

D

LEADER OF COUNCIL'S REPORT 17th July 2018

Yorkshire Devolution

Leaders of 18 local authorities across Yorkshire sent a well thought-through proposal for Yorkshire devolution to Government before the local elections. This was based on many other devolution deals that have been successfully negotiated throughout the UK. A response to this proposal was only received on 9th July from the Secretary of State and was frankly disappointing. He stated that until Sheffield City Region's deal is fully implemented, Yorkshire devolution cannot be discussed. We have huge growth potential and opportunity in our region. Whilst we have an existing deal in West Yorkshire which is delivering major capital projects, I have an eye on the future and will continue pressing for devolution to give us more power and resources locally so we can reach our full potential.

With this in mind, in my role as Chair of West Yorkshire Combined Authority, I met with the newly elected Mayor of Sheffield City Region, Dan Jarvis, to discuss our respective positions. The Mayor has been elected on a mandate of achieving devolution for Yorkshire and is therefore speaking to ministers about how and when this can practically be achieved. This was also discussed at the Yorkshire Leaders' meeting last week when all 18 authorities came together and reaffirmed their commitment to seeking Yorkshire devolution.

Integration and Cohesion

We have been selected as one of the five areas nationally to pilot the development of local integration plans. This will mean additional funding to support things we know work in Bradford such as the Schools Linking Project for example. The final plan needs to be approved by Government in the autumn before we are granted funding to deliver it.

It is with real regret that we remember the passing of Jed Din. Jed died suddenly and will be missed for the great contribution he made throughout his life to tackle hate crime. Before he died he led an important piece of work on Understanding Islamophobia. This concluded that Muslims feel that anti-Muslim sentiment is on the increase and that there is a strong correlation with people who are isolated and lack understanding/knowledge of others. Given that some members in the Chamber have been subjected to hate letters in the last year, we must all commit to taking on Jed's work and making sure that his legacy lives on. As Leader I commit to making sure that his findings on Islamophobia and the recommendations to tackle it are implemented.

Keighley Business Awards and T&A Business Awards

Both these awards events were hugely successful. I would like to thank the organisers for all their work and the businesses for taking part. We have great business leaders in the district. From the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award winner at the Bradford awards - 30 year old Gemma Andrews who started her own business at 23 and has now built it up to a multi-million pound wholefoods business employing 60 people to the husband and wife team at Wave Refrigeration in Keighley who run a successful business by being experts in their field and by investing in their staff, taking pleasure from seeing them flourish in their employment.

Air Quality Summit

Last month I represented the LGA at the Air Quality Summit hosted by London Mayor Sadiq Khan. Secretary of State for DEFRA, Michael Gove was in attendance along with other Mayors and Leaders. We presented the priorities as we see them. This included asking for a Modern Clean Air Act, an Enhanced Clean Air Fund, better funding for public transport, a national diesel scrappage scheme and funding for retrofitting. We will be working with the UK100 to further support these asks in future national budget setting.

CQC Inspection

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the local health partners in Bradford and Airedale for their great work on health in our district. Bradford District was selected as one of the few places in the country to be inspected for CQC DTOC inspection, looking at how we as a health system discharge people effectively from hospital and enable them to continue independent lives for as long as possible. The feedback from CQC has been hugely positive. They remarked on how good the relationships here are between health partners which enables patients to be put first.

Next Stop Bradford campaign

Just because we are now on the map of Northern Powerhouse Rail, doesn't mean we can rest on our laurels. To support the campaign I have spoken at the following conferences recently promoting Bradford's case:

- Greater Manchester All Party Parliamentary Group – speaking alongside Andy Burnham about importance of Northern Powerhouse Rail and connecting Northern cities.
- Northern Transport Summit – speaking on a panel of other leaders from across the north about the importance of transport in regenerating communities.
- High Speed Rail Institute conference speaking alongside the Northern Powerhouse Director for Transport for the North and the HS2 Rail Director

- Attended a meeting in Newcastle with Jake Berry MP, Minister at MHCLG to discuss investment in the North with other Northern Leaders.

Silsden Gas Incident

I would like to place on record my thanks to the people of Silsden for their fortitude and patience in tolerating being without heating or cooking facilities for the entire Easter weekend. People helped their neighbours and vulnerable residents to keep warm and St James Church and Silsden Sports Club in particular went out of their way to host the emergency effort. Thank you Silsden.

Welcome to the new leader of the opposition

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Cllr John Pennington as new leader of the opposition. Cllr Pennington is also taking a place as member of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority retaining Bradford's strength on that body.

QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER

Councillor Pennington

Thank you Leader for your report. On devolution we realise there is a constant change of Ministers, none of whom seem to want to even talk to us. I would like to ask you if you would like me to write to the newest Minister and copy in the Prime Minister telling him that if there is no devolution we will come out of the UK, and then I had another thought, the Minister's name is now Brokenshire which is quite apt because that is what we will end up with. You have my full support on the Combined Authority, especially for Bradford, but I know your list of engagements. I have come to the conclusion you are working so hard there must be two Susan Hinchcliffes somewhere. But as regards the Bradford Business Awards would you be good enough to invite me next time and then I do not read about it afterwards. Thank you.

