

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF COUNCIL – 16 OCTOBER 2018

GCSE and A Level Results

Well done to all those who worked so hard in their GCSEs and A-levels this year. Final results for the district will be confirmed in January after all re-marks have been taken into account. However provisionally we can say that at GCSE level our Progress 8 measure continues to be better than the national average. At Attainment 8 we have seen a small improvement from 42.4 to 42.6 but this still remains below the national average of 44.3. At Key Stage 5 we have moved from a C- to a C this year but this is still below the national average of C+. Whilst this is steady progress we all want to see an acceleration in education improvement and we will continue to push for this.

Convention of the North

In September I led a delegation of business and community leaders from Bradford to Newcastle and Gateshead to take part in the first Convention of the North. This is a cross party initiative with representatives from all over the North. Bradford shared a platform with Manchester and Newcastle. There was an agreement that the North needs to come together across party lines to make the case for investment in the North. There has been a North/South divide for too long, and as the country takes some big decisions about its future, there needs to be a recalibration of how all regions in the UK deliver for the many.

Yorkshire Devolution

On 1st August, Yorkshire Day, Yorkshire Leaders as well as MPs, businesses and unions met to launch the campaign for One Yorkshire. This took place at the palace of the Archbishop of York. The campaign is being led in the Commons by John Grogan MP plus Robert Goodwill MP. The Economic Case for Yorkshire Devolution has now been submitted by the 18 Yorkshire Local Authority leaders plus the Sheffield City Region Mayor.

Revo Conference, Manchester

I spoke at this town centre regeneration conference in Manchester a few weeks ago. This generated good interest in the Bradford district story. Two developers have visited us as a result already, a third is due to visit in the next few weeks. There is a growing appetite for investment in Bradford as evidenced by the level of interest from potential development partners for One City Park.

Hate Crime Awareness Week

I would encourage all members to take note of Hate Crime Awareness week which runs 15th – 19th October. There are events and information sessions running all over the district. From Keighley College to Bradford University and transport hubs like Bradford Interchange. We have suffered some high profile hate crime incidents this year including Islamophobic hate letters which were delivered to some members in this Chamber. We are all pleased to see that a conviction has been made regarding these incidents. However we must continue to take a strong stand against hate crime wherever we experience it and encourage victims to come forward and be supported.

Children's Ofsted

Most members will now be aware that there has been a full inspection of Children's Social Care in Bradford. This took place from 10th to 27th of September although the Inspectors were only on site from 17th to the 27th. I would like to thank all staff who took part in this inspection. Many of them worked evenings and weekends to prepare. The Inspector's report and judgement will not be available until 29th October after which I have asked officers to arrange briefings for all Groups.

LEP Review

The Government has determined that no LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) should have overlapping boundaries with another LEP area. This means that the Leeds City Region current arrangement where some authorities in North Yorkshire are part of the Leeds City Region LEP can no longer continue. Leeds City Region LEP, led by the Chair Roger Marsh, has therefore proposed to merge with the North Yorkshire and York LEP. This latter LEP are keen to maintain their current arrangements with East Yorkshire, however East Yorkshire have determined to merge with the Humber LEP. It is very much up to Government whether they approve the mergers or not. In the meantime, Leeds City Region LEP has to provide details of how such a merger might work by the end of October. Government have said they will make their decision on the way forward in November.

"Breaking Point"

Labour Leaders from all over the country have united in the Breaking Point campaign. Led by the Labour Group Leader of the Local Government Association, Cllr Nick Forbes of Newcastle, thousands of Labour councillors have now signed the petition calling for a real end to austerity in local government. Funding for local councils has been cut by over £16 billion since 2010 – equivalent to 60p in every pound. Austerity has caused huge damage to communities up and down the UK, with devastating effects on key public services that protect the most defenceless in society: children at risk, disabled adults, and vulnerable older people.

I am going with a delegation led by Cllr Nick Forbes to hand in the petition to 10 Downing Street on Thursday morning.

Meeting with Chris Grayling

Over the summer I've had two further positive meetings with the Secretary of State for Transport. We raised a number of issues with him including Northern Powerhouse Rail, Shipley road congestion, Skipton Colne railway, Transpennine Upgrade and Queensbury tunnel. Whilst he was here Chris Grayling made an immediate announcement of £300,000 for a feasibility study regarding Shipley congestion which we welcome. I believe he also met with the opposition.

Bradford Business Improvement District (BID)

Following on from the success of the Keighley BID, I want to warmly welcome the new Bradford BID after a vote in favour by Bradford businesses. I congratulate all the businesses involved and particularly Ian Ward of The Broadway who has shown great leadership on this since the beginning. Bradford BID can now help the city go from strength to strength.

QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER

Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

It is in connection with the business improvement districts and join you really in congratulating the successful bid for Bradford and previously the one for Keighley and hopefully the one from Ilkley but just wonder what the enthusiasm is for much smaller bids in other communities across the district?

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Yes I think Bingley and Shipley have also talked about it with us over the years. The challenge is when it is a small place you do not obviously raise as much business rate levy and having a business improvement district you at least need a worker and therefore it can get all sucked into the work if it is too small so the smallest I know is the Otley and Skipton ones which raise about £60,000 a year is it or something. That is probably about as small as you can go. We have talked about it with Shipley and Bingley and happy to continue these conversations but Ilkley in the district will be smaller obviously than Keighley and Bradford so I think we are going to see how that goes and then Bingley and Shipley might be learning from their example but it is about making sure you raise enough to make it worth the while of employing somebody and giving them a budget to do other things with rather than just one person being there. You need to be able to fund events, marketing, whatever other safe and secure things you want to do round the city or round the town. If you cannot do those I suppose then what is the point of having just a manager I suppose

is the question. It is a judgement for each place but we are happy to support any town that wants to consider it.

Councillor David Ward

In the light of what seems to be ever positive reports that we on the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee we always receive on a regular basis about social workers workloads is she confident that the services we deliver to protect the most vulnerable are meeting the high standards we set ourselves?

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Thanks Councillor Ward for that leading question. You know jolly well that I cannot talk about the Ofsted report at all so I am not going to answer your question because actually you are just trying to get me into the Ofsted judgement and we are not able to discuss it at all in this Chamber. So we have been given strict instructions not to – I have to abide by that. Apologies.