



REPORT OF THE LEADER OF COUNCIL

18 October 2016

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

I continue to work closely with fellow Council leaders and build up relationships to benefit our District, both individually and as part of the Combined Authority.

The most recent Combined Authority meeting agenda included items on Business Rates Retention. Leaders expressed concern about the Government's intention to add huge financial burdens to local authorities using the passporting of 100% of business rates income as a justification. There is talk of Government asking local authorities to cover the whole of the Public Health budget, as well as benefits like Attendance Allowance. Neither of these are linked to economic growth. A consultation response has been submitted to Government and we await their revised thinking on the subject.

As Investment Chair of West Yorkshire I proposed the approval of 10 projects across West Yorkshire to go to the next level of delivery. This included approval for a £4.8 million grant for One City Park with conditions. It also included approval for a full business case to be developed for New Bolton Woods which may require a £3.6 million grant.

Inclusive Growth

The Interim Report of the Inclusive Growth Commission is out. Bradford is on the Board of the Key Cities network which is supporting this important research by the RSA. The Commission team spent two days in Bradford in order to understand the ways in which a wider number of people can benefit from growth.

They found that while there is a lot of wealth in Bradford, there is also a lot of deprivation, and several years of austerity and changes to welfare and benefits are obviously having a real impact on people. They concluded that education, skills and infrastructure will all be key to ensuring that Bradford's growth can become more inclusive. I'm sure these conclusions chime with most Council members however having an external reviewer with national profile concluding the same is helpful.

Theresa May's Government has tried to differentiate itself from the previous administration by declaring that this time, it wants growth to be felt more evenly across the nation. We are still waiting to see whether the policies will match the rhetoric however the intentions behind inclusive growth are unarguably the right ones and a key priority for cities like Bradford. Recently I attended a Roundtable with

leaders of other major cities and the Commission Chair, Stephanie Flanders, where I talked about the need for action to support our young people to reach their potential in order for our city to thrive. The interim report was published on 22nd September and I look forward to seeing the full report next year.

New Consul General of Pakistan

I have enjoyed a positive meeting with the new Consul General of Pakistan. Mr Ahmed Amjad Ali is keen to get involved in the full life of the city. He has previously distinguished himself in postings to Bangkok, Frankfurt and Kuwait as well as serving at the UN. He has an MA from Durham University and is a former naval officer. We are lucky in Bradford to have one of only four Pakistani Consul Generals in the UK. I am delighted to be able to welcome him to the City and look forward to working with him.

Asad Khan

No one can fail to have been moved by the tragic death of Asad Khan, the 11 year old boy who took his own life. There has been an outpouring of grief, not just by his own family and friends but by the whole of Bradford. From everything we have heard and learned of him he was a lovely intelligent boy. Our hearts go out to his family. The Council is committed to supporting Asad's family, the school and the community through this terribly difficult time.

QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER

Councillor Cooke

Thank you for the report. I note that you refer to the tragic death of Asad Khan, and I do not want to dwell on the issue, but many Members will be aware that this was the second seeming child suicide that occurred always associated with my ward in the period of the summer and into the first part of the school holidays. Whilst I do not want to dwell on any details, because I do not think that is appropriate here, I would just like to ask that the Council pay some attention to the issue of not just a child death, any death is tragic, but child suicides are particularly tragic and we just take a look at the issues surrounding it and what actions and support can we try to minimise this effect because it is really tragic but it is something that I think we should be concerned about.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

I was not going to mention the other case. Obviously we are aware of it but I did not want to highlight it. You are right, it is something that concerns us. Anybody who has seen the grief there of those parents cannot fail to be concerned for children with mental health and suicide is a terrible thing to happen to anybody let alone a child. I think obviously the death itself will be looked at by the Child Death Panel as is appropriate. I think there is a legitimate inquiry to do on whether we should take specific action on child suicides and with that in mind I think it may be appropriate for a children scrutiny to have a look at it. It is something that has been reported in other local authorities. Sadly it is not a unique event and therefore we all need to be mindful of anything we can do to prevent this kind of tragedy happening in anybody else's family. It is obviously something that parents can never get over and obviously from a community point of view it has been tremendously upsetting so anything we can do to prevent further deaths I will be very willing to contemplate.

Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

Your report, it is a bit of an odd beast, but thank you for it anyway. I am really glad that you have been talking to leaders of other major cities about the need for action to support young people to reach their potential in order for our cities to thrive and with that in mind I wonder if you would care to comment about the unsuccessful bid to hold the Great Exhibition of the North which I am sure is just a mere oversight from your report.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

You are right, it is not in the report but I can comment on it. Obviously we are very disappointed not to get the Great Exhibition bid. It is something that we were all battling for and I have to say thank you to the people of Bradford district as well who also battled for us in that campaign. We have got loads of social media hits, we came top in that poll so I think we put a really good show on to the nation. I think it

has done us a lot of favours in the future. So we raised the profile of Bradford, we showed the level of our ambition, we showed what we can achieve and I think we have made a lot of friends out there and therefore we are not bowed by this decision, in fact I am invigorated by it. I am going to see the Chairman of the Arts Council tomorrow, actually the Chief Executive of the Arts Council tomorrow, and I will again be telling him what a great cultural landscape we have in Bradford and how it needs more investment. So we keep going and also I have to say I have already written to the Newcastle Leader and said be happy to co-operate with them of course as obviously the Great Exhibition is for the whole of the North, not just for one city, and that was our own pitch as well, it is for other cities, it wasn't just for Bradford. We expect to fully play a big part of that in the future and therefore yes happy to comment. Thank you.

Councillor Rickard

One of the bits that were missing was the announcement last week that the 2019 world cycling championships would be hosted within Yorkshire. I am particularly inspired by this being a cyclist but also because tourism is the big growth opportunity for us in Bradford. Do you agree that this is a great opportunity for us to put in another application, another bid, to host the hub here in Bradford district so that we can take advantage of this huge economic opportunity? By the way the Tour de France in 2014 brought in a £100m. This is a chance to bring in twice as much as that. It is a larger event entirely so a huge chance to really stimulate not only tourism but Bradford district itself. Do you agree that is an opportunity and secondly what lessons have you learned from the recent application for the Great North Exhibition that you can put to that application?

Councillor Hinchcliffe

We are going a bit off piste here. I am not sure this is really in the report. Obviously welcome any investment into Yorkshire. It is a huge amount of money. Gary Verity hats off to him really I have to say for the amount of influence he has with the Government and what he can draw down and how he champions the region. Obviously we would be happy to talk to Gary Verity but it is early days. He is in Qatar at the moment. He was meant to be at an event I did at the weekend in Bingley, he was meant to be in Bingley, he wasn't there, so it is early days, too early to comment I am afraid. The Great Exhibition - what did we learn from that? I think we learned that to get shortlisted was great and I think we had a very good pitch team together so we need to be confident in our pitching and make sure we sell ourselves well to the outside world and to the Government so for me it was a matter of making sure the right team together pitched well and sold ourselves well and all partners in the district working together as well. The University was really a strong part of that bid, National Medium Museum really strong part of that and, of course, they all want to make whatever comes next a success so we will still be part of that. So partnership working and a jolly good pitch team.