

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 28 November 2023 in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.00 pm
Concluded 7.55 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	GREEN	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
K Hussain Rowe Wheatley Kausar Mitchell Steele	Herd	Watson	

Observers: Councillors Ferriby and Ross-Shaw

Apologies: Councillor Riaz Ahmed

Councillor K Hussain in the Chair

34. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Mitchell declared in the interest of transparency that in relation to the items on Bradford Beck Pilot Study (Minute No. 38) and Water Management and Resilience in the Bradford District (Minute No. 39), he was employed by Yorkshire Water.

35. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 03 October 2023 be held as a correct record.

36. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The referral from full Council on 17 October 2023 to the Regeneration and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee was addressed during Item 9 of the agenda.

Resolved –

That the referral be added to the Committee’s programme of work for consideration at its meeting of 28 November 2023. The report to the Regeneration & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlining progress on the Smart Street Lighting Project and the Council’s approach to overnight dimming can be found at Item 9 (Document “T”).

37. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

No requests to view documents or reports were received.

38. BRADFORD BECK PILOT STUDY

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “Q”**) outlined the work undertaken within the catchment since the previous report in October 2022. The Bradford Beck Pilot Study was first discussed by Members in April 2013 and has been before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis since then. The Principal Drainage Engineer explained that the report detailed the work that had been done in the Bradford Beck catchment and that it included consideration of main river status. The Committee were informed that the Environment Agency would be responsible for maintaining a map of water courses and that a request for main river status would have to be submitted to the Environment Agency. It was added that the Environment Agency would have statutory guidance to follow in relation to main river status.

The Chair of Friends of Bradford Beck outlined Appendix 1 to **Document “Q”** which highlighted the activities that had been undertaken by Friends of Bradford Beck alongside the hope to progress the main river status. The new and ongoing issues surrounding pollution were outlined and the Friends of Bradford Beck stated it would be beneficial to create a partnership to tackle pollution with the Environment Agency.

The Chair of the Committee noted the absence of the Environment Agency and stated that it would have been beneficial for the discussion and for questions to be put to the Environment Agency.

The Principal Drainage Engineer was asked what the barriers to main river status were and how they could be unlocked. The Committee were advised that the Environment Agency had a program in 2000 that looked at the issue of main river status for ordinary watercourses. It was added that the Council would need to approach the Environment Agency to ask for main river status and this would then follow a process. The Principal Drainage Engineer explained that there would have to be an appraisal surrounding the implications of main river status and it was suggested by a Member of the Committee that this could be incorporated into

a future report.

A Member asked about the type of pollution being seen and whether there was a lot of biodiversity within Bradford Beck. The Chair of Friends of Bradford Beck explained that most pollution was visible which eliminated the need for chemical testing and added that pollution could also be measured by looking at populations of riverflies. The Committee were informed that in terms of biodiversity different kinds of fish could be found upstream but downstream of Bradford the water quality was worse.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Committee request the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport and the Strategic Director, Place to report back in 6 months regarding the enmainment of Bradford Beck and that the report include a financial appraisal.**
- (2) That the Committee expresses support for the enmainment of Bradford Beck.**
- (3) That the Strategic Director, Place be requested to work jointly with Friends of Bradford Beck on studies, proposals and addressing pollution.**
- (4) That the Friends of Bradford’s Becks be invited to report back in a year’s time.**
- (5) That the report be noted and that the ongoing collaboration between officers and the Friends of Bradford’s Becks be supported.**
- (6) That Members 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.**

To be actioned by: Strategic Director, Place

39. WATER MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE IN THE BRADFORD DISTRICT

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “R”**) provided an update regarding the Council’s progress of all Water Management and Resilience initiatives within the district. The report has been brought to the committee on an annual basis to highlight progress made against each recommendation of the Water Management Scrutiny Review. The Principal Drainage Engineer emphasised that flood events in the past years had highlighted that water management remained a key challenge. The Council’s Flood Risk Management Programme was outlined, and Members were told that Bradford Council’s Emergency Planning Team had developed local Flood and Emergency plans with Parish and Town Councils within the district.

The report addressed the impact of climate change and noted the increasing

intensity of rainfall and the challenges this brought with it. The need for partnership working to form more flood resilience within the district was stressed. The Principal Drainage Engineer addressed the financial constraints and the impact it may have upon the delivery of flood risk management schemes.

A Member addressed the section of the report that focussed on community engagement and stated that they were unaware of the plan update in Bingley or the training stage. The Principal Drainage Engineer stated that this could be investigated to ensure information was up to date.

Members noted that some properties within the district were vulnerable to flooding, and this meant that residents faced issues surrounding insurance. The Principal Drainage Engineer was asked if there was any work in place to support people in vulnerable areas. The Committee were informed that a database was being developed to monitor and manage flood installations and that information could be shared with insurers to encourage a reduction in insurance premiums.

The Committee spoke about the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and asked when it would be completed. The Principal Drainage Engineer advised Members that it was a statutory duty placed on the Council to develop a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and that it would be completed in the next year. It was added that the strategy would need to go out to consultation and be endorsed by the Executive.

A Member stated that it could be beneficial to mitigate the impacts of flooding to look at the creation of flood plains on non-productive land in order to bank excess water and reduce flooding downstream. The Committee were informed about how Ilkley Moor acted as a natural flood barrier as well as the Keighley and Stockbridge Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The Principal Drainage Engineer was asked if there was a link between new build estates and increased surface water. In response it was clarified that national policy stated that any new development should not increase flood risk and the developer was responsible for this although the Principal Drainage Engineer acknowledged that during a build process surface water runoff may increase.

The Committee stated that it would add clarity if future reports incorporated a map to show future flood risk and areas that had been prone to flooding.

A Member asked about culverts that were at risk of collapse and what work was done to assess the condition of culverts across the district. Members were told that it was dependent on the level of risk due to constraints on resources meaning that not all culverts could be inspected, but areas of high risk would take priority.

The Committee addressed the impact of climate change and queried how capable the current drainage system was to deal with an increased volume of rain. The Principal Drainage Engineer acknowledged that infrastructure may become overwhelmed and stressed the importance of promoting and maintaining flood risk management schemes in high-risk areas.

The Principal Drainage Engineer spoke briefly about the work with the Highways Department to implement sustainable drainage systems on appropriate roads.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted and the views and comments expressed by the Committee be taken into account.**
- (2) That a digital report be circulated to Members in 12 months' time to provide an update on the progress of all Water Management and Resilience initiatives within the district.**

To be actioned by: Strategic Director, Place

40. BRADFORD CLEAN AIR ZONE (CAZ) UPDATE REPORT

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “S”**) provided an update on the operation and monitoring of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) since introduction on the 26th of September 2022. The Director of Air Quality Programmes summarised the report and highlighted key sections of the report. The Committee were informed that under the Government CAZ Framework all CAZ were charging. The impacts of the implementation of the CAZ were outlined, particularly in regard to NO2 levels, and attention was drawn to the monitoring and operational data contained within the report. The Bradford CAZ Grant Funding was summarised. The report also detailed the CAZ revenue re-investment.

The Director of Air Quality Programmes outlined the data in relation to compliant vehicles and non-compliant vehicles and explained that some companies pay the CAZ charge rather than upgrade the vehicle. It was also highlighted to the Committee that the CAZ traffic displacement assessment had shown no significant displacement of traffic.

The Committee asked several questions in relation to exempt vehicles, how an exemption worked and if it could be carried over to another vehicle. The Committee were advised that government permission to re-consult on the charging scheme would need to be obtained. The Director of Air Quality Programmes explained the difficulties surrounding the transfer of an exemption due to the possibility of fraud but added that Compliance Officers do checks routinely in relation to exemptions.

A Member asked about grants for private hire vehicles and whether a person would be liable to pay the money back if they became ill and could no longer work. The Director of Air Quality Programmes stated that it would be covered in the terms and conditions and that discretion may be exercised within legal parameters and in such an instance advice would be sought.

The Committee queried the traffic displacement assessment figures which had been collected the week before the CAZ was launched, 2 weeks after launch and 6 weeks after launch. Members asked if further monitoring data could be collected as they stated that many residents had expressed concerns that traffic had increased. The Director of Air Quality Programmes addressed the data that indicated no significant change and told the Committee that lots of factors could influence traffic displacement. In relation to the request for further monitoring the

Committee were informed that this was a possibility, but the costs would have to be considered.

The Director of Air Quality Programmes was asked about the CAZ revenue reinvestment and the HyBradford Programme which looked at hydrogen initiatives and the Committee were told that further updates could be provided in future reports.

A Member asked about misinformation and was informed that the amount of misinformation had reduced, and the majority of surveys showed support for CAZ. The Director of Air Quality Programmes stated that CAZ had become political nationally and acknowledged that communities could be reassured further.

In response to a question about how long CAZ would be in place the Director of Air Quality Programmes advised that it could be lifted by the end of 2026. It was added that compliance may be achieved in 2024 and that the government require the CAZ to remain in place for at least another two years after an area is deemed to be compliant.

Resolved –

- (1) That the report be noted.**
- (2) That a digital report be circulated to Members in 12 months' time to provide a further update.**

To be actioned by: Strategic Director, Place

41. SMART STREET LIGHTING

The report of the Strategic Director, Place (**Document “T”**) advised the Committee of the forthcoming tender for the Out-of-Scope Column Replacement Contract in line with Contracts Standing Orders (CSO 7.2.1) prior to the commencement of the procurement process. Also, in response to a motion submitted to the Council meeting on the 17th October 2023, the report provided information regarding the progress of the Smart Street Lighting project and the utilisation of the CMS for variable lighting levels. The Principal Engineer summarised the report and outlined the progress of the project as well as the variable lighting levels. The Committee were informed that as part of the project the new lighting was controlled by a CMS (Central Management System) which facilitated dynamic control of the streetlights.

The Principal Engineer highlighted the benefits of the Smart Street Lighting Project which was detailed in Appendix 3 and the data indicated reduced energy usage which resulted in lower costs.

A Member asked about snickets and footpaths dimming levels and how any issues could be reported. The Principal Engineer explained that dimming would only be noticeable below 50% output levels and that any issues could be addressed due to the ability to control each individual light.

The Principal Engineer was asked about the Amey completion rate in relation to column replacements and informed Members that there had been delays due to difficulties obtaining steel.

A Member asked about half columns that had been cut and were yet to be replaced and in response it was explained that single, isolated lights were prioritised and that the remainder would be picked up as part of the column replacements. The Committee were advised that if there were any particular concerns Members could contact the Principal Engineer.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Committee notes it is the intention of the Strategic Director, Place to award a new contract for ‘Out-of-Scope Column Replacement’ as part of the Smart Street Lighting Project to an external contractor to commence on 19th February 2024.**
- (2) That officers be thanked for the informative report and that a digital update report be circulated to Members in September 2024 to detail the completion of the project.**

To be actioned by: Strategic Director, Place

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