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**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2013

Dear Secretary of State

### **Doncaster MBC Intervention**

I have pleasure in presenting the Recovery Board's assessment of the Intervention in Doncaster MBC, as discussed at the Board's meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> December.

The Board considered the report on the Recovery Plan, prepared by Jo Miller in consultation with the Commissioners, together with the Commissioners' own appraisal of the progress made in the preceding year. These documents are appended here.

The Council deserves praise for clear improvements in some key areas and for the way in which it has dealt with a number of challenging matters. It is our opinion that the Council, with the presence of Commissioners, has operated effectively during the past year and has undeniable strengths upon which it can build. These strengths will however be severely tested in the future and in particular by the magnitude of the financial challenge presented in balancing the budget over the next 2 years.

In our opinion some form of intervention will be required for at least another year and possibly longer if this is considered necessary to address the specific issue of children's services. This will provide time to digest the Spring election results and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the new regime, whatever it might be. It will also provide us with more time to ascertain and recommend future sector led support after intervention has concluded.

## Appendix A

I would be happy to discuss these matters directly with yourself or one of your colleagues at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sykes".

Rob Sykes  
Lead Commissioner



**To the Chair and Members of the RECOVERY BOARD**

**RECOVERY PLAN ANNUAL STOCKTAKE REPORT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The report gives the Recovery Board the opportunity to assess and comment upon progress made against the agreed recovery plan during the past year and to agree the high level plan for the coming year. There are 4 appendices attached to the report as follows:
  - Appendix A – Progress update from the Chief Executive of the Council
  - Appendix B – Detailed report of each strand of the Recovery Plan
  - Appendix C – Audit Commission Annual Governance Report
  - Appendix D – Proposed 2013/14 Recovery Plan priorities

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. The Recovery Board is asked to;
  - a. note and comment upon the content of the report
  - b. consider, comment upon and agree the high level 2013/14 Recovery Plan priorities

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Recovery Plan sets out the proposed recovery process to address the weaknesses identified in the Corporate Governance Inspection report. The initial Plan was agreed by the Recovery Board and Full Council during October 2010. The current recovery plan was agreed by Full Council in December 2011 and the Recovery Board in January 2012. The Recovery Plan sets 3 broad tests and 17 key tests/measures of progress as the agreed focus for 2012.

**PROGRESS 2012/13**

4. Progress made during 2012/13 is set out in Appendix A which is a specific report produced by the Chief Executive of the Council. Detailed information and rating of progress against each strand and measure of the Recovery Plan is set out in Appendix B.

## **NEW RECOVERY PLAN 2013/14**

5. The proposed priorities for the 2013/14 Recovery Plan are set out in Appendix D. The new plan follows the same format as the current plan in that it contains the same 3 broad tests but it now includes a consolidated list of 11 key tests, accompanied by associated relevant progress measures. The tests and measures will be developed into a more detailed plan after approval by the Recovery Board and will form the basis of the Council's new Corporate Plan to be presented to Full Council in February 2013.

## **RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS**

6. Without clear accountability and effective performance management arrangements the progress of activity in the recovery plan may not proceed as quickly as required.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7. There are no specific Legal Implications arising from this report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8. Clear links between the budget process and Recovery Programme need to be maintained to ensure Recovery Programme actions can be contained within the Council's approved budgets.

## **CONSULTATION**

9. There has been consultation with the three commissioners on the format and layout of these reports with further dialogue with strand leads on the updates that have been provided onto the covalent system from which the reports are derived.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- a. Doncaster MBC Recovery Plan, December 2011

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

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**Jo Miller**

**Chief Executive**

## **Doncaster Recovery Plan: progress report**

December 2012

### Purpose

The Council and the Recovery Board agreed a Recovery Programme for Doncaster Council in October 2010, following the Secretary of State's intervention in June 2010.

The Recovery Board has considered quarterly reports of progress against the programme ever since.

This report and annex provide a summative review of progress in the second full year of the recovery. It provides a basis for the Recovery Board to consider its advice to the Secretary of State over the future of the intervention mechanisms.

### Background

The Secretary of State's Intervention set out a number of strands of recovery. The current recovery plan was agreed by Full Council in December 2011 and the Recovery Board in January 2012. The Recovery Plan (in a format approved by the recovery board) set 3 broad tests (and 17 key tests/measures of progress) as the agreed focus for 2012.

The report attached to this document sets out those strands and tests, states direction of travel and assesses progress made against the measures identified. In addition, when the 2011/12 recovery plan was adopted, some strands of the original recovery plan required further work. Those elements were incorporated into the current Recovery Plan, are present within Appendix B to this document, and should assist the Recovery Board in their assessment of headway in both the former and current plans.

### Additional Sources of Evidence

The Council's Recovery Plan is fully integrated into the Council's Corporate Plan. There are further sources of evidence the Recovery Board may wish to refer themselves to:

Annual Governance Report - Audit Commission (attached)

Staff survey results – available on request

Governance survey results – available on request

Assessment by the Joint Director of Public Health on Public Health Transition – available on request

Internet links:

[Public Health Annual Report](#)

[Housing Improvement Board Legacy Report.](#)

[Peter Kemp's latest CYP report](#) (Latest report to Council attached – Peter will produce separate report post Ofsted)

[Ofsted Report November 2012 - Protection of Children](#)

[The Edlington Case - Carlile Report](#)

### General Commentary on Progress

The council has made some good progress this year. Many of the key risks anticipated at this time last year did not materialise, or have been successfully overcome.

### Whether the Council is operating effectively.

The previous year's recovery plan set out key episodes that would demonstrate the Council's ability to face up to challenges and take decisions in a timely and well considered way. Last year's annual assessment by the Recovery Board confirmed that this was the case. For this year, the key focus is to address the extent to which operating arrangements were embedded. This year's plan lists four key tests of success in this area, and progress in achieving those milestones is set out on page 1 of Appendix B.

This is an area of some success, as key decisions have demonstrably been taken at appropriate times. There is however, a difference between the Council operating effectively, and operating at an optimal level, and it is still very much the former, with significant progress having been made since the start of the intervention.

The ability to deal with a very difficult, and ever changing financial position remains a major challenge, but one which has been addressed responsibly to date, including for example, political willingness to channel resource into the Children's Services budget to reflect a significant growth in demand. This will continue to be a major test and focus in the current financial climate and the run up to next year's Mayoral Election.

### Whether the Changes are Fully Embedded and Sustained

This was a finely balanced decision last year; in essence the Recovery Board felt it was too early to cast a judgement in this area. The Recovery Board then were particularly interested in the ability of the Mayor, Cabinet and leading councillors to come together in the best interests of the Borough. This year's recovery plan set out five key tests of progress which the Board determined would inform its judgement and these appear at page 2 of Annex B. The risks that were perceived last October, around for example the referendum on governance, did not materialise, and the Council operated effectively during this period, to great credit. The performance report largely shows that the Council is on track in achieving milestones in progress that were set. The question of the nature of Council's political

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governance is now settled for some years, and this certainty should assist future progress. However, it would be naive to suggest that change is yet fully embedded and sustainable, and the fact that the presence of Commissioners is necessary is evidence of this. Much progress has been made, and some tricky waters navigated. Despite this relationships require constant vigilance, and attention. The detail of the operation of the mayoral model, and political/managerial leadership are not always universally accepted or understood. This can be time consuming and a potential source of tension.

The embedding and sustainability of changes will continue to be a key area of focus in the coming year, as the Council makes the difficult decisions around the 2013/14 budget, and does the preparatory work and decision making for the far more difficult 2014/15 resource envelope.

### The Ability of DMBC to Build on its Strengths and Giving Confidence in Priority Areas to Achieve Excellence

The assessment of progress in 2010/11 showed that Doncaster could already claim some significant good practice in this area. Eight key tests of progress were highlighted in the current year's plan to test progress against this strand. Unsurprisingly, these are a mixture of being on track, or some progress but not complete. This is consistent with Doncaster being an organisation where change is yet to be fully embedded and sustained.

There are some real signs of progress. Whereas Doncaster was once perceived as inward looking and slow to engage with others, there is now real collaboration at political and officer levels outside Doncaster. The Council remains in LGA and LGYH membership. Senior officers are taking lead roles across the wider geographical area in Finance, Adult Social Care, Public Health Transition and Skills. As well as the Council benefitting from the help of the sector, it is assisting others, where it has expertise most notably in public health, finance and mayoral governance issues. The Council is collaborating with other authorities to provide real service improvements to residents e.g. in the soon to be launched e-market place for adult social care.

The Council remains a key player in the Sheffield City Region, and played its part in the negotiation and in the delivery of the Sheffield City Region "City Deal". In addition, the Mayor has made contact with leaders up and down the East Coast Mainline to focus on combined lobbying, priorities for improvement in the rail franchise and shared opportunities around economic development and growth.

The 2012 Recovery Plan also included as key strands a number of areas from the previous Recovery Plan that required further action this year. They are set out below with a commentary against each, and referred to in the programme table in Appendix B.

### Children's Improvement

Within the current Recovery Plan, as in the previous year's plan, this is listed as being improvement through the Children's Improvement Plan, with the Children's Board overseeing delivery against progress measures set out in the plan.

There is no doubt that the extent to which Children's Services was systemically broken, was underestimated, at the time of the Children's Services Intervention, which predates the Corporate Governance Intervention.

In last year's Recovery Plan report it was reported that an Ofsted Inspection into safeguarding had assessed Children's Services as 'adequate'. In January this year, a further Ofsted inspection of the "front door" multi agency referral and assessment process took place and was found to be satisfactory with a number of areas for development. Since then, a DfE review took place in February, which again identified the progress made and highlighted the significant challenges ahead.

Lord Carlile has visited the Council, and the report on his assessment of both Doncaster and National issues arising from the publication of the "Edlington" serious case review has been released. The report sets out a series of recommendations with implications Nationally and locally that the Council is currently reacting to, although progress was already being made on some of the issues highlighted.

The Council has recently been subject to an unannounced inspection of "services for the protection of children" and the official report was released on 16<sup>th</sup> November. The conclusion of the inspection is that arrangements are "inadequate" in all 4 of the domains covered. A number of "areas for improvement" have been highlighted that need to be addressed within very strict timescales.

The seeds of dealing with the inadequacies raised in both reports have already been sown, indeed measures were being put in place before the inspections happened. The Council was well aware that whilst progress has been made, some of that progress was fragile and made particularly more so by the current increase in demand for services and an unstable budget which has to be brought back on track. Notwithstanding the need to deal with the Ofsted and Carlile findings, there is acute awareness that there is a real need to accelerate and embed progress which will require a stabilisation of the workforce, better caseloads, budget control, consistent good professional practice and better engagement with the wider local government sector. DfE colleagues are considering next steps in the children's intervention, which sits unsatisfactorily separate to the corporate intervention. It is my own view that the two interventions could be better blended, and that in order to truly accelerate progress in children's services, a strong public private partnership to bring in increased change capacity will be beneficial.



### Development of Skills, Behaviours, Relationships and Decision Making Arrangements

This was a strand within the initial recovery plan, which was included in the current year's plan with the relevant progress requires listed in Appendix B. Again, this is an area where some progress has been made, but more remains to be done, not least around member development and for the reasons set out earlier in this report.

### Housing Improvement Work

The Council set up its own Housing Service Improvement Board to oversee the work in this area, and it was responsible for measuring progress. Considerable progress has been made, and the Housing Improvement Board declared its work complete in July this year. The Report of the Chair of the Board is annexed to this report. Whilst performance metrics and relationships have demonstrably improved, moving the Strategic Housing Function forward in a fragile economy will continue to be an area of focus for the Council and its partners, but not one that specifically requires an intervention approach.

### Improving Life Chances and Reducing Dependency

Partnership Commitments developed in the 2011 Stocktake have been progressed, especially in the areas of domestic violence, and early detection of Cancer.

A stocktake was held in October with good attendance and engagement from the Council and partners. The key focus was around young people, families and youth unemployment, and the conclusions from that event have been drawn up into a report that is being developed into an action plan for adoption by partners. Partners said the event was focused, engaging and strategic and built upon last year's success.

### Integration of Public Health into Council

This area is a particular strength, acknowledged locally, regionally and nationally. We are well on track to integration by April 2013 and the report to the LGA is cited as evidence of Doncaster's position.

### Leadership, Confidence and Morale

Again, this is a strand from the original recovery plan, which remains in place. Significant progress was made last year, and on the performance measures identified this year, progress continues to be made. Inevitably, in the current financial climate, morale remains a key issue. The Change Programme has been refocused and is currently subject to review to ensure optimum programme management of all of the strands, not least to ensure achievement of financial savings anticipated through the Change Programme, some of which were not robust.

Performance Management and the Council's PDR Scheme have been strengthened and improved this year, and progress will need to continue if the Council is to become one that is truly focused on results.

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Industrial relations have been difficult around the changes to terms and conditions, and an understanding and response to the challenging financial position. At times, governance around Industrial Relations has been confusing. This area will require significant work on all sides in the coming year if the Council is to move forwards effectively to meet the challenges it faces.

### Summary

It is not for me to judge whether the transition from one Chief Executive to another has been successful so far, that is a matter for others. That in itself was a key test this year. The Council has met the many challenges of the past year and continues to make progress. Whilst many difficult decisions are yet to come, and it will be a key test of progress to handle that difficult future, the Council builds on progress, and does not let past obstacles get in the way.

Jo Miller

Chief Executive, Doncaster Council

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## Recovery Board Performance Report

Recovery Board 7<sup>th</sup> December 2012

Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
<b>1. RECOVERY PLAN 2011-12 (New recovery plan items and actions agreed as part of the annual review of recovery progress)</b>		
<b>COUNCIL OPERATING EFFECTIVELY</b>		
RB201 Decision taking over revised Terms and Conditions for Staff	<b>COMPLETE</b>	Progress measure– New terms and conditions agreed - Completed
RB202 Budget and MTFS decisions: Feb 2012	<b>COMPLETE</b>	Progress measure – Full Council Approval of budget - Completed
RB203 Budget Implementation, throughout 2012	<b>AMBER</b>	<p><b>Progress measure – Ability to remain within agreed budgets during 2012/13</b></p> <p>The Council’s latest projection, as at 30/9/12 is for a £1.24m overspend by the year end. Progress is being made on delivery of the required savings but there is concern that they are not being delivered quickly enough to keep pace with requirements.</p> <p>The area of biggest concern is the Children and Young People Service (CYPS), which is expected to overspend by £4.4 (£0.5m worse than</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>the quarter 1 estimate). A considerable amount of effort is being put into reviewing the spend in this area and tackling overspending, with the CFO and CE regularly attending management meetings in CYPS, as well as revised contracts for out of authority placements, and reviewing agency spend. This is a major challenge for the Council, as in view of the negative Ofsted report it will be very difficult to make savings in this area.</p> <p>The other 2 areas of concern relate to the Change Programme strands of Customer Access and Procurement, where each strand is projected to fall short of savings targets by £1m (£2m in total). In both areas further resource is being targeted to ensure that savings are delivered as soon as possible.</p> <p>This Recovery Plan area is rated as <b>Amber</b> as it relates to the ability to control the 2012/13 budget. However, if the ability to meet future years budget savings was taken into account then the rating would have to be <b>Red</b>.</p>
<p>RB204 Adoption of updated, and well-focussed, council and partnership plans</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Corporate Plan revised and 2012 Partnership Stock Take held</b></p> <p>A new corporate Plan was agreed at full council with a full set of measures, milestones and strategic risks for the 2012/13 financial year. Work is now underway to produce the 2013/14 Corporate Plan alongside the budget process.</p> <p>The 2012 Stock Take was held as planned on 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 2012. The event was a great success with excellent attendance and engagement from Partners and wholly positive feedback. The session focussed on Doncaster’s young people and the Partnership Chief Officers Group (COG) has now agreed a draft set of partnership key priorities for the coming year. A report has been produced by the COG setting out key desired outcomes and specific responsibilities for Theme Boards and individuals. An outcomes framework is now being developed to measure progress.</p> <p>The review of future partnership arrangements was approved by Cabinet in August and a project is underway to implement further improvements to partnership working in Doncaster. New partnership arrangements should be implemented this financial year.</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
<b>CHANGES FULLY EMBEDDED AND SUSTAINED</b>		
RB205 Maintained momentum as the new Chief Executive takes over, Jan 2012 onwards	<b>Green</b>	<p><b>Progress measure – Appropriate decision making</b></p> <p>Since January 2012 appropriate decisions have been made to ensure that the Council continues to improve. Key decisions include the 2012/13 Budget, the new Corporate Plan, staff terms and conditions, post-election cabinet arrangements, the successful completion of the governance referendum, new partnership arrangements. Challenges remain around the focus on Value for Money, ensuring good quality services with increasingly scarce resources and the future of the change programme and embedding related work post December 2012.</p>
RB206 Ability to manage major challenges, especially the development and implementation of the 2012/13 budget strategy, alongside the referendum on the Governance system: Jan -May 2012	<b>COMPLETE</b>	<p><b>Progress measures – Effective budget implementation, Council decisions relating to referendum and appropriate actions following referendum</b></p> <p>Full Council approved budget March 2012 and Referendum on future governance arrangements at DMBC was undertaken successfully which resulted in the continuance of the elected Mayoral Model in Doncaster.</p> <p>The 2013/14 budget process is currently underway and will present a stiff challenge in view of the emerging financial constraints and the severe impact upon the Council’s finances. The picture is even bleaker for 2014/15 where much less progress has been made towards bridging the significant funding gap.</p>
RB207 Revised Cabinet arrangements following the May 2012 elections, and the maintenance of effective relationships across the political structure of the council.	<b>AMBER</b>	<p><b>Progress measure – Effective Annual Council Meeting and new Cabinet in place</b></p> <p>All Governance arrangements including a new Cabinet have been agreed post elections 2012 as planned, although the current Cabinet does not include any Members from the majority party group.</p> <p>The strand would be rated as green if merely getting the arrangements in place was taken into account. However the current make-up of the Cabinet is clearly unconventional and very challenging within Doncaster’s wider political framework and so this area will remain a significant area of future focus.. It is important that the current situation is closely monitored to ensure that the Cabinet, Shadow Cabinet</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>and Scrutiny arrangements are effective and sustainable and that relationships are maintained into the future.</p> <p>The Mayor has appointed a new Deputy Mayor from within his existing Cabinet without changing portfolio holder responsibilities Relationships between the Executive and the remainder of Council remain business-like rather than cordial, full Council meetings are conducted in an appropriate manner and atmosphere. There have been no standards complaints against a Borough Councillor for more than 18 months and independent members on the Standards Committee that attended full Council meetings reported favourably on the conduct of Members at those meetings.</p>
<p>RB208 Increased Member engagement in driving the improvements in Children's services through the latter stages of the Children's intervention and beyond.</p>	<p><b>RED</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Understanding and fulfilment of corporate parenting role</b></p> <p>There has been Member engagement in supporting and scrutinising the children’s improvement agenda. The Cabinet Member continues regular visits to service teams, schools and children’s centres; along with weekly meetings with the Director and monthly meetings with the Service Leadership Team. The Schools, Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Panel has played a major role both in terms of their detailed monitoring of performance and progress and in implementing the Improvement Plan; as well as undertaking in-depth reviews into key issues including Inclusion, Health and Education Outcomes of Children in Care and is midway through a review of Children’s Services Budget Pressures. A review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is planned for later in the year.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Board has been refreshed and agreed a new work plan in June 2012. A programme of meetings is scheduled, the last meeting of the Board took place on 26th September 2012. A Members Seminar on Corporate Parenting was held in March and a further one in September 2012 with 7 and 10 Members attending respectively. A Review of Corporate Parenting Functions was due to be discussed at the Doncaster Children’s Board on 25th October 2012 but the item was replaced in order to concentrate on planning the next year, including consideration of the implications of the Ofsted report.</p> <p>Clearly there has been progress in terms of activity in this area, however the Council has not achieved the necessary and desired outcomes for Children. Further more intensive work is required and is being planned for the year ahead, especially to drive home the message that corporate parenting is the responsibility of all and including meaningful engagement with Group Leaders. The Carlile report was particularly critical of this area and has made specific recommendations relating to the development and training of individual Councillors and Scrutiny Panels.</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
<p>RB209 Engagement of the council in the wider change agendas and improvement strategies affecting the sector as a whole</p>	<p><b>AMBER</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Settled position to new standards regime in place, Public Health integration, Awareness of the Localism agenda and compliance with relevant Acts, Effective governance arrangements post intervention, Member commitment to wider change agenda (beyond budget)</b></p> <p>A new Ethical Governance Framework was agreed at the Annual Council Meeting (Standards Committee retained). The Members Code of Conduct was agreed at Full Council on 12<sup>th</sup> July and the Independent Persons have been appointed. The requirements of the Localism Act in relation to the standards regime have now been fulfilled.</p> <p>Directorates are increasingly taking the lead on the Localism and Decentralisation agenda as the new legislation becomes available and is embedded. The Council’s Localism Group meets regularly to highlight emerging issues and monitor progress. Elected Members are updated on progress and implications as and when required. A Localism Act update report was presented to OSMC on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. Further details of engagement with Neighbourhood Planning is set out in RB216 below.</p> <p>Governance arrangements continue to be strengthened aided by a very effective Corporate Governance Group, with strong links to the Mayor &amp; Cabinet, OSMC and the Audit Committee.</p> <p>The change programme has delivered £8,667,000 of savings in 2012/13 and has plans in place for a further £3,744,000 (although there are risks associated with the delivery of this), against a overall target of £14,000,000. The remaining £1,600,000 that needs to be delivered by the end of 2012/13, is being assessed by the responsible strands and a full understanding of the expected outturn against target will be available later this year. However, it is clear the Council is unlikely to be able to bridge this entire gap and the remaining shortfall will be passed through to 2013/14 as an additional target.</p> <p>The current bleak financial picture shows no let-up in the future and it is clear that the Council faces many challenges ahead. This has put additional pressure on the Change Programme and it is clear that savings will need to occur at a faster pace to achieve our financial strategy. A review and refocus of the Change Programme is currently underway to ensure that the organisation transforms within a vastly</p>



Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>reduced cost base.</p> <p>The Council moves into its new Civic Offices from the 19th November 2012. This provides an opportunity to introduce new ways of working, change of culture and significantly reduce annual costs.</p> <p>Wider discussions are required on what type of organisation the Council needs to be in the future and the need for a more mature industrial relations framework. This together with the current Change Programme Review leads to an <b>AMBER</b> rating for this strand.</p>
<b>THE ABILITY OF DMBC TO BUILD ON ITS STRENGTHS AND GROWING CONFIDENCE TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN PRIORITY AREAS</b>		
<p>RB210 Setting in place a confident approach to the relationship between the council and the schools sector</p>	<p><b>AMBER</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Clear understanding of strategic role of Council with schools and school providers and Establish schools sector engagement forum</b></p> <p>There is a comprehensive, strategic and co-ordinated approach to continuing to improve education standards including developing a robust business relationship with schools. This was presented to the Recovery Board on 27 January 2012 and was positively welcomed and supported. Education is one of five priorities in the 2012/13 Improvement Plan. 'Inspiring Success' is one of three of the Doncaster's Children Trust/Children and Young People's Plan's priorities.</p> <p>A meeting was held with Secondary Headteachers in early Oct to agree an approach for developing quality assured alternative education provision. The Schools Causing Concern list and action plans were revised in September.</p> <p>Cabinet approved the establishment of the Schools and Children's Services Partnership on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and a steering group is now being formed to take forward more detailed proposals and governance arrangements.</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>The strand is rated as <b>AMBER</b> in recognition that arrangements are still in the early stages of development.</p>
<p>RB211 Establishing an approach to 16-19 provision that's capable of improving prospects for young people</p>	<p><b>AMBER</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Age 16-19 Strategy in place and Partnership focus on ages 16-24</b></p> <p>The 16- 19 Strategy has been subsumed in to the 16- 24 work carried out by the Partnership. The Work &amp; Skills Board will agree key targets at its meeting in October. A Local area Statement for 16 -19 age group will be ready by the end of November, which will include a Raising Participation Age plan for the borough.</p> <p>The Strategic Partnership continues to focus on the 16-24 age group and this was the key focus of the 2012 Stock Take event, which was held on 04/10/2012. Priorities have now been formed with the clear intent to get young people into work. This includes a coordinated cross partnership focus on apprenticeships which will link directly with the planned Apprenticeship Hub. The Troubled Families project will also focus heavily on this age group. The Work and Skills Partnership continues to meet and is progressing its work plan.</p> <p>Fieldwork on Doncaster's Labour Market Information Survey has begun, i.e. our businesses have been approached to complete a detailed survey on their present and future skills requirements. This will directly inform future Business Support provision and the work of the Work &amp; Skills Partnership to facilitate a 'business demand-led' skills system.</p> <p>Development of an 'Apprenticeship Hub' for Doncaster within the 'City Deal' for Sheffield City Region continues. This 'Hub' will support Small &amp; Medium-sized businesses in the Borough to take on apprentices by getting them 'employment-ready' and to properly support apprentices whilst 'on the job'. The requirement of Doncaster as part of this deal will be 650 new apprenticeships for the Borough between 2013 and 2016.</p> <p>Doncaster's Association of Training Managers (DATM) has been reconstituted and will play a key role moving forward in ensuring training provision offered across the Borough matches what employers require in terms of current and future.</p> <p>This strand is rated <b>Amber</b>, because despite the work that is being progressed, 13.7% of Doncaster's 18-24 age group are claiming JSA, which remains the highest rate of 18-24 year old JSA claimants in the Yorkshire &amp; Humber region.</p>
<p>RB212 Following through on the approach to life chances established by the October 2011 Stocktake event</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Stocktake Commitments progressed</b></p> <p>Good progress has been made against the 2011 stocktake commitments and this was highlighted at the 2012 Stocktake Event on 4<sup>th</sup> October. This progress will be advanced through an agreed focus on Doncaster's young people that will continue the work established last year but concentrate partnership effort on getting young people into work through a variety of means. This includes a clear, agreed commitment to redesign the way partners work together across the Borough.</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
<p>RB213 Building on strengthened housing arrangements and responding to challenges of ensuring future housing supply, standards and affordability</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>The Housing Improvement Board has systematically assessed the progress against the four strategic themes in the Housing Improvement Plan. In each case the Board has reviewed progress against the desired outcomes listed in the Improvement Plan and considered the detailed actions put in place to overcome any shortcomings. It has also discussed the Housing Service Plan for 2012/13. The overall conclusion of the Improvement Board is that Doncaster’s strategic housing service has improved significantly over the past couple of years, is now being run satisfactorily and is meeting the criterion set by the Recovery Board and Council. Thus the work of the Housing Improvement Board is complete, however, the Board endorses conclusions of the Audit Commission, that work remains to be done in some areas and that it is important that the service improvements and cultural change taking place within strategic housing become deeply embedded. The necessary structures are in place within the Council and it is clear that staff are committed to continuing the progress made to date. One of the main areas requiring improvement relates to reducing empty properties. Despite improvements in the way the Council has been working to address this issue Doncaster is fighting against a weak local housing market. Over the past few months the number of empty homes has started to climb again and the recent targets set are not being achieved. Doncaster is performing better than its peers but it will be a long hard slog to significantly reduce the problem.</p> <p>This strand is rated as <b>GREEN</b> in recognition of the progress made and the standing down of the Housing Improvement Board. However, it is acknowledged that housing remains as a significant issue for Doncaster and so the new Recovery Plan will retain a focus on the area.</p> <p><b>See also RB02 below.</b></p>
<p>RB214 Taking the outline approach to the transfer of public health and well-being responsibilities to the point where we have strong arrangements in place, in advance of full national implementation in 2013</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Agreement by April 2012 between Council and NHS on Public Health transition</b></p> <p>On track. Strand given Green rating by Strategic Health Authority and DMBC Change Team. DMBC Chief Executive providing assurance through Local Authority routes. Public Health transition plan includes working groups on Human Resources, IT and relocation and a memorandum of understanding has been produced to cover the period up to final transfer. Public Health is now conducting “Worksmart” work in preparation for moving into the new Civic Office on 26 November 2012.</p>
<p>RB215 Implementing the Doncaster Economic Strategy in the changing context of government strategies the LEP and the connections between</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Aligned business support solution, Stocktake commitments progressed, Strong and effective relationships with the LEP and other key players</b></p> <p>Doncaster’s aligned business support solution “Business Doncaster” launched at the end of May and provides a single point of contact for Business support. Take up of this 'offer' has increased recently, with a number of firms receiving help to set-up/expand through this route.</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
Doncaster and other economies		<p>The Business Doncaster offer will expand during the remainder of 2012/13 to further support the private sector to grow in the Borough. The Enterprising Doncaster partnership theme board review is now complete and will focus on local and City Regional economic progression (one of the local board members is also a LEP board member) and includes a specific cross sector business support group, whose remit it is to ensure that Business Doncaster works.</p> <p>Activity being pursued at City Region level continues particularly now that the City Deal has been signed with Government. This includes a number of work streams, including: - development of a demand led approach to skills; an investment fund for the City Region; and improved governance. Doncaster officers continue to actively engage across these agendas to maximise their contribution to the delivery of Doncaster's Borough and Economic Strategies.</p> <p>Engagement with towns and cities outside of the LEP is continuing. We have agreed with York Council that further work would take place around; Markets, Investment Funding, East Coast Mainline, Airport promotion and pre-planning service. Work with Hull has resulted in the development of the 'golden corridor' concept working towards better transport links to Hull and Humber and also to the trans-pennine corridor; including Wakefield and North Lincolnshire. A further meeting with Hull took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October and as a result infrastructure proposals are being developed that could benefit from European funding. Bassetlaw are part of the Enterprising Doncaster logistics group and have been included within the 'Port of Doncaster' initiative.</p>
RB216 Responding to the changes in the planning framework envisaged in the Localism Bill	<b>GREEN</b>	<p><b>Progress measures – Agreed approach to neighbourhood planning</b></p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plans Support Pack and Process Guide was approved by Full Council in May 2012 and at the same time Council agreed that given the limited resources available, priority should be given to supporting those communities where development is being promoted as set out in the LDF Core Strategy. There is significant interest in Neighbourhood Plans in Doncaster, a lot more so than in any other Local Planning Authority in the Sheffield City Region. Formal applications seeking approval of the boundaries of the area to be covered by their Neighbourhood Plans have now been received from Tickhill, Armthorpe, Burghwallis, Thorne &amp; Moorends and Rossington Parish Councils. Applications have been approved by the Planning Committee for Tickhill, Armthorpe &amp; Burghwallis. Sprotborough and Cusworth Parish Council and Barnburgh Parish Council have asked for advice on the process.</p> <p>There may be the opportunity for the Council to access non ring fenced funding from DCLG of up to £30k for each Neighbourhood Plan to assist with the costs to the Council. For 2012/13 this would be an initial payment of up to £5k following designation of a neighbourhood area and a second payment of up to £25k on successful completion of the neighbourhood planning examination. This is intended to cover costs of the examination and any further steps required for the neighbourhood plan to come into legal force, including referendum.</p> <p>An emerging risk associated with Neighbourhood Plans is the relationship between the Plans and the emerging LDF Sites and Policies document that is currently being prepared. The Sites and Policies document, which will allocate housing and employment sites across the borough is timetabled to go to Full Council in March 2013, which will be in advance of any referendum on Neighbourhood Plans. The Strategy and Programmes Team is working closely with the Parish Councils to try and ensure that the emerging Sites and Policies document reflects the proposals and aspirations of those communities.</p> <p>There is a risk that if those areas that are developing Neighbourhood Plans are not included in the Sites and Policies document this could lead to uncertainty for developers, delays in planning and a potential brake on development.</p> <p>For clarity and effective coordination purposes, Neighbourhood Plans are being linked with the Local Investment Plan (through</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		Neighbourhood Investment Plans) to inform and shape Area Plans.
<p>RB217 Setting a Doncaster approach to the future role of the council, ensuring the delivery of public services and in responding to the wider challenges and opportunities, in the context of the legislation programme currently going through parliament</p>	<p><b>AMBER</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Future role of Council embedded within Change Programme, Continued awareness and focus on decentralisation and localism</b></p> <p>The legislative landscape for local government has changed significantly over the past year with further changes on the horizon. Some significant challenges remain such as the implications of the Welfare Reform Act but these are not unique to Doncaster and all local authorities are wrestling with the implications of these changes.</p> <p>All Services will be reviewed to help enable the Council meet the 2013/14 and 2014/15 service improvement and financial challenges. By the end of January 2013 the Council will have a clear programme of prioritised service reviews to support service improvement and meeting financial pressures. The purpose of this work is to build on the work already completed by directorates, recognising and removing duplication and help align service delivery to a 'one council' way of working.</p> <p>All strands within the Organisational Change block have identified key areas and processes which require review to ensure the culture of the council is fit for purpose, allowing the organisation to benefit fully from new ways of working. Behaviours and competencies and rights and responsibilities will make it clear what the council expects from its staff, managers and leaders and there will be a move to a more performance-based management culture which recognises good performance and deals with poor performance. Reviews include induction procedures and processes, appraisal (PDR and 1 to 1s), communication, Worksmart and leadership development.</p> <p>The Localism agenda is becoming embedded within Council departments and the Localism Group continues to operate effectively in addressing and coordinating the wider issues of the localism and decentralisation agenda. A separate Partnership Welfare Reform Group has also now been established with clear objectives in place and developing project plans. Doncaster’s response to the legislative changes has been very good throughout the year and is this will continue in respect of the challenges ahead to ensure that appropriate action is taken.</p>

Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>Despite good progress against Recovery Plan measures the strand is rated <b>AMBER</b>. This is due to the size of the agenda and the complexity and emerging nature of legislation and funding and the difficulties this presents to all local authorities. It is also an acknowledgement of the significant work that will be required into the future, including the achievement of political consensus on the future role of the Council and the need for a more mature industrial relations framework. Clearly the current complexity in the Council's political make-up continues to be a risk to progress on this strand.</p>
<p><b>2. INITIAL RECOVERY PLAN 2010-11 (Those elements of the first recovery plan that need further improvement)</b></p>		

Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
RB01 Children's Service Improvement Plan	RED	<p><b>Progress measures – Contained within the separate Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>The Improvement Plan for 2012/13 (as approved by the Children's Board in March this year and substantially revised in June) was signed off at the Children's Board meeting on 30 March 2012. The CYPS has made considerable but fragile progress and this has been recognised by Ofsted in the Announced Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children conducted in March 2011 and, most recently, in the Unannounced Inspection of contact, referral and assessment conducted on 18-19 January. The former which judged the Local Authority as satisfactory and the latter found no areas for priority action, recognised multi-agency working as a part of our child protection strategies as a strength and noted a small number of areas for development, e.g., reduce reliance on agency workers. There was a detailed DfE review in February 2012, and this noted the significant improvements made and confirmed our self-evaluation for areas requiring further improvement. Details of this progress have been reported to the Children's Board on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The approved CYPS Improvement Plan for 2012-13 has the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to raise educational standards for all children and young people</li> <li>b. Improve professional practice, particularly in safeguarding and children in care, through managers effectively managing performance</li> <li>c. Improve outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers, by modernising and improve the children in care service through developing a more family based service and moving children speedily to permanence</li> <li>d. Develop a whole system approach to improving outcomes for children and young people, including in partnership with RDaSH, implementing the One Team Working model</li> <li>e. Provide effective financial management including improving value for money and making the savings in the Council's budget</li> </ul> <p>The CYPS budget is an area of major concern for the Council, reporting a £4.1 million overspend for the 2011/12 year, partially linked to the on-going increase in demand for services. An overspend of £4.4m is also predicted for 2012/13. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services is working closely with the Director of CYPS to address this issue and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has tasked the Schools Children &amp; Young People Scrutiny Panel to undertake a review in this area. The reduction of out of authority placements is critical to reducing the overspend and it is also critical that once reduced they are kept to a minimum to sustain the resultant cost savings.</p> <p>During Quarter 2 the Children's Board saw the outcome of a review of Domestic Violence Services, review of progress in raising Educational Standards including Children in Care Education Work Plan, proposal for the Development of a Strategic Partnership Body for</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>Children’s Services; and are undertaking detailed monthly monitoring on Health Assessment Performance Indicators. Key focus also remains on the Social Work Recruitment Campaign in Quarter 2 and this will continue into Quarter 3. Caseload levels still remain a concern and this will be addressed via a new model of working children in need through the Integrated Family Support Service.</p> <p>At the beginning of September, Children’s Services also migrated their case file management system from CareFirst into Liquid Logic. This is a key step in the improvement journey of Children’s Services and will further strengthen the progress made to date. However, this migration has proved problematic in terms of producing reports from the new system. This situation cannot be allowed to linger since these reports are essential for effective performance management purposes. The situation is currently being closely monitored.</p> <p>Services for the protection of children have been subject to an unannounced Ofsted Inspection during October. The result of that inspection is that all 4 domains covered by the inspection have been assessed as “Inadequate”. The final report sets out a series of recommendations, a number of which need to be completed within very strict timescales. In addition, the anticipated report relating to Lord Carlile’s review of the Edlington case has recently been published and also contains specific implications for the Council. A link to both reports is included within the Chief Executive’s update attached. Clearly, in view of both reports, improvement activity will require major review and refocus and work has already started within the service and through the Children’s Board on taking immediate actions and producing a new Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The strand has been rated as <b>Red</b> in view of the Ofsted and Carlile reports and the Quarter 2 reported performance information.</p>
RB02 Housing Improvement Plan	<b>GREEN</b>	<p><b>Progress measures – Contained within the separate Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>The Housing Improvement Board has systematically assessed the progress against the four strategic themes in the Housing Improvement Plan. In each case the Board has reviewed progress against the desired outcomes listed in the Improvement Plan and considered the detailed actions put in place to overcome any shortcomings. It has also discussed the Housing Service Plan for 2012/13. The overall conclusion of the Improvement Board is that Doncaster’s strategic housing service has improved significantly over the past couple of years, is now being run satisfactorily and is meeting the criterion set by the Recovery Board and Council. Thus the work of the Housing Improvement Board is complete, however, the Board endorses conclusions of the Audit Commission, that work remains to be done in some areas and that it is important that the service improvements and cultural change taking place within strategic housing become deeply embedded. The necessary structures are in place within the Council and it is clear that staff are committed to continuing the</p>



