

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF COUNCIL 19 MARCH 2019

Christchurch, New Zealand

First of all I'd like to agree with the statement of the Lord Mayor in saying that last Friday's despicable act of terrorism in New Zealand has shocked and disturbed us all. As a Council we have written to Christchurch expressing our condolences for their loss as a city. The way in which the Prime Minister of New Zealand has shown compassionate leadership in the face of this terrible act is to be commended.

In Bradford I have written to the Council for Mosques, as Leader, expressing condolences. I, along with other councillors and faith leaders, attended Westgate Mosque on Friday lunchtime to show our support during their lunchtime prayers. Naturally our Muslim residents feel fearful at this time, having seen what has happened in New Zealand. I have spoken to the Police regarding safety in the district and have had assurances that the police will be vigilant. Islamophobia is all too real and recent reports to Corporate Scrutiny have shown that hate crime of all types is sadly on the rise. We must stand united against hate crime against all minority groups, whenever we come across it. In Bradford we are a welcoming city and generally get on well with each other. We cannot and will not let hate win.

The Lord Mayor led a vigil in Centenary Square on Friday for the victims and their grieving families which was well attended including attendance by the Bishop of Ripon who has recently been appointed to post after her previous role as Bishop in New Zealand.

Conviction of 9 men on charges of CSE, sentenced for 135 years

We all welcome the fact that these men have been convicted of what is a most heinous crime. This case concerns the sexual exploitation of two girls, commencing some 10 years ago; those two girls are now young women aged in their twenties. I thank and pay tribute to them for their bravery in coming forward. These two women were both residents in a Local Authority Care Home. The conviction of the perpetrators and the length of sentences shows how seriously the courts take these crimes. The victims have shown great courage in coming forward. These convictions show that no matter when crimes were committed, if victims come forward, they will be supported, their case will be investigated and perpetrators will be brought to justice. These crimes were committed in 2008 and 2009. In Bradford, as nationally, our understanding of CSE was not as developed as it is now. We are truly sorry for what happened to these women in their youth. The Bradford Safeguarding Children Board will look closely at this case to see if there are any lessons we can learn.

Devolution

On 1st March I attended a meeting of other Yorkshire Leaders with the Secretary of State for MHCLG, James Brokenshire regarding devolution. No civil servants or

officers were present and we were able to have a frank and free flowing conversation about the One Yorkshire devolution proposal. As outlined in his letter, the Secretary of State reiterated his reluctance to agree to a One Yorkshire deal; however he listened to what we had to say regarding the strength of feeling Yorkshire people have about our county and our collective view, across party, that this preference should therefore be respected. The most important and positive step forward is that the Secretary of State has agreed to the start of talks between his civil servants and our officers, reflecting our mutual ambition to achieve devolution for the region.

One Yorkshire Conference and Northern Powerhouse Conference

Jake Berry MP, Minister for the Northern Powerhouse spoke at these conferences, both of which have taken place in the last month. I also spoke at both as Leader of Bradford Council and Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Whilst not committing to OneYorkshire, Jake Berry was positive at both events about our devolution ambitions and thoughtful about how we might reach a conclusion to the debate. With the Spending Review pending later this year it is more important than ever for Bradford that we achieve a deal sooner rather than later.

Arts Council North Chair Visit to Bradford District

Thanks to all those who participated in the visit of Kate Willard to the district in January. I introduced her to National Science and Media Museum, Impressions and Kala Sangam. I was also grateful for a number of the district's arts organisations for attending a meeting with her and Dame Mary Archer (Chair of the Science Museum Group) on that Saturday afternoon. Organisations represented included Ilkley Literature Festival and Bronte Parsonage. Kate Willard was impressed by all she saw. The visit can only stand us in good stead when it comes to encouraging increased cultural investment from the Arts Council into the district.

#WeareBradford

It was great to have the BBC nationally focussed on Bradford District last week. It is the first time the BBC has done such a focus on one place, once again Bradford showing itself to be a pioneer! There were some brilliant stories told showing the breadth of the talent and the variety of all the district offers. We could never have afforded the positive profile it has given the district through advertising and what's more it has given people in the district confidence that their stories are important and will be heard.

Here's an indication of the scale of our district's profile over the last week: BBC Breakfast, Radio 1 Newsbeat, 5-Live, Radio 4's Today, Radio Leeds, Look North, Asian Network and the BBC News Channel all broadcast live from Bradford. 7m listen to Today each week. Look North and Radio Leeds broadcasted live every day from the district. A rich array of digital videos have been produced; around 30 now, with many more to come. They've had around 2.5m views in the last week. Digital videos have been viewed 2.2m times so far on social media. On social media, We Are Bradford had 5,000 mentions, potentially reaching as many as 58m people on Twitter. We Are Bradford stories also featured on the BBC News at 6 (estimated audience 4m), The One Show (estimated audience around 5m) and BBC3. A half

hour documentary goes out on BBC1 on Sunday at 1230. It'll also be on the BBC News Channel and the iPlayer.

MIPIM

I led a visit of the region to MIPIM France last week to showcase Bradford and the region to international investors. I was there from Monday to Wednesday inclusive and spoke on Future Tech Cities, Channel 4, Connectivity and launched our blueprint for how we are going to regenerate the southern gateway for the city in preparation for Northern Powerhouse Rail coming to the city centre.

QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER

Councillor John Pennington

Just on the first two items, I attended the vigil on the sad tragedy. Thank you for that. On Safeguarding Children obviously we must learn lessons but I think that is already fully understood. On devolution though will you please ensure that our officers are firmly, and I emphasise that, firmly briefed towards a One Yorkshire deal and on the Northern Powerhouse Rail because we are getting into a grey area on some of this, can we please ensure that we have a city centre railway station for HS3?

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Thank you Councillor Pennington. Yes One Yorkshire devolution is what we are still battling for. Now seventeen authorities are all signed up to One Yorkshire and it was good to have that meeting with James Brokenshire and in fact one was from Jake Berry. I think there is a way to go yet before the Government are convinced but I think it is a really positive step forward that there is now a dialogue taking place between officers to get us some progress and get us some resolutions on the table that we can all discuss and debate and take a view on. I see the recent movements as positive although we have still a way to go before we get to One Yorkshire. Regarding Northern Powerhouse Rail, absolutely we need a city centre station. Manchester just a few days ago made that absolute point as well so we have got a lot of supporters across the North are making sure that Bradford city centre station is on Northern Powerhouse Rail. In the next 12 to 18 months it is going to be a very significant time for us as the actual routes of Northern Powerhouse Rail is defined and just for those of you who are not familiar with it, that is a route going from Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Leeds to York right across the Pennines. So it is a significant piece of investment. What we also need to be cited on is a spending review and what commitment the Treasury are going to make to funding Northern Powerhouse Rail. For the uninitiated HS3 is the old name for a Northern Powerhouse Rail so we have to get up with the new lingo. That is just what they call it nowadays. So thank you very much.

Councillor Jeanette Sunderland

Thank you Leader and Lord Mayor for your response on behalf of the city to the atrocities in Christchurch. I am sure the whole city was with you in spirit although we

could not all be there. The issue I want to raise with you from your report is I am sure that we are learning lessons as a result of the prosecutions and continued prosecutions I hope in terms of CSE but I am interested in the actions you are taking to prevent the similar mistakes that were made around young girls twenty years ago where we talked in terms of lifestyle choices - what did you expect?, the parents should do more - I am particularly concerned about the use of language around young children who have been groomed into other forms of criminal activity and what steps are you taking to prevent us getting into a situation in twenty years' time where we said oh well it was a different time to today and we would not use that language now?

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Thank your Councillor Sunderland for your question. Absolutely one thing that always haunts me is what we are missing now. This was obviously ten years ago but what is there now that we are not seeing. Are there new things? So child criminal exploitation is a thing that we all need to be really aware of. Children being brought into crime early in life and therefore never being able to escape so that is a thing we also need to concentrate on now. Are there other things? Just this week we have had some arrests made by online exploitation of children so as a Leader it is always what are we not seeing now. We just need to be really vigilant which is why we all do that mandatory training about CSE and I think it is absolutely vital we continue doing that. How things have changed now. The whole attitude to all public agencies has changed towards this terrible crime and if a child went missing now from a home for example the carers of that child would be immediately on the phone to the police and the police would be chasing down that child and trying to find them. That was not the case in days gone by but now one of our two imperatives that we have, one is absenteeism from school and the other is missing children. So children missing is absolute priority for us. It is about children achieving in school but also about children being safe. If there are not safe they are not happy and they cannot learn. Absolutely we have a whole different attitude now and that is not just us, it is the police as well working with health and other agencies to make sure that we make sure that children are where they should be and we as their parents, their corporate parents, know where they are as any good parent would.

Councillor Simon Cooke

Another question just on the CSE issue. I recognise the work that has been done by all the agencies in terms of turning round the manner in which we safeguard young people and that is welcome. Obviously there will be a serious case review of this so we will again see a report on what has gone right and wrong in terms of safeguarding. One of the things that concerns me and it is not just a Bradford issue so I am not picking on anybody, is we are locally and nationally doing a lot around improving safeguarding. We are not doing enough to try and understand why it is that men do this in the first place. What we are teaching young men that is bringing them up to behave in this kind of way and how that is happening. It struck me and those of you will have read the reports in the T&A about the friends and family of some of the people who were found guilty of these abuses essentially treating these people as if they were victims. Abusing female lawyers and so forth. I really think Leader that we perhaps ought to having done a great job on improving safeguarding

start to do something about educating boys and young men in terms of them being better behaved.

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe

Thank you Councillor Cooke. Absolutely work does go on educating young men in that regard but it is beholden on all communities and that is not just the Council, it is parents, it is schools, to all make sure that we realise the value of each human life and that young women and women in general are valued and we do not have any misogyny in society. It is absolutely very important and obviously the behaviour in that court room from friends and relatives was objectionable and should not have happened. I am very glad those people are being convicted and it does show how serious we take this crime in our city and we will act when it comes up in front of us and we will jointly act with agencies to make sure they are given justice.

Councillor Mike Gibbons

On this issue and I have already said this to him personally on that day I happened to see His Honour Justice Jonathan Durham Hall walking over to the car and I congratulated him on the work that he had done that day and the message that it sent out which I think was a very strong message and I think he should be congratulated. Thank you.
