

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF COUNCIL

13 December 2016

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

West Yorkshire Combined Authority met on 1st December and approved the latest spending from the Investment Committee. The total investment from the Skills Capital Fund alone is now £79 million. This has funded upgraded FE college infrastructure around the region. It is the largest package of skills capital investment in the country. Shipley College was one of the earlier recipients of this fund. At the beginning of 2015, Leeds City Region was awarded the largest Growth Deal in the country with £1 billion to invest. We are still waiting for the outcome of negotiations with Government on how much we will get in Growth Deal 3 and are expecting an announcement within the next week.

Autumn Statement

The Government's Autumn statement was disappointing particularly on Adult Social Care with no mention of the strains universally being felt by local authorities as they strive to meet increasing demand with less funding. The Local Government Association has made strong representations on the subject. Cllr Izzie Secombe, the Conservative leader of Warwickshire County Council and Chair of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board said, "Tragically, the human cost of this will be elderly people continuing to face an ever uncertain future where they might no longer receive the dignified care and support they deserve." We await to hear the Government's spending plans on Thursday to see if they have had a change of heart. The indications are that instead of formulating a proper plan for social care, the government might leave it to local authorities to increase council tax. But we are concerned about the burden on local council tax payers and the fact that this could lead to a postcode lottery of care, as wealthier parts of the country have a much higher council tax base than Bradford does.

Meeting with Lord Nash

Last week I was invited to meet with one of the Ministerial Education team, Lord Nash, who listened to me outline what is needed in the Bradford District. Teacher recruitment and retention remains an issue nationally but given our historic league table rankings it is even more of an issue in Bradford. This is particularly true of Maths, English and Science. We pitched a number of ways in which Government could lend support to the Bradford District. We await the outcome of the discussion.

Meeting with Andrew Percy

Along with other West Yorkshire leaders I met with Andrew Percy last week, the Minister in charge of Devolution. The Minister outlined how the Government is handling devolution at the moment. They have a number of deals across the nation which have agreement and which they are pushing to finalise ready for Mayoral Elections next year. There is still an appetite from Government for a deal in our region but it needs to satisfy parliamentary and business interests as well as local authority leaders. I remain keen to get the right devolution deal for the Bradford District and I'm working hard with colleagues to achieve it.

Serious Case Review

The Serious Case Review of "Autumn" was published on 6th December. This report is clear that agencies had been active in working with Autumn throughout her young life. However before 2012 the main agencies were not joined up, and therefore none of them really understood the full scale or the issues Autumn was experiencing. There is no doubt in my mind that we should have done more earlier to support this child and all agencies must learn the lessons. The Chair of the Safeguarding Board acknowledged that the CSE hub has made a significant difference to how this issue is dealt with now. However we cannot be complacent and we are all responsible for making sure crimes are reported. If anyone has any concerns about the safety of a child or a young person they should contact West Yorkshire Police, Crimestoppers (0800 555 111) or Children's Services Initial Contact Point on 01274 437500.

Casey Review on Opportunity and Integration

Dame Louise Casey published her long anticipated review on 5th December. This review was borne out of her visits to a number of cities including Bradford. Given our diversity, Bradford inevitably became the focus for much of the reporting on the subject. There are no quick fixes to any of the issues she raises. Many people in Bradford talk about the fact that there are some areas of the district which are predominantly white and some which are predominantly South Asian. Economics is inevitably a significant factor in where people choose to live, however people in Bradford want to get on with each other. There is an appetite to learn English, which is often frustrated by funding cuts. And I would like to see more opportunities for cohesion programmes where people can come together and build relationships between communities in common social spaces. Bradford is a welcoming city and we must never shy away from tackling issues which run counter to this.

Budget

The Labour Group tabled a budget for consultation on 6th December at Executive. These proposals are now out for consultation until the Full Council budget meeting on 23rd February. We have already taken £250 million out of the budget since 2010. Next we have to take out a further £82 million. The harsh fact is that in four years'

time the council will only have half the spending power it had in 2010. In 2013/14 the Council received £183 million in Revenue Support Grant from the Government. In 2020/2021 it drops to zero. Currently council tax covers only 42% of what Bradford spends on services. Eliminating the Revenue Support Grant represents a reshaping of local government, it will change how councils operate forever.

Tour de Yorkshire

The route for the Tour de Yorkshire was announced on 2nd December at the Impressions Gallery in Bradford. Sir Gary Verity hosted the event with a number of cycling celebrities from yesteryear as well as the here and now in attendance. Bradford is hosting the start of Stage 3 of the race which ends in Sheffield. It will start in City Park on Sunday 30th April next year passing through Saltaire, Burley in Wharfedale, Silsden, Keighley, Haworth and Queensbury before going on to Halifax. The hosting fee will be paid by West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER

Councillor Cooke

Thank you Lord Mayor. Can I thank the Leader for making reference to the Casey Review. The preface to what I say by saying I thought it was extremely disappointing to say the least piece of work which added really nothing to either our understanding of the challenges facing our district or for that matter the challenges facing the country in terms of integration and I hope that for once this piece of work is shelved somewhere to gather dust because I do not think it actually contributed anything at all to the betterment of our nation. Can I ask the Leader though in the context of this just to give us a little bit of background on the work that is being done around here in Bradford and how we are going to take on board things such as the Government's welcome adoption of an internationally recognised definition of anti-Semitism for example and how we are going to use those kind of things to actually improve the way in which we understand some of the things that create division in our society because I think that sometimes we need to say those things a little bit more publicly than we do and be a little bit more critical of people who want to point at division rather than at efforts to reduce it.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

There is quite a lot in there Councillor Cooke so it is a 200 page report is Casey and it is wide ranging and goes from English lessons to cohesion to education to neighbourhoods, different communities etc. So there is quite a lot to take in there. I think we have to be mature about reports like this. This is the third report in three weeks that told us we were divided as a city and I think we have to say look we know that we have some predominately areas which are South Asian, we know we have some areas that are predominately white but the important thing is that we get on

together and we create opportunities for us to mix, to mingle. Just City Park out there is a great space where everybody feels part of and I hope that everybody in Bradford feels that when they come there that they can see different people with different ages, different backgrounds and that they all feel part of that space. So I am keen for more things like that to happen. I am hoping that the Casey Report will lead to more money for cohesion activities just around things that are programmed. We obviously will talk about cuts on this agenda but we have had to cut everything in the Council and therefore some of the cohesion activities that we used to do are not quite as extensive as they were so if this report leads to something like that I would welcome that. Similarly with English language lessons they are quite expensive. There are communities who would welcome that if there is a free provision. I would love free provision in English lessons as well. So as I say let's be mature about it. We are grown up as city. People come here all the time to talk about these issues. We are saying that actually we are willing to talk about difficult issues whenever they occur, wherever they occur and that we want to start taking on board the cohesion agenda and only for Bradford because you are right there is lots of good work that goes on here like with the Jewish community and the Muslim community around the Synagogue and all that really shows us to our best advantage. That message does not always get out. So I think it is time for us to start saying these are the things we do well and show these to the nation. So I am wanting to do more on this agenda just to show how good we are on this because other cities are not as advanced as we are and we need to show off a bit sometimes when we have got something good to say.

Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

Given the significant lessons to be learnt from the recent serious case review I would just like her to give us some assurance please about the amount of staffing that we have in order to deal with what seems now to be an ever increasing number of cases coming forward.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

Thank you Councillor Sunderland. Yes we had a presentation at Group yesterday on the findings of the case review and obviously that will be open to all of you to have that detailed examination of it. Clearly that child was let down by actually things not working properly together. Since 2012 we have put in more resource into that area, into the CSE Hub in particular as have other agencies. It is not just us of course, the police have committed to that kind of way of working as well to make sure that the seriousness of these issues is collated and somebody acts on it quickly when they see everything come together. At a time of reducing resource of course we are still having to invest heavily in those areas. Again it is one of those issues that we are talking about a lot. We make sure we talk about it. We know that children are at risk all the time. We can never be complacent at that where there are children, there will be some predator there trying to get to them and we need to

make sure they don't. Therefore we have to make that a priority. I do not want anything like that happening on my watch, none of us do. So we have to be really really mindful of that. Obviously we have done our training as Councillors as well has done that now and that is really important for us to be mindful of what is out there, to watch out for it because you do not always see it if you do not know what to look for. So it is all our responsibility. We will continue to commit resources to that area and I encourage other local authorities to do likewise and yes it is something that we always need to look back on and there will be other cases coming forward as well to make sure that we look at those and historic cases as well investigating. So it is something that we must never lose sight of and we can never think we have sorted it because there are a lot of people and we need to be mindful of all our children's protection.

Councillor Rickard

I wonder if the Leader can elaborate please on the comments that you make about your meeting with Lord Nash where you say you pitched a number of ideas as to how the Government can help but perhaps elaborate on what those are.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

Yes so I was pleased to get the meeting with him. I have been trying for a while to get that so I was glad to get that. Councillor Imran Khan and I met together with officers and thought about what the best things are we could ask. We wanted a short list. One I would like to be opportunity areas we have discussed before in this Chamber, I think there is only about four areas left, I would like it to be one of them because that is money and we could do with that for teacher recruitment and retention in particular. I asked him not to do the formula funding for schools, the new formula funding for schools, they are going to do that which is disappointing for Bradford schools so I am concerned about that. So really my conversation was around teacher retention and recruitment and about how we could get the Government to fund us more to do that. Obviously working with the Regional Schools Commissioner and with our own maintained sector regardless of where children go in this district we want them to have an excellent education so it is working across the board, working with the Government, with the RSC to see if we can put something in place to support teacher retention recruitment in particular.

Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

Thank you Lord Mayor. It is a question about Adult Social Care. There is lots of noise and mood music now around Councils being allowed to increase the precept again to pay for Adult Social Care. I just wondered whether or not you had given consideration to supporting this and do you want the other one? The other question, the process for this is not very clear. It is a question about the Tour de France, Tour de Yorkshire coming to Bradford and it is just to offer our congratulations to Sir Gary Verity but also to ask that the Leader will ensure that she speaks to, or whoever puts

it altogether, speaks to the parents and grandparents of people who attended the Christmas lights with small people in order that we can improve the view of people that will be watching the event. Thank you.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

So on Adult Social Care yes we will wait to see what is going to be announced. So the Local Government Association has been very clear that actually increasing the Council precept is just not going to do it for authorities like ours which obviously have a low Council tax base. So I would like to see a more significant level of funding coming to areas so it is more equalised otherwise it is going to be a post code lottery is Adult Social Care and I think it should be a service that everybody should be able to use in this country regardless of where they live. We will have to see what comes out and then obviously we will have to consult and go with what people think we can actually sustain but I for one really do not want to put more pressure on people in Bradford who are already struggling to pay bills at this time but naturally we need to make sure we can pay for Adult Social Care that all our citizens can rely on in their hour of need. Regarding your second question did you mean are they going to have a good view, is that what the question was?

Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

If you were very small you did not see it.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

Okay so can you a good view of Tour de France going through the district.

Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

If people just ask?

Councillor Hinchcliffe

I am probably not the best person to ask because I always get a fabulous view wherever I am. You are right this is why we have Council Chamber to scrutinise people like me who may be tallest in their approach to make sure that small people also get a good view so it is a good point and we will feed that in and Sarah Ferriby will take that on.