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Thank you. I would absolutely welcome cross party efforts to get devolution over the line. It is notable that the 18 authorities, that is Conservative authorities and Labour authorities, so we are all working together. I think the real issue is Brexit can I say. The Government is completely preoccupied. We are trying to sort out a Brexit and all the rest of that agenda which is very important to running this place and running the rest of the country gets pushed down to second place. Anything you can do with your notes to Theresa would be gratefully received. Of course you should also receive an invitation to Bradford Business Awards. Keighley Business Awards I think we pay our own ticket don't we as well. By all means come to Keighley Business Awards as well which is an excellent event and one we have attended every year. Thank you.

Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

My question too is on devolution unsurprisingly. First of all thank you for your very fulsome report and welcome to Councillor Pennington in his new role. My question is about devolution. There is clearly now going to be a significant delay and I know we have a sort of a deal but there must be some impact on us now as this gets delayed. Can you tell us a little bit about what that impact is going to be?

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Yes we had a billion pound growth deal and that obviously is being delivered at the moment. A lot of that is transport schemes, Apperley Bridge Station of course was delivered through that, Low Moor delivered through that, so we benefitted greatly from that. My eyes are on the future of course. For me that is like post 2020. What do we do for further capital projects from there and that is what is being pushed now at Government level, Civil Servants, to say it is not good enough just to say we are going to wait for the Sheffield City Region to get over the line. We have also got business to do here. To be fair that is not just in West Yorkshire. That is other areas around the country. They have also put devolution deals on the table for consideration. Some of them have not had a letter back. The real thrust for the Government that was in the old regime to get devolution through does not seem to be there at the moment. It does make you wonder that if they are really worried that they put more and more devolution through. Are they just going to end up running London because there is already somebody doing that. Sadiq Khan is doing quite a good job. We might not need Theresa May and her Government at all if she is not careful. I think there is a bit of a fear. To be fair by Civil Servants as well for letting go because they have always run everything centrally, from Central Government. They say something and it goes throughout the whole country but you know what we have learnt in this country that one size does not fit all. Therefore we know absolutely what suits our area. We know what powers we need. We know what funding we need and we know absolutely what projects we deliver with it. They just need to work with us to make sure we have that funding and we will do that growth for them whilst they get on with doing whatever they are going to do next on Brexit.

Councillor Ellis

Your article on the Next Stop Bradford campaign Leader. Some months ago now I questioned the need for a railhead, a freight railhead to be able to transfer freight from rail onto lorries for future delivery. Went to a presentation for Transport for the North recently and what they say is that major ports in the north to be served by a railway that will support movement and future growth of rail freight, I actually questioned where in West Yorkshire we are likely to have a railhead. They thought it was a good idea. The last thing I would like to see is freight put on a train at Liverpool, transferred to Hull and we send a lorry to Hull to bring it back to Bradford.

It does seem Leader in spite of all the assurances I have been given that we still have yet failed to identify land for the transfer of freight.

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Thank you Councillor Ellis. So freight is certainly important in the Transport for the North plans and we talk a lot about commuter, traffic and the Leeds/Bradford link etc but yes a lot of our businesses are stuck in traffic all the time because they cannot get their goods anywhere so that railhead connection, you are right, it is something that we need to press on. Perhaps I will just ask Councillor Ross-Shaw to be tasked with that and making sure you have a proper answer to that question and see how in West Yorkshire we are going to deal with that issue because that is something certainly we need to be sighted on. Thank you for raising it.

Councillor Azam

Can I just ask the Leader in light of the rise of Islamophobia both nationally and locally, I know your report mentioned about good work on hate crime in general but can you reassure me and all those of Islamic faith that Bradford Council shall continue to do all it can to tackle Islamophobia in all its form.

Councillor Hinchcliffe

Absolutely Councillor Azam and I think at last Council meeting we had a question didn't we about those awful letters that came to some Members in this Chamber and that arrest has since been made and it is gratifying to know that it was somebody not from this district, it was somebody well outside this district. We are not unsighted of the fact that there is Islamophobia in our society and therefore we have to tackle that locally as well as nationally and Jed Din, who I mention in the report of course, that was something that he really had a passion for and really supported us through the Bradford Hate Crime Alliance to make sure he pushed us to always do more and I think certainly we are acting on that issue. First of all in schools for example, so making sure that now school staff have an awareness of what Islamophobia is, is very important and that training continues. In communities I know Councillor Jabar did some community round tables on Islamophobia recently which fed into the report that I think Jed Din compiled. And also there is working with the Hate Crime Alliance itself which obviously Jed was so an integral part of in looking at the interventions we can do early on to make sure we do not get into a state when we have Islamophobic comments and actions happening in our district. It is about understanding isn't it, it is about people understanding more about each other's faith, each other's cultures and I think we have had discussions in Group recently about getting those voices of faith round the table. So we understand more about that. You can never do enough can you, so we have lots of faiths represented in the district and I think now more than ever there is a chance to do Jed Din proud and make sure we carry on his legacy and make sure we continue the good work and make sure Islamophobia is not a blight on our society. Thank you.