

# DONCASTER BOROUGH STRATEGY: A Refresh

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## The Borough Strategy Refresh: An Introduction

The Borough Strategy is a key long-term document for improving quality of life in Doncaster for residents, visitors and people considering moving, working or investing here. It covers the whole of Doncaster, from Askern to Tickhill, Thorne to Mexborough, and all of the 305,000 people who live here, young and old alike. The most recent version was published in 2010, so, in order for it to remain current, it has undergone a refresh.

What do we mean by a refresh? Well, it means we have taken a look at our priorities, in order to assess how far we have come – and where we still need to go. Whereas our overall priorities remain the same, we need to be sure that our focus is clear, that what we are doing is working and, of course, that it is still relevant to achieving our goals. The Borough Strategy is an aspirational document: it outlines where our main efforts will be targeted. In these straitened times, where budgets are tight and resources even tighter, it is imperative that every penny and every minute spent makes a difference.

Our Borough Strategy Vision is:

Doncaster is one of the most successful boroughs in England and a gateway to opportunity locally, nationally and worldwide and has:

- A strong local economy
- Progressive, healthy, safe and vibrant communities.



- All residents will be able to achieve their full potential in employment, education, care and life chances.
- Pride in Doncaster will have increased further.



It is important to note that a Borough Strategy does not make anything happen just by the virtue of existing. It does not provide answers in itself; it simply highlights what we need to ask ourselves.

It is a high level document that is underpinned by a number of technical strategies and plans overseen by Partnership Boards organised around our key themes. While reviewing the Strategy, it seemed clear that it would be useful to ensure that our priorities corresponded more closely with these Boards, and so the refresh focuses on four over-arching themes:

- Children, Young People and Families
- Economy and Enterprise
- Health and Well-Being
- Safer and Stronger Communities

The refresh enables us to continue to meet the needs of the people of Doncaster - whilst also taking a series of unprecedented changes at a local, national and international level into consideration.

Although it reflects on the path travelled so far, it is essentially a forward looking document in that it highlights the activities and plans that are being, or will be, undertaken to meet Doncaster's aspirations into the near future.

### Please note:

*The Borough Strategy is a high level strategic document, and, consequently, this refresh necessarily concentrates on the big picture: the broad brush strokes rather than the fine detail.*

*Everything here, however, is based on hard fact – and underpinned by raft of statistical data and analysis. Ultimately, the Strategy informs the work plans, special projects and initiatives which are carried out by organisations, teams and individuals and overseen by the Partnership Boards - the day to day work that has a real, measurable impact on our priorities and, of course, on the people of Doncaster.*

*For more information on any of the themes, or to find out how you can help support the delivery of the Strategy, please contact us at: [partnerships@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:partnerships@doncaster.gov.uk).*

*Those interested in facts and figures will find an invaluable resource in the Doncaster Data Observatory, which can be found at: <http://www.doncastertogether.org.uk>.*



## Theme One: Children, Young People and Families

When the Borough Strategy was written in 2010, Doncaster was under intense scrutiny over the way that we looked after our children and young people. A lot has happened in the last four years, not least the formation of a new organisation - Doncaster Children's Trust. It remains an over-riding and immediate priority to improve the quality of children's services in Doncaster, across almost every area, and we are all working hard to ensure we are equal to the enormously important task of protecting and providing social care for our children.

Doncaster is still the single most deprived area in South Yorkshire, with a quarter of our children living in poverty. In some parts of the borough, this rises to over 50%. Our children don't always have the best start in life: too many are born to mothers who smoke and, as a result, have very low birth weights; there are also very low breastfeeding rates, and too many emergency hospital infections for respiratory infections.

Overall, more than half of all school age pupils are in a school which requires improvement or is inadequate, and Doncaster is below the national average across the board with regard to educational attainment. Fixed term exclusions are a particular issue, especially at Secondary level, and teenage pregnancies remain a problem.

We have a high level of 16 to 18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) compared with the national average. The number of young people getting a level 2 qualification by the age of 19 is improving, but those with level 3 qualifications and numbers entering into higher education are still relatively low.



Things are improving, however, and we are working every day to further close the gap. We are restoring the quality and effectiveness of social work practice, and redesigning early help for families who need support.





Doncaster's Stronger Families programme is supporting over 870 families to overcome complex problems that blight children's opportunities and can affect whole communities. Schools and local organisations are actively building strong relationships and new networks to ensure that local needs are identified and responded to. And we are committed to building a Doncaster Children's Trust which will secure better results, for the long-term, for our children and families.

### Our Strategy:

- Children should have the best possible start in life: they should be safe, fit, well, fed, clothed, educated and given access to all the opportunities that Doncaster has to offer.
  - Children's voices must be incorporated into everything we do, informing service planning, service delivery and decision making: if we don't listen, we can't learn.
  - Families face multiple issues, and they need support. Early intervention remains vital to preventing the escalation of problems, and children in resilient families will have a better quality of life.
  - The most effective support is only possible if Doncaster's statutory, private, voluntary and independent organisations work together to share information and work towards sustainable solutions.
- We must maximise opportunities for our young people in school and beyond, boosting attainment, raising expectation and improving the transition to work and independence. Our young people should feel valued and job-ready, and have the skills, qualifications and personal qualities to take on the world.

### Five Facts and Figures

1. Doncaster is home to 92,000 children and young people (aged 0 – 24): 30% of our population
2. The birth rate remains high – by 2021 there will be almost 20% more primary school age children than in 2011, with significant implications for our schools
3. 1 in 10 young people aged 18 – 24 are claiming Job Seekers Allowance
4. There were 5, 798 referrals into social care in 2012-2013 (equates to roughly 9 per 100 children); younger children aged under 5 account for 44% of children with a child protection plan
5. 4, 360 young people in Doncaster took part in the 2013 Make Your Mark survey organised by the UK Youth Parliament. Better work experience was the number one priority for Doncaster's young people, followed by funding to youth services and zero tolerance to bullying in schools.

## Theme Two: Economy, Enterprise, Investment and Skills

In terms of population, Doncaster is bigger than Newcastle, or Bolton, or Brighton, but it does not compete with those smaller towns and cities in terms of economy. Our annual economy is worth £4bn, but this isn't enough. Our outputs simply aren't as high as they should be, and the gap means that around half a billion pounds is lost (or rather not earned) a year. So what do we need to do?

We have already made a start. Our manufacturing and logistics sectors remain steady, as does our Financial and Business Services and Leisure, Tourism and Sport Sectors. Despite the economic downturn, our Retail sector remains buoyant. Good work has been done in ensuring our young people are employed, or in education and training; apprenticeships are on the rise. However, youth unemployment is still too high and adult employment too low. We don't have enough private sector jobs, or the diversity of employment essential to creating a truly vibrant economy. Our businesses struggle to start up, and are not always resilient enough. People earn less here, and have lower qualifications and, perhaps, lower expectations.

We know that Doncaster has a lot going for it. It is perfectly placed geographically to do business with the whole world and has excellent connectivity: by road, by rail, by canal, by air. It is still a green, open place, with lots of available and affordable land for business investment and housing. It has established business sectors with growth potential, and a willingness to welcome new sectors, new businesses, and new ways of doing things.



Our membership of the Sheffield City Region demonstrates our desire to change, and our commitment to partnership working, both in South Yorkshire and beyond it. Our role is to participate fully and to maximise opportunities for the SCR and, of course, for Doncaster. We must be our own staunchest champions as, after all, no-one knows what Doncaster needs better than Doncaster itself.



We are constantly striving because we know that we are capable of so much more than we are currently achieving. When we can increase the number of private sector jobs, when we can stop leaning on a shrinking public sector, when we can achieve strong, diverse, sustainable economic growth that has a measurable impact on each and every person in the borough, young and old, then this will be the measure of success, a sign that we are getting somewhere.

### Our Strategy:

- To maintain and preserve what we have achieved so far; to retain existing businesses and to continue to support enterprise; to continue to reduce youth and adult unemployment; to carry on investing in the borough and making it an attractive place to live, work, visit and do business in.
- To build on our successes: to grow and expand and diversify. To address the gaps, grow confidence and raise expectations; to attract different types of businesses to the borough, with different types of jobs. To sell Doncaster to the rest of the world, starting with our own residents.
- To work with our people to increase employability skills, to raise aspirations and have a measurable impact on attainment, on qualifications, on training. To incentivise hard work, vision, bright ideas, investment; to let our people and businesses know that they are valued and can prosper here, that they can grow and expand as well here as anywhere else – *better* here than anywhere else.

- To actively and vigorously pursue new opportunities, new options; to be progressive and fast moving, to facilitate rather than vacillate, to enable rather than delay. We know that we no longer have the resources to control everything, and we will not have them again. Our role now is to broker solutions, to support partnerships, to encourage, to allow others to take over, to take responsibility, to bring new ideas and ways of doing things, and to appreciate that, sometimes, these will be better than what we have been doing – and to welcome the change.

### Five Facts and Figures

1. Doncaster has a £4bn economy, the second largest in the Sheffield City Region.
2. The proposed DN7 Project will create 3,000 new homes, 6,000 new jobs, and a new power station and recycling facility – it will be one of the most advanced carbon capture and storage facilities in Europe.
3. The Gateway to the SCR project will integrate road, rail, water (via the Humber ports) and air to provide a major UK multi-modal logistics offer known as the ‘Port of Doncaster.
4. Doncaster Robin Hood Airport has served 7.5m passengers since it opened in 2005.
5. One of Doncaster’s great success stories, Yorkshire Wildlife Park, recently welcomed its one millionth visitor.

### Theme Three: Health and Well-Being

We're not a particularly healthy lot in Doncaster. Some of us have drug and alcohol dependency issues, and all the other problems that this can lead to. Even those amongst us that do not suffer from addiction tend to drink too much and smoke too much. Most of us eat the wrong stuff, and lots of it: three quarters of us are overweight – and we don't do nearly enough exercise. Worst of all, most of us think we're invincible, as, when asked, 78% of our people said they were in good health despite incontrovertible evidence to the contrary!

That's the bad news. The good news is that there have been strong and significant improvements in recent years: men and women are living longer than ever before; recovery rates from heart disease, strokes and most cancers are improving; teenage pregnancy rates are reducing, and there are fewer hip fractures in people over 65.

We are targeting alcohol misuse, and have made gains as a Local Alcohol Action area. Our successes in providing treatment and combating the harmful effects of excessive drinking are bucking the regional average.

We are tackling obesity at every level, starting in schools to ensure that the message is learned early on. We are also working on the factors that can lead to obesity, and providing alternatives: affordable healthier food, and green space and built environments that encourage physical activity.



With an ageing population, dementia is an ever present issue, with almost half of all cases going undiagnosed and untreated at a national level. Doncaster is steadily working towards increasing diagnosis rates from over half to just below 60%, as well as making significant and very important changes to increase the quantity of support and the quality of care – and the quality of life – for people with dementia and their carers.





Health is a cornerstone of well-being, something that, sometimes, is not fully appreciated until you lose weight or stop smoking or drinking or get the treatment that you need. Much of this can only take place if the individual takes responsibility for their own health, their own life. There are people and organisations here to help, but, ultimately, you must also help yourself.

### Our Strategy:

- To continue to improve the quality of life of the people of Doncaster by reducing health inequalities, and by vigorously targeting key areas where intervention makes a real difference: alcohol and substance misuse; obesity; mental health; dementia.
- To continue to promote the benefits of a healthier lifestyle, and to highlight the importance of personal responsibility amongst individuals, families and institutions as a vitally important factor in well-being.
- To raise further awareness of common health and well-being issues, and to provide practical advice on how to approach them and, if possible, overcome them.
- To ensure a joined up approach to preventable health issues by tackling the underlying issues that can lead to illness and abuse, and to provide help and guidance at the earliest possible stage.

- To transform our culture of care and support to be more integrated and person centred, to create more responsible organisations, stronger people and more resilient communities.
- To increase the quality of care for those who require it – to provide the right support and the right treatment to patients as best we can, as soon as they need it, for as long as they need it. Better care, better care taken.

### Five Facts and Figures

1. Our population is ageing: we will have an additional 9,300 residents over the age of 65 by 2021.
2. Over £24 million will be made available through Doncaster's Better Care Fund to help patients and people with care and support needs.
3. There are over 140 play areas in Doncaster, 18 Skate Parks, 18 public parks and 5 country parks.
4. Doncaster has been chosen to be part of a major Department of Health pilot scheme to create dementia-friendly care environments, including acute hospital wards, 'extra care' housing schemes and new garden areas on hospital sites.
5. Doncaster's Health & Wellbeing Board has been selected under the Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) programme to co-produce a community capacity building framework for national use to develop stronger communities to boost health and wellbeing.

## Theme Four: Safer and Stronger Communities

We all want to feel safe in our homes, in our communities, in the places where we live and work. Although it sometimes seems that the world is a more dangerous place than ever, Doncaster is actually getting safer all the time. Over the last few years, crime has reduced by almost a quarter with anti-social behaviour down by nearly 40%. Each improvement has been achieved by targeted support to perpetrators, victims and vulnerable people – to those most at risk of committing offences, or most affected by offending. Interventions are making a real impact that goes beyond mere statistics – they are making a difference to individuals, to families, to communities, to you.

Our population is more diverse than ever, and can sometimes seem fragmented and disunited. Our overall view of what constitutes a community has changed or, rather, is evolving all the time: a community is no longer represented by a single set of people, or a single set of values – and this complexity and diversity can be a huge asset as it demands flexibility, and flexibility is key to strength. A strong community benefits everybody, and not just the people who are part of it.

Since the Borough Strategy was written much has been done to tackle negative behaviour or, rather, to support and encourage *positive* behaviour, as this is actually far more prevalent. Key organisations are working more closely together than ever to provide communities with the strong support they need to feel safe, to feel included and to feel that they are being treated fairly.



This is impossible without the communities themselves, of course, who have risen to the challenge magnificently. Over 50,000 of us have taken part in community activities and events, including targeted interventions and volunteering.



Volunteering and community groups are key factors in modern life, with people lending their time and skills to the things they really care about. It's a hard task, but it is not a thankless one: each and every volunteer is hugely valued, and their dedication and enthusiasm is vital in taking the borough forward.

Communities no longer sit passively as things are imposed upon them: they have found their voice, and it becomes louder – and stronger - every day.

Perhaps more than any other theme, 'Safer, Stronger' involves an enormously diverse number and type of agencies and people, and the way that they treat each other and work together is hugely important to the way that we see ourselves, and how we feel about Doncaster as a place to live and work.

### Our Strategy:

- To work closely with each other to provide a consistent, cohesive approach to managing multiple issues and retaining focus.
- To continue to improve safety by providing a strong response to crime, including pre-emptive interventions with individuals and families in order to tackle issues that may lead to offending and re-offending.
- Building stronger families by providing bespoke interventions based on often relatively basic immediate needs (extra beds; help with cleaning)
- Ongoing action on drug and alcohol misuse, including those problems linked to the night-time economy.

- Increased support to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour; more transparency about how safeguarding agencies are dealing with these problems.
- Enabling volunteers to make the most of opportunities, putting them in touch with like-minded individuals and organisations to share information and expertise. Supporting individuals and groups to take charge of their own community, including some of its assets, and to further embed the volunteering ethos into everything we do.
- To champion and facilitate inclusion and fairness at all levels; to understand all perspectives without prejudice or imbalance across faiths, values, communities and individuals: to let them use their voice – and to hear what they say.

### Five Facts and Figures

1. Our population is steadily increasing, at the 2011 Census it had grown by 5.4% to 302,400.
2. The last census also revealed that 6.2% of Doncaster residents were not born in the UK.
3. The burglary of people's homes is at its lowest level since 1983.
4. Vehicle crime is at its lowest level since 1990.
5. Criminal damage is at its lowest level since 1992.