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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>progress made to date. One of the main areas requiring improvement relates to reducing empty properties. Despite improvements in the way the Council has been working to address this issue Doncaster is fighting against a weak local housing market. Over the past few months the number of empty homes has started to climb again and the recent targets set are not being achieved. Doncaster is performing better than its peers but it will be a long hard slog to significantly reduce the problem.</p> <p>This strand is rated as <b>GREEN</b> in recognition of the progress made and the standing down of the Housing Improvement Board. However, it is acknowledged that housing remains as a significant issue for Doncaster and so the new Recovery Plan will retain a focus on the area.</p> <p><b>See also RB213 above.</b></p>
<p>RB04 Improving Life Chances and Reducing Dependency</p>	<p><b>GREEN</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Stocktake commitments considered by partnership and appropriate actions in place, Incorporation of PH objectives into Council Plans, Visible progress in 2012 towards integration of PH by April 2013</b></p> <p>The Stocktake commitments have been fully considered by the partnership throughout 2012 and emphasis on the issues will continue throughout the year. A further Partnership Stocktake has now taken place and new commitments are being finalised for 2013.</p> <p>Public Health objectives have been fully incorporated into the Corporate Plan and the Council’s performance management arrangements are now fully inclusive of Public Health issues and outcomes. Public Health transition arrangements are fully on track.</p> <p>The Troubled Families programme is progressing well. This project alongside a renewed partnership focus on young people will help to address inequalities within Doncaster and help to support the most vulnerable and problematic families in Doncaster by targeting those most in need. Identification of families in Doncaster is now largely completed and the work strands of the project are well underway.</p> <p>See also RB214 above for Public Health transition.</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>The strand is rated <b>GREEN</b> in terms of progress against key milestones but much more needs to be done in terms of the Council's role in signposting people to help themselves.</p>
<p>RB07 Development of Skills, Behaviours, Relationships and decision making arrangements</p>	<p><b>AMBER</b></p>	<p><b>Progress measures – Councillor engagement in seminars and development programmes, Management of key decisions across municipal year, Confidence of senior officers and leading politicians, Group Leaders feedback, Evidence of appropriate response to advice from statutory officers, External Audit, Clear understanding of different decision making roles (Inc. Mayor Head of Paid Service and Council Committees)</b></p> <p>Behaviours and relationships between Officers and Members have improved. These working relationships have resulted in considerable improvement in the management of decisions, an example of this being the appropriate engagement in the budget process with constructive dialogue between all political parties, the Mayor and the Executive.</p> <p>A rolling programme of all Member seminars is in place with events planned on a monthly basis. There have been 19 seminars since January 2012 with an average attendance of 14 Members per session representing a 22% attendance rate. Cabinet also receive informal briefings on an on-going basis. Informal feedback from Members has indicated that the timing and number of seminars is impacting on their attendance. Officers are reviewing the way information is presented to Members and reviewing the way Members seminar events are delivered and the timing of such events. It is hoped that these initiatives will help increase member attendance.</p> <p>A new Member development framework is being developed and has initially been discussed at the Political Group Leaders meeting. Meetings have been arranged with each Group to take this forward. A budget of £10k has been established to aid Member development and a knowledge and skills audit will be undertaken to ensure maximum benefit from the funding.</p> <p>A review of the Member/Officer protocol will be completed by December 2012 to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose.</p> <p>Support arrangements are in place for relevant political groups and individuals including within the Cabinet itself.</p>

Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>Developing the capacity and capability of Members to be effective is a priority within the Council’s Governance Plan. Progress on outcomes in this area is monitored as part of the quarterly performance reporting process and issues are taken up by the Council’s Governance Group.</p> <p>See also RB201-RB217 above for evidence of the effect of improvements in this strand .</p> <p>A report recommending a series of changes to the Constitution was approved at Full Council on 18<sup>th</sup> October. The report reflected a balance of changes that are required by legislation and those which improve our working arrangements, incorporate best practice and allow for appropriate corporate oversight. For example, the period for consultation between the Mayor and Overview and Scrutiny on the annual budget, will be reduced from 6 weeks down to 4 weeks to reflect later Autumn announcements from the Chancellor. Similarly, a requirement will be incorporated into the Constitution for Members to present any proposed amendment to the budget to the Section 151 Officer at least 2 days before the meeting. This will allow the S.151 to appropriately consider his duties to oversee a proportionate and balanced budget. There was also a proposal to amend call-in arrangements to allow a collection of Members from one political group to trigger a call-in. This is a reflection of the balance of political power within the Council and will be in addition to the current position, which require s 5 members from at least two political groups to trigger a call-in. All of these small changes in combination represent a further step forward in modernising and improving practices within the Council. Work is under way in revising guidance to officers on the completion of Officer Decision Records (ODRs) which should mean a clearer process with appropriate regard paid to professional advice and other material factors and result in a more robust audit trail.</p> <p>The strand is currently rated <b>AMBER</b> as although progress measures are being achieved, the full impact of recent work on Member development has not yet been fully felt. More needs to be done, not least to improve Member attendance at and engagement with seminars and workshops. The Intervention Commissioners have raised specific concerns around understanding and engagement with corporate parenting and this will be an area of focus for the future. These issues will be discussed at the next Governance Group Meeting and raised with Political Group Leaders.</p>

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Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
RB11 Leadership, Confidence and Morale	<b>AMBER</b>	<p><b>Progress measures – Response to Change Programme episodes, Feedback from stakeholders, Consultation feedback, Evidence of cultural change</b></p> <p><b>Leadership &amp; Confidence</b></p> <p>The senior Leadership Team is now established and functioning well. Leadership team meetings are held on a regular basis and have been refined to have a clear focus on both business and developmental issues. To give impetus and direction in support of the Change Programme, Assistant Directors meet as the Change Leadership team – this has led to improved understanding, awareness and greater collaborative working. Senior managers also have the opportunity and a forum to discuss and contribute to the Council’s progress and this is in the process of being reviewed to encourage even better ownership.</p> <p>The Leadership Academy pilot has been completed and evaluation carried out to assess impact and outcomes. Significant progress has been made by the candidates and they have demonstrated real results back in the workplace that impact positively on service delivery. Through the Academy 13 delegates have also completed the Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management The well-established First Steps in Leadership initiative continues and 36 candidates have been enrolled for the Level 5 Diploma in Professional Development.</p> <p>The Council’s Change Programme has been revised to provide a strong focus on organisational and cultural change, with specific strands in place to cover strong leadership, performance, rights &amp; responsibilities, communication and ways of working.</p> <p>Following the staff survey in March work continues with directorates to deal with the issues that emerged from the results and further information on progress to date is due to be published shortly.</p> <p>The Performance and Development Review Scheme has been strengthened this year with more emphasis on communicating the importance of the benefits and with compliance. Managers down to Heads of Service were required to have a PDR by the end of May and as at the end of Quarter 1 95% were completed. All staff were required to have a PDR by the end of September and data is being</p>

Recovery Board Strand	Progress in Achieving Milestones	Performance Commentary
		<p>collected to confirm the completion rate. A questionnaire is about to be launched that gives staff the opportunity to comment on the scheme and will give valuable information on the qualitative aspects.</p> <p><b>Morale</b></p> <p>There are clearly improved leadership arrangements within the Council with the knock on effect of renewed confidence in future improvement. However, there is awareness that the recent and future financial pressures have and will continue to negatively affect the morale of the workforce, particularly as further significant change will be needed. Various methods are being used to improve matters led by the Chief Executive, including staff visits, staff briefings, weekly updates and more recently opening up social media channels. As a result of the employee survey a review of internal communications is underway and there is a need for the Council and the Trade Unions to engage more effectively. Through the Worksmart project staff have had the opportunity to influence and change their ways of working to enable more efficient and productive practices. This is in preparation for the move to the new Civic Building which is anticipated will have a morale boosting effect on the staff involved.</p> <p>Staff sickness continues to be a significant concern, especially when set in the context of the Council’s diminishing levels of resources and financial challenges ahead. The current rate of sickness is 13.11 days lost per employee, per annum, which is a slight improvement on the quarter 1 figure. More robust monitoring and performance management is being rolled out and a corporate action plan is now in place to address this area.</p> <p>This strand is considered <b>AMBER</b> as there is still much work to be done to embed the good work that has taken place in recent months and due to the recognition of the significant impact of change on individuals and teams now and in the coming month.</p>

## Draft Recovery Plan Priorities 2013/14

### 1) Council operating effectively

- a) **Effective leadership, relationships, behaviours and development leading to increased confidence and better morale**
  - Increased confidence of senior officers and leading politicians
  - Clear understanding of different decision making roles (Mayor, Head of Paid Service, Council Committees etc.)
  - Engagement with and feedback from Group Leaders
  - Evidence of appropriate response to advice from statutory officers
  - Acceptable outcome following implementation of revised Terms and Conditions
  - Evidence of cultural change
  - Consultation feedback
  - Response to external inspection
  
- b) **2013/14 Budget and MTFS decision and Implementation**
  - Full Council approval of the 2013/14 Budget and MTFS
  - Ability to control spending and remain within the agreed budget during 2013/14
  
- c) **Adoption and implementation of well focussed Council and partnership plans**
  - Corporate Plan revised and agreed for 2013/14
  - Effective Corporate Performance Management Framework embedded during 2013/14
  - New Partnership arrangements operating successfully
  - Partnership Stock Take event held in 2013/14
  
- d) **Increased Member engagement in driving improvements in Children's services and other key priority areas**
  - Understanding and fulfilment of Corporate Parenting role
  - Effective development of Members ability to understand and scrutinise services (particularly Children's services)
  - Enhanced training of Scrutiny panels
  - Improved Councillor engagement with seminars, training and other development initiatives

## 2) Change is fully embedded and sustained

- a) Effectively manage major governance challenges including mayoral election and political relationships
  - Effective decisions relating to the 2013 Mayoral election
  - Appropriate actions following the 2013 Mayoral election
  - Effective 2013 Annual Council Meeting
  - Cabinet arrangements in place during 2013/14
  - Management of key decisions during 2013/14
- b) The Council's ability to respond to the wider change agendas affecting the public sector as a whole.
  - Ethical governance arrangements operating effectively
  - Integration of Public Health
  - Continued awareness of the Localism Agenda and compliance with relevant Acts
  - Continued development of the Council's approach to neighbourhood planning
  - Member commitment to the Council's change agenda
  - Embed the "future role" of the Council within the Change Programme

## 3) The Ability of DMBC to build on its strengths to Achieve Excellence in Priority areas

- a) Implement the Priorities of the 2012 Stocktake event
  - Creating stronger families (Partnership system redesign, science of behaviour)
  - Help young people into work
  - Promote the Borough
- b) Effective arrangements that respond to Housing challenges
  - Improved housing supply
  - Improved housing standards
  - Improved housing affordability
- c) Effective arrangements for Children's services in Doncaster
  - Clear understanding of the strategic role of the Council with Schools
  - Establish and embed a schools sector engagement forum
  - Deliver the CYPS Improvement Plan

**d) Effective and modernised arrangements for Adult Social Care in Doncaster**

- **Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy agreed**
- **More People exercising choice and control in their care**
- **Effective arrangements for safeguarding adults**
- **Service users and Carers are treated with dignity and respect**

**e) Implementing the Doncaster Economic Strategy**

- **Strong and effective Local Enterprise Partnership(s)**
- **Stocktake priorities progressed**
- **Aligned business support solution in place (Business Doncaster)**
- **Implementing key transformational projects e.g. FARRRs**
- **Better understanding of Doncaster's economic challenges and potential**



## **Intervention Commissioners**

### **Assessment of Intervention at Doncaster Council December 2012**

#### **Introduction**

1. This paper should be read in conjunction with the report provided by Jo Miller and the specific performance report of each area of the Recovery Plan, both of which were produced in consultation with us as Intervention Commissioners. The reports are distinct from each other in that the first 2 are written from a Council perspective, albeit incorporating advice and information from Commissioners, whilst this paper is an independent view of the progress the Council is making. However, in both cases performance has been assessed against the Recovery Plan which was jointly agreed by the Recovery Board and the Council.
2. We feel that the Recovery reports produced by the Council present a clear honest picture of the headway being made and a tangible degree of self-awareness, which in itself is clear evidence of a change in culture. Whilst the main areas of focus from the initial Corporate Governance Inspection are being addressed, there is a genuine understanding where further improvement is needed and of emerging issues that require focus.
3. Government intervention at the authority was initiated in order to “achieve a sustained change which embeds a culture of good corporate governance and continuous improvement”. It is again evident this year that the situation has improved and that the Council has been well managed in some difficult circumstances. Having said that, the fragility of the improvement cannot be underestimated and the risk of regression must be seriously considered when assessing the need for intervention post June 2013.
4. The following paragraphs contain our observations in relation to the specific 3 “broad tests” set out in the Recovery Plan, the fundamentals of which will largely remain relevant over the next year.

#### **Council operating effectively**

5. Most importantly, there has been a smooth transition to a new Chief Executive at the Council, which has contributed significantly to the effective management of potential flashpoints and key decisions during the year. For example, the agreement of the 2012/13 budget and Corporate Plan were major steps forward, as was the handling of the Mayoral referendum. The Council has also learned from the past experience of becoming too isolated and is engaging well with peers and partners. Specific and encouraging examples are the renewing of links with the LGA and LGYH, improved Local Strategic Partnership and the involvement with the Local Enterprise Partnership (Sheffield City Region).

6. These are positive and promising signs but are heavily dependent on the ability to maintain good political relationships and behaviours and the further embedding of change and improvement.
7. The financial situation faced by the Council is particularly worrying and the ability to deliver on a very challenging 2013/14 budget is a specific risk to additional progress. In the longer term, the 2014/15 budget will present an even stiffer challenge with much more work to be done on the development of efficiency initiatives. There is a significant lead-in time to the 2014/15 budget and bearing in mind the scale of change required and how long it will take to implement, this must not be wasted. In addition, it is fair to say that political negotiations on the development of a budget with at least a degree of consensus have been more difficult this year. Our concern reflects the importance of the budgetary position for the Council's future and consequently we have requested monthly updates on the situation.

### **Changes fully embedded and sustained**

8. The Council has demonstrated that it can operate effectively and that it can change, but the question of whether this is sustainable remains to be answered. A number of factors need to be considered in forming that judgement.
9. Cabinet arrangements following the 2012 elections were put in place and the Mayoral referendum has cemented Doncaster's political model for the foreseeable future. The Cabinet does not currently contain any members of the majority party, although in 2011 the Mayor invited members of the Labour Group to join. This in itself presents difficulties and is clearly an unorthodox situation that will need to be carefully nurtured.
10. We are concerned about the capacity and commitment of all elected members to deliver the major changes that Doncaster needs to make in order to tackle its very challenging financial, cultural and performance difficulties. Not all members accept the need for personal development and this manifests itself in continually low levels of attendance at workshops and training sessions. The Recovery Report highlights a particularly concerning lack of engagement with corporate parenting, which is especially worrying given the recent Ofsted and Carlile reports. This suggests to us that there is insufficient member "buy-in" to the responsibility for the improvement of Doncaster for the benefit of local people, which is somewhat surprising and disappointing in the current circumstances.
11. The run up to the 2013 Mayoral election will be a significant test in terms of the process of selecting candidates by the political parties and the risk this poses to effective decision-making for the long term future of Doncaster.

12. In summary, the comments above reinforce our view about the fragility of the politics and political behaviours in the Council and the consequent risk to the sustainability and embedding of improvements and further progress. We urge all members to accept and commit to their personal role in changing the Council's culture and improving its performance.

### **The ability of DMBC to build on its strengths and growing confidence**

13. The Council has demonstrated key strengths in significant and challenging areas and now needs to maintain impetus and step up to the challenge of converting these strengths into tangible improvement. There is significant "work in progress" and seeing aims and objectives through to successful and speedy conclusions should be prioritised.
14. The joint focus on Doncaster's young people is a positive step and has gained commitment from partners across the Borough. Priorities have been jointly agreed and projects are now in place that should ultimately improve prospects for the young and consequently the Borough as a whole. The difficulties experienced during the planning and staging of the annual partnership stock-take were not evident this year and the event proved positive and productive. Full interaction with local schools is still proving problematic but the Council and partners acknowledge the importance of their involvement with schools and measures are in place to build and improve relations.
15. The Housing Improvement Board has been stood down in recognition that the service is now operating satisfactorily. We still feel that specific housing related outcomes require closer attention and the Council will need to focus more closely on empty properties, housing standards and the availability of affordable housing in the coming months.
16. Public Health transition is wholly positive at this stage and progress has been acknowledged locally and nationally as best practise that others may learn from. The Public Health team is now co-located with Council staff and was one of the first teams to move into the new Civic Office.
17. Adults Services continue to perform well and this is an example of how the Council can turn around an ailing service successfully. The lessons learned from this experience need to be better utilised, for example to accelerate improvements in Children's Services. There are testing times ahead however and the challenges associated with the necessary modernisation of services to adults and the demands of an ageing population cannot be underestimated.

18. The local economy will remain a significant priority for the foreseeable future as the town continues to establish its economic identity. The Council and partners are well aware of the issues to be addressed and do not need the Commissioners to provide advice. Good relationships with partners and the local business sector have great potential and interaction with local towns and cities both inside and outside of the LEP have the capacity to pay significant dividends. This is another example where strength is evident and merely requires further exploitation.
19. The council appears to be dealing with the impact of recent (and future) legislative changes well, which is commendable given the magnitude of some of the changes. The implications of the Localism Act on the local planning framework are being addressed and there is significant interest from local communities in the development of Neighbourhood Plans. Support and advice is being provided, particularly to Parish Councils to ensure that Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Development Framework are coordinated. Welfare Benefit Reform will have a considerable effect in Doncaster and the Council is working hard to understand and deal with the implications.

### **Children's Services**

20. Improvements to Children's Services was a part of the original Recovery Plan and was retained within the current plan. The service is subject to a separate intervention overseen by the Children's Board and has a specific improvement plan.
21. Although we were aware of the historic state of Children's Services in Doncaster, the Commissioners were particularly disappointed with the result of the recent Ofsted inspection of services for the protection of children. It is clear in our eyes that the children's intervention can no longer exist in isolation to the corporate intervention and that swift and strong action is required to combine the two. A decision is expected shortly from the Department for Education on the future shape of children's intervention in Doncaster and in our opinion this should include, as part of any package of immediate measures, integration of the 2 arrangements and perhaps the introduction of an additional Commissioner to specifically concentrate on the children's issue. A speedy conclusion by the DfE is invaluable in accelerating necessary improvement and the Recovery Board has requested a decision at the earliest possible convenience. With any improvement package the Council must also take the necessary steps to ensure that the Children and Young People's Service fully engages with corporate arrangements and does not become isolated from other services.
22. It is clear from the Ofsted conclusions and our subsequent discussions that swift action is needed to increase capacity in Children's Services. Help will be needed from other Local Authorities and the private sector.

## Appendix A

23. The report produced as a result of the review of the Edlington Case by Lord Carlile has also been released recently. It is significant that this report raises serious concerns relating to the weaknesses of member challenge and leadership. These issues, in our opinion, are directly related to our assessment of the lack of engagement of members in development programmes and particularly buy-in to the corporate parenting agenda.
24. Any future Children's improvement plans must, as a key priority, address the recommendations of the Ofsted and Carlile reports.

### **Leadership, Confidence and Morale**

25. The Council is trying hard to develop its leadership capacity and capability and this is a crucial ingredient in the recovery process, not least to ensure that existing confidence is at least maintained. Morale will continue to be an issue given the current climate of large scale change and economic instability. The move to the new Civic Office has progressed well and the Chief Executive has embarked upon a schedule of visits to service teams, both will provide an important morale boost for staff.
26. More worrying is the historical and continuing high levels of staff sickness in the authority. To deliver the programme of change and deal with diminishing resources the Council needs its staff at work and 13 days lost per employee per year is not effective use of valuable resources. Many issues have been identified but the crux of the matter is that staff attendance needs to be managed better. There are currently some positive signs but the situation will need to be controlled diligently.

### **Conclusion**

27. The Council deserves praise for clear improvements in some key areas and for the way in which it has dealt with a number of challenging matters. It is our opinion that the Council, with the presence of Commissioners, has operated effectively during the past year and has undeniable strengths upon which it can build. These strengths will however be severely tested in the future and in particular by the magnitude of the financial challenge presented in balancing the budget over the next 2 years.
28. The main question for us as Commissioners is not whether the Council is capable of improvement or has strengths, these traits have been exhibited in the past, but whether these green shoots of recovery are sustainable and can be embedded into everyday operations. We have considered the evidence carefully and our strong conclusion is that at this stage we are not yet confident that progress can be maintained post 2013 elections without intervention. This is in the main part due to the fragility of the political situation but is also related to the speed of recovery and weaknesses highlighted elsewhere in this report and in recent Children's related reports.

## Appendix A

29. In our opinion some form of intervention will be required for at least another year and possibly longer if this is considered necessary to address the specific issue of children's services. This will provide time to digest the Spring election results and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the new regime, whatever it might be. It will also provide us with more time to ascertain and recommend future sector led support after intervention has concluded.

Rob Sykes – Lead Commissioner