

Agenda Item 9 – Report by the Leader of the Council

Israel and Palestine

We are shocked by the terrible events we have seen unfold in Palestine and Israel. We unequivocally condemn Hamas and the atrocities and acts of terror they have committed against Israeli citizens as well as British citizens and others. Hostages must be released immediately.

The bloodshed in Israel and Palestine that we have seen has been sickening. The loss of life is deplorable.

The Israeli Government's response to the attack – cutting off food, water, electricity and fuel from 2.4 million people including one million children, is tantamount to collective punishment and a humanitarian catastrophe. International law needs to be adhered to at all times.

We desperately want to see innocent civilians in both Israel and Palestine protected.

We are very concerned by reports nationally and internationally of Islamophobia and Anti-semitism. There is no place in Britain and particularly not in Bradford for hate crimes or hate speech. We stand alongside the Police and the Bradford Hate Crime Alliance in tackling any such reports that occur in our district.

Government announcement on Bradford city centre station

The Prime Minister announced at the Tory Party Conference that Bradford would get its new station and be connected to the mainline with a budget attached to it of £2 billion. This is obviously something we have been campaigning on for some time so it is positive. We want to see progress made at pace though. Listening to the people of Bradford they are somewhat cynical that the Government will deliver on this commitment. We have obviously been promised this investment before. When the Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper and his Rail Minister, Huw Merriman visited a few days later, I relayed these concerns to them and advised them that progress needs now to be made at speed to silence their critics.

Obviously, we need to make sure that Manchester and Leeds also have their transport infrastructure needs met which is why the cancellation of HS2 is so disappointing. Only by all the cities of the North being better connected can the Northern economy thrive.

Bus franchising decision

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority recently made the decision to move to public consultation on taking buses back into public control. Franchising would allow the Combined Authority to set fares and routes. The decision whether to go to franchising is purely the decision of the Metro Mayor and she will decide on this in March next year.

To get a London-style bus system also requires us to have the same level of funding which London has. This is currently far from the case and we will need to continue to

lobby further to get proper funding for bus routes. Buses are the bedrock of our economy enabling people to get to work, education and leisure, we need to ensure they are funded properly to sustain economic growth.

Local Government Boundary Review

The Local Government Boundary Review happens about once every 20 years and most councillors should know that there is currently a review ongoing. The Boundary Commission will publish their own proposals at the end of November for residents to comment on. The final ward plan will be ready in spring next year ready for implementation in 2026.

It's worth noting that this review is only about the wards within Bradford district, it does not include anywhere outside the district, our external boundaries remain the same.

£20 million for Keighley

We welcome the £20 million for Keighley announced recently. To clarify there was no application process for this funding, therefore Shipley did not get the chance to bid. 25% is revenue and 75% is capital. The money is however spread over 10 years and it is not clear whether this money is index-linked. We thank Ian Hayfield as Chair of Keighley Towns Fund and will consult him on next steps as soon as we have clear guidance from Government.

Northern Powerhouse Partnership Conference

We were pleased to welcome this prestigious Northern Conference to Bradford City Hall in September. The West Yorkshire Metro Mayor, the South Yorkshire Metro Mayor and the Manchester Metro Mayor were all in attendance. Transport, Skills and Climate Change were the main topics of the day.