15 September 2022 and recommenced on Tuesday, 25 October 2022 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.00 pm
Concluded 7.40 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	BRADFORD SOUTH INDEPENDENTS GROUP
Azam D Green Arshad Hussain Mohammed Regan	Nazam Loy	Stubbs	Clarke

Apologies: Councillor Sarfraz Nazir

Councillor Azam in the Chair

24. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Stubbs disclosed that he had initiated the Call for Action on Anti-Social Behaviour (Minute 30).

In the interest of transparency Councillor Green declared a personal interest in the Anti-Poverty Strategy in that he was employed by a charitable organisation (Minute 34).

Their interests were not prejudicial and they remained in the meeting during discussion and voting on those items.

ACTION: Director of Legal and Governance

25. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meetings held on 30 June and 21 July 2022 be signed as a correct record.

Action: Director of Legal and Governance

26. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

27. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no recommendations referred to the Committee.

28. TENDERING OF PROCUREMENT OF CONTRACTS OVER £2 MILLION FOR FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, CATERING AND CLEANING SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM)

As required under Part 3A of the Council's Constitution, Standing Order 38.2 the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, reported that Document "Q" had been included on a supplementary agenda published after the publication date of the adjourned meeting on 15 September 2022 which was reconvened on 25 October 2022.

It was explained that this had been necessary as immediate action was required in respect of the withdrawal by Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) from the grocery/ambient goods supply chain. The service wished to immediately progress market testing via a YPO DPS (Dynamic Purchasing System) to secure a suitable supplier for a combined contract encompassing ambient, chilled and frozen goods as a way to mitigate the withdrawal of YPO, to mitigate food price inflation and to reduce the level of deliveries and associated carbon footprint.

The report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources (**Document "Q"**) was submitted to the Committee in line with the requirements of Council Standing Order 7.2.1 to report all proposed procurement exercises to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a total estimated contract value of over £2million prior to commencement of the procurement tendering process.

Document "Q" set out the details of the contracts that Facilities Management Catering & Office Services proposed to tender and the timelines to ensure compliance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, Financial regulations and UK procurement legislation.

Following a detailed presentation, a Member questioned if any consideration had been given, or if any discussions had been held with neighbouring authorities, to achieve economies of scales in future contracts by submitting joint tenders. It was confirmed that discussions had been held regarding the elements of the contracts which YPO were no longer able to fulfil which included frozen, ambient and chilled foods. Transporting those goods together on multi-temperature vehicles would also reduce the carbon footprint and, it was hoped, would reduce costs. It was agreed to inform Members, after the meeting, of the progress and outcome of those discussions.

In response to questions it was confirmed that although the provision of Halal products was included in the contracts there was a separate arrangement with butchers to supply those goods.

In light of the rapidly changing economic climate it was questioned if the length of

the contracts would be amended. Members were advised that if the contract length was too short it would not be attractive to the market and would be unlikely to attract any interest. It was proposed that, to provide maximum flexibility and best value, the contracts would be offered for two years with the potential to extend if appropriate.

The report revealed that the optimum start for the new contract would be after the October 2022 half term break. A Member queried if that target would be realised and was advised that YPO were still in the market but the procurement exercise would be commenced at that time.

It was questioned if other providers could fill the YPO elements of the contract and also what was proposed for the YPO equipment and staffing resources. It was explained that not all distribution vehicles would be suitable as they did not have multi-temperature capability. One of the reasons for YPO not continuing was the need to update the transport fleet. Other contractors had indicated that they would look at the opportunities for any equipment and staff no longer required but they would not be prepared to do that until a contract was secured.

A Member raised concerns that increased procurement costs would be passed to schools and she was assured that there was no intention to pass increased costs to schools in the current year. When the contracts were renewed there may be inflationary pressures but as a traded service the Facilities Management and Catering Service would provide a competitive service. In response to questions about contingency plans should the economic climate worsen it was clarified that the current contract arrangements were in place with schools until September 2023. The current Government crisis; the war in the Ukraine and inflation reaching 25 to 30% and rising was being monitored very carefully to ensure the supply of meals to children would not be affected.

Members queried how the contract would be affected should schools withdraw from the agreement with the service. It was stressed that schools were given an annual price which the service would honour. Once agreement with schools had ended they had the option to continue with the service or to test the market. Any new suppliers would be subject to Transfer of Undertaking, Protection of Employment (TUPE requirements).

Whilst not suggesting that contracts with schools should be ended it was asked if there were regulatory requirements for that provision. In response it was explained, as an example, that Calderdale Council did not operate any catering provision. All schools were free to choose their meal providers. As a traded service any surplus had been reinvested into schools and the service.

A Member explained that many years ago the Council had taken over the school meal provision to address inconsistencies in the quality of meals; provide children with a healthy and diverse meal choice and to offer best value for money. It was stressed that the decision to take over the service had not been financial but to ensure the quality of school meals.

It was acknowledged that the current year was the only year when the service had not been in surplus and questioned if overspend would be sought from schools in future years. Members were assured that the overspend would not be

sought from schools and the service would endeavour to reach a cost neutral position in the future. It was stressed that the service provided good quality and healthy meals and that any surplus was always reinvested in schools and equipment. A state of the art production facility, developed at Mitre Court in Bradford, providing an efficient service and healthy meals was reported as an example of that investment.

Resolved –

The committee requests that the comments raised by members, be considered by officers during this procurement exercise.

- (1) Officers are asked to let members know of the outcome of discussions with the other West Yorkshire authorities about possible joint ventures, together with reasons of decisions made.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

29. BRADFORD COUNCIL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015-2021

Members were reminded that at the meeting on 1 December 2020 Executive had approved the Council's refreshed Workforce Development Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2024. The workforce development plan was developed taking account of an internal evidence base. The evidence base included staff feedback from engagement sessions held during 2020; the Council Plan; updated equality objectives; outputs from culture and inclusive employer surveys and reports; induction and learning management system evaluation; the workforce development strategy 2015 – 2021, plus a review of existing KPIs and performance data.

The report of the Director of Human Resources, (**Document "J"**) presented the Council's new workforce development strategic plan and detailed progress since the topic had last been discussed by the committee at the meeting on 14 October 2021. The ten key priority workforce development areas contained in the plan for 2021 – 2024 were reported and identified development activities over three phases. Each phase outlined the key activities required.

The priorities included an enhanced coaching offer and it was questioned if the take up of coaching had improved. In response it was confirmed that feedback had been good but there was a need to increase the number of trained coaches.

The report revealed efforts to continue to improve performance management metrics and an increase in the number of staff completing annual performance appraisals from 27% in 2020/21 to 51% in 2021/22 was reported.

It was questioned if those figures were benchmarked with neighbouring authorities and it was explained that no exact statistical comparisons were available as other authorities used different systems. Leeds Council appraisal figures had reduced to a 70% completion rate and it was recognised that Bradford was behind that figure and that remained an area of focus for the Council.

The report revealed areas of concern in two departments with regard to completed appraisals and it was asked what action or interventions were planned. It was explained that systems requirements were required to ascertain the actual figures of staff completing appraisals as more than the number recorded had been undertaken. The Strategic Director, Health and Wellbeing explained that half of his employees were located in care homes and did not have IT access. In addition to system developments plans were being made to support colleagues in their completion and reporting of appraisals.

A Member referred to assurances which had been provided over the previous ten years that all staff would complete an appraisal. In response it was acknowledged that more work was required to capture statistical information and that managers who were not conducting appraisals would be targeted to ensure that employees were aware of the contribution they made to the Council and to plan their development. In response to questions about the commitment of managers' assurances were provided that all the senior team were committed to setting a culture for success. The COVID pandemic had presented difficulties with getting managers together and making them aware of the most effective way to provide support.

The progress made on the Kickstart programme was acknowledged. It was questioned if the figure of 126 people leaving the programme early was because they had secured other employment and it was asked how the figures compared to other authorities. It was reported that the drop off rate was higher than other schemes but that the majority of those that had left had secured alternative employment. It was explained that anecdotally the scheme appeared to be successful but statistics were expected from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to confirm that belief. In response to questions about the identification of a successful scheme it was felt that 50% of those leaving the programme taking up permanent, sustainable, employment would be seen as a good achievement.

The number of places available through the Kickstart programme was questioned and in response it was explained that there was not a specific number determined. Investigations had been made to ascertain availability in departments and areas of interest to potential applicants. Following that process specific placements had been advertised; some areas were oversubscribed and in some areas there was less demand. The service did have an ambition to provide as near to 500 places as possible in the future.

Concern was expressed that statistics in Document "J" reported that only 34% of managers had completed Evolve performance training and it was suggested that they should lead by example. In response it was explained that the figure did not reflect that previous training had been completed and did not require a refresh. It was agreed that future reports would be presented to provide more context around the statistics presented.

The percentage of staff with an active performance goal from April 2022 was included in the report and Members requested that in future anonymised examples be provided.

A Member referred to the volume of information on equality and diversity

presented and requested that information be provided to reveal what was being done to support professional development. He believed that the reason that some groups were under represented at management level was because of a lack of access to the skills and professional training and qualifications required. He referred to professional qualifications required for lawyers, town planners and human resources specialists as an example. He felt that people were left behind and suggested that there be an equitable distribution of training and development budgets to ensure staff who wished to progress received the necessary support.

It was explained that the budgets for that development were located with individual departments. In response Members suggested that regardless of where the budgets were located they should be spent on the appropriate staff and not just those at the top of the organisation. Members were disappointed that information on how the budget was apportioned and the grades, ethnicity and gender of those employees was missing from the report and believed this information was required for them to ensure that the management of the organisation reflected the city as a whole. Assurances were provided that the information would be provided in future reports.

A Member asked if a specific report could be provided by the end of the municipal year presenting the budget spent on development and to include the roles and grades of those employees who had been supported. It was agreed that the information could be provided by that time.

An officer from the Credit Union addressed the meeting and reported increased membership and provided statistical information about savings and borrowings made by 3106 members. It was explained that a third of members were Council employees and that work with the Council's workforce was continuing.

The Leaving Care Employability Programme, a 12-month Council initiative which supported care leavers and linked into the Kickstart programme, was reported and in response to questions it was confirmed that one care leaver had progressed from that scheme into an apprentice role.

Resolved –

- (1) That a progress report relating to Council Workforce Development be presented in 12 months.**
- (2) This committee requests that a report relating to professional career development spend on Council Departments with a breakdown of grades, be presented to the committee in April 2023.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

30. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - ENQUIRY INTO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Members were reminded that at the meeting on Thursday 30 June 2022 a Call for Action request, from Councillor Brendan Stubbs, into Anti-Social Behaviour in the Bradford 2 and Bradford10 areas was considered.

At that time Members expressed their belief that Anti-Social behaviour was actually an issue for the whole of the District. Subsequently it was decided to undertake an enquiry into anti-social behaviour across the whole of the District.

The report of the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document “K”**) presented the draft Terms of Reference for the Call for Action in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour across the District.

Councillor Stubbs, who had subsequently been appointed as a Member of the Committee, confirmed that he was happy for the enquiry to be extended across the district.

A Member referred to the Key Lines of Enquiry contained in Document “K” and suggested that the understanding of the legislative; policy and performance context of anti-social behaviour be conducted at the end of the process and not be limited to current legislation.

It was requested that the indicative list of interested parties include victims and residents and that a mechanism to include those residents be developed. It was believed that anti-social behaviour was not just limited to 14 to 19-year-old boys and examples of people driving badly and dropping litter to be picked up by others were cited as examples of poor behaviour. It was felt that residents should be given the opportunity to discuss a range of issues affecting their lives.

A Member suggested that all 90 local Councillors be provided with a template to complete to highlight issues in their areas and that neighbourhood offices also be targeted to enhance the evidence gathering process.

The timescale for the enquiry was questioned and it was explained that three sessions were proposed. These would take place on a monthly basis with draft recommendations being compiled by the fourth month.

Resolved –

Members amended and adopted the Terms of Reference for the Call for Action into Anti-Social Behaviour.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

31. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Members were reminded that the Constitution of the Council required the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to produce an annual report to Council on the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The report of the Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (**Document “L”**) presented the draft annual report for 2021-2022 to be considered for adoption prior to its presentation to Council.

The report included annual survey results and in response to questions about participation in the survey it was reported that all Councillors and officers who had participated throughout the municipal year had been included. It was

acknowledged that Councillor responses had been low despite reminders being issued.

It was confirmed that the report would be presented to the next Council meeting in December 2022.

Resolved –

(1) The committee adopted the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-22.

(2) That the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2021-22 be referred to Council for consideration.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

32. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

The Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (**Document “M”**) which included proposed items for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2022/23.

It was noted that the report requested earlier in the meeting on workforce development would be added to the work programme and confirmed that the Stonewall report would be presented in December 2022.

The Committee was asked to consider any additional items it wished to include in the work programme and Members were advised that following the meeting they could contact the Scrutiny Lead with any further items.

Resolved –

Members discussed and amended the work programme.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

33. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Members were asked to consider if Not for Publication Appendix 1 to Document “I” relating to the Anti-Poverty Strategy be considered in the absence of the public.

Resolved –

That the proposal to consider the Appendix to Document “I” in the absence of the public be overruled.

34. ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

The report of the Strategic Director, Health and Wellbeing, (**Document “I”**) presented the new draft District Anti-Poverty Strategy and accompanying action plan.

Members were advised that the strategy had been developed by the District Anti-Poverty Coordination Group (DACG), a multi-partner group consisting of representatives from the Council, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), health, Incommunities and the voluntary and community sector.

The renewed draft Anti-Poverty Strategy –

- Reviewed the latest national and local picture;
- Outlined the vision, goals and work themes of the strategy
- Provided an overview of the work being undertaken across the district to support our poorest and most vulnerable communities through and beyond the cost of living crisis;
- Highlighted some key issues for Corporate Overview & Scrutiny (CO&S) to have sight of and place in the context of the priorities of the District Anti-Poverty Coordination Group’s (DACG) next steps.

Members were reminded that Bradford was one of the most deprived areas in the country and the cost of living crisis had impacted greatly on the Local Authority, public services and the voluntary sector. The pandemic had demonstrated how reliant residents were on public services and the strategy attempted to recognise the new poverty landscape. A lot of good work was being undertaken and this was captured in the strategy which aimed to build and develop lessons learnt during the pandemic and to recognise the leadership role the Council provided.

A representative of Inn Churches addressed the meeting. Members were advised that Inn Churches was a voluntary organisation providing, amongst other things, Food Hubs to tackle food poverty through intercepting, sorting and distributing surplus food to community groups across the district and through social supermarkets providing access to affordable, fresh and long-life food on a budget.

Their representative explained that whilst grateful for preventative measures to tackle the food crisis she felt that the problem was merely being moved further down the line and she was concerned about what would happen to the 26 foodbanks which were engaged with Inn Churches when Government funding ended in April 2023.

She believed that people were trapped in poverty and sustainable models were required to prevent people remaining reliant on food banks. Details of a Food Saver initiative developed before the Covid pandemic, to assist people who did not want the stigma of reliance on food banks, were provided. Members of that scheme paid a fee of six pounds and received a bag of shopping. One pound of that fee was deposited with the credit union for that member. It was explained that the Bradford Credit Union was a faith friendly organisation, paying a dividend as opposed to interest, and the number of people saving was growing.

Details of a Uniform Savers project launching shortly were provided and national

recognition for the Covid Loan which had commenced in July 2020 was reported.

The intention of the Trussel Trust to close food banks in its five-year plan were reported and it was explained that initiatives such as the Food Savers project were an attempt to ease people towards more sustainable models during times of food crisis.

In response to questions about amendments to the Anti-Poverty Strategy following its consideration by the Executive on 1 November 2022 it was explained that the strategy was a live document which was responsive to community need.

Members questioned if there was a database of all food banks in the district and were advised that the Bradford Foodbank website was available for the public to access. A cost of living survival guide was also updated weekly.

A Member referred to the Company Shop, a shop open to all public sector employees and volunteers selling heavily discounted surplus products. The representative of Inn Churches explained that the Company Shop had now been bought by a hedge fund and that the surplus food available to her organisation had reduced and that had impacted on their costs.

It was queried why the strategy contained no mention of older people and a Member expressed his belief that isolation was an issue which should be built into the strategy. He reported that a lot of activities for older people had ceased during the Covid pandemic and had not resumed. The addition of gambling addiction to the drug and alcohol reference was also suggested.

A Member, whilst acknowledging the good work contained in the Strategy, questioned the time frame for proposed actions to filter down to enable community support and questioned if information had been provided to those who were in a position to support communities. She also referred to members of the BME community who traditionally cared for people within the family but may need support. In response it was reported that messages about the Warm Homes/Healthy People programme had been circulated to all voluntary groups and Councillors. Attempts were being made to also contact all small grass roots groups.

A Member stressed his belief that a key way to address poverty was to provide the skills to get people into jobs. He felt that reference in the report to growing skills was inadequate and not easily understood. It was acknowledged that schools were key to young people acquiring the right skills and it was suggested that what will be done as opposed to what had been done should be emphasised in the report.

In response it was explained that it had not been possible to include written actions for each department prior to the strategy being approved. The specific intentions of individual departments would be included in the next report to Members.

Resolved –

- (1) Members would like to thank officers and in churches, for the excellent work undertaken in the area of Anti-Poverty.**
- (2) This committee requests that a further progress report be presented in 12 months.**

ACTION: Strategic Director, Health and Well Being

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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