

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

3<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2012

A MEETING of the REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the MANSION HOUSE, DONCASTER on FRIDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2012 at 2 PM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Tony Revill  
Vice Chair – Councillor Richard Cooper-Holmes

Councillors Monty Cuthbert, Nuala Fennelly, Bob Ford, Stuart Hardy, Ken Keegan, Ted Kitchen, Yvonne Woodcock, David Nevitt and Paul Wray.

Paul O'Brien – GMB

Also in Attendance:

Councillors Andrew Bosmans, John Mounsey

Nigel Brewster, Managing Director, Brewster McBride (and Skills Chair for the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership) and Dan Fell, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Doncaster Chamber

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from the Councillor Deborah Hutchinson

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

15. MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>th</sup>  
AND 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2012

RESOLVED that: -

- (1) The minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**ACTION**

- (2) The minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 were agreed as a correct record subject to Councillor Nuala Fenelley being deleted from the attendance section.

16. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

There were no public statements made.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, the Panel agreed to the variation of the order of business that agenda item 7 be considered prior to agenda item 6 on the agenda. This was in order to accommodate attendees who were attending from external organisations.

17. UPDATE ON WORK & SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

The Panel was presented with an update on the work of Private Sector led Work and Skills Board to improve the skills of the residents in Doncaster in order to support economic growth across the Borough. The report provided a full assessment of the present position of the Board in recent months and an outline of what was planned in the remainder of 2012/2013.

The Panel was informed that the Partnership was undertaking work around: -

- Establishing a skills system and ensuring that the training and advice provided were what employees were in need of now and in the future.
- Understanding local needs and the demands of businesses and services better.
- Undertaking work around bringing an up-to-date Careers Information, Advice & Guidance service in one place.

Members were also informed that provision mapping work had also been undertaken on the supply side.

The Panel was advised that through the work the Partnership was taking forward, it was trying to put building blocks in place for the long and medium term future. It was noted that the Partnership was about trying to link with partners on the schools and business side and ensure that key representatives from the public and private sector were in place. It was further reiterated that the role of the partnership was to focus on reach of work across all ages from children through to adults of a working age.

One Member emphasised the need to hold discussions with schools and was concerned by the lack of willingness from businesses to go into schools. It was felt that communication was essential in engaging others in what the partnership was trying to achieve. The CEO of the Doncaster Chamber welcomed the observation and stated that this characterised a broader issue and was part of a wider national debate. It was commented that historically, businesses were not very good at outlining what their needs were and that there were few resources to get basic information to young people. It was noted that at present there was no strategic approach to business and schools forming a joined up approach. It was stated that an important part of this work was about getting the basics right, building upon them to be able to access more resources in the future, becoming more consistent and developing a cohesive approach.

There was a brief discussion about the role of the Voluntary and Community Sector and whether any of those organisations appeared on the list that had been produced as a result of the provision mapping exercise that had been undertaken. It was confirmed that if the organisation delivered a service through a funded scheme they would be on the list. It was felt by one member of the Panel that this sector had a great deal to offer, particularly in providing low level basic skills training.

It was noted that the work of the partnership and the involvement of academies was still being progressed. Some Members expressed their belief that in order to successfully connect with schools and academies, governors should be used as key source to engage with them further.

The Panel was informed that a comprehensive 'Labour Market Information' survey was underway with 1,000 local businesses to effectively establish the state of our local economy and to establish what support business in order to grow. Members were informed that the results of this survey would be made available in October and would help in guiding areas being moved forward by the Partnership. The work would inform the procurement of a 'portal' for pupils, teachers, and people looking for apprenticeships or employment opportunities to access in the future to guide their future intentions.

There was further discussion on the relationships that the Local Authority had with local businesses, in particular, major projects taking place and Members were reassured that positive relationships have and were being developed with the relevant companies. A query was made about how small businesses were being involved and the Panel was informed that there

were 6,000 businesses that employ less than 10 people and therefore do not have the capacity to take the time to approach schools etc. It was emphasised that what was important was to ensure that the mechanism was right and to show young people what the current business picture looks like.

The Assistant Director for Development notified the group about new ways of working within the Council to maximise local job opportunities. The Panel was made aware of a process in place in the Planning Team for planners to flag up to the Investment Team where job opportunities could occur following contact with developers submitting planning applications. Members were further informed that this process ensures that once such job opportunities have been identified to the Investment Team, Officers would try to ensure that we have a local labour force match to meet the new supply. The Assistant Director offered to provide an update of this work to the Panel at a future meeting.

Assistant Director of  
Development

Overall the Panel expressed that it was pleased that action was being taken to address the work and skills issue in Doncaster and was interested in receiving relevant updates on the initiatives in place and the delivery of the actions outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that the Panel

- 1) Note the contents of this report;
- 2) Consider the effectiveness of what was proposed to improve Skill levels across the Borough; and
- 3) Question the presenters of the report at the meeting itself.
- 4) Establish a joint working group with members from the Schools, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel (subject to the agreement of Chair of that Panel). This group would include the following Members from the Regeneration & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel:
  - Councillor Richard Cooper-Holmes
  - Councillor Nuala Fennelly
  - Councillor Yvonne Woodcock
  - Councillor Monty Cuthbert
- 5) Receive the Labour Market Information Survey at a future meeting and invite members of the Schools, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny

Panel.

- 6) Receive an update on the process in place in the Planning Team for planners to flag up to the Investment Team where job opportunities could occur following contact with developers submitting planning applications.

18. VERBAL REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR CYNTHIA RANSOME - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, STREET SCENE, ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION & RESOURCE RECOVERY (WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING).

Councillor Cynthia Ransome updated the Panel on the key priorities and challenges within her portfolio which included the following 3 areas:

- A cleaner and better environment.
- A strong focus on undertaking timely, appropriate and joined-up enforcement action.
- Strengthening local communities.

Achievements 2011/12 – A Cleaner and Better Environment

The Cabinet Member stated that her priority last year was to get people involved in their community and to “Love Where You Live”. This was therefore behind the reason to champion the “Love Where You Live Campaign” which involved hundreds of residents, volunteers, businesses and other agencies and organisations. Events have ranged from litter picks to dog fouling campaigns and have been a huge success.

The Cabinet Member expressed delight to have represented Doncaster in the Spring when two national Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards were won; the Business Awards for a unique partnership approach with Doncaster Rovers to dealing with litter, and the Environmental Elected Member of the Year award. It was noted that Doncaster was also nominated for a Free Press Environmental Award.

Members were informed about activity undertaken to raise awareness of Love Where You Live and the Cabinet Member outlined her aim to get even more local people and businesses/organisations involved in the campaign. It was raised that further to a recent attendance to the DN Showcase event, many local businesses pledged their support. Also, Area Teams continue to support this initiative and a wide range of activities have taken place and were planned in neighbourhoods.

Some key successes include:

- A remodelled Street Scene service implementing a single management model and achieving required efficiencies in management posts.
- Issued 2,103 Environmental Protection Act Notices.
- Engaged many members of the community and partner agencies in Neighbourhood Alliance.
- Dealt with over 3,000 calls from the public about local issues.

2012/13 Priorities aim to continue to build on this and include:-

- Drive further improvements in the performance of the Street Scene service, taking account of planned efficiencies required through the Council's change programme but with the aim of improving the quality of local neighbourhoods and areas, and recognising the importance of well maintained places to communities and the economy (this would include streets, open spaces, parks and woodland areas).
- Work with partners and external organisations to improve key gateways to the borough; town centre and shopping areas; and key sites including bridges, rail and waterways.
- Waste PFI Project – as a member of the Joint BDR Waste Board monitor the progress of the PFI project through to construction which was due to start later this year subject to appropriate permits being in place, and beyond.
- Review the existing waste strategy and current waste contracts to look at ways of further improving performance, increasing customer satisfaction and increasing diversion from landfill and reducing costs.
- Work with Cllr Paul Coddington the Environment portfolio holder to ensure the Council develops and adopts a meaningful and appropriate Environmental Strategy.
- Continue to work in partnership so that people can continue to get involved and Love Where You Live.

2011/12 Achievements – Joined-Up Enforcement Action

This was stated as being a key priority for 2011/12 and would remain so throughout 2012/13. It was outlined that significant improvements in this area this year would be achieved by taking a strong enforcement approach to those that deliberately spoil our local environment.

It was explained to the Panel that by working together, the

teams have:

- Implemented an Integrated Enforcement Team, bringing together staff from a variety of teams including St Leger Homes and the police to operate in a multi-functional way, reducing duplication and delays and resulting in an increase in successful investigation into environmental crimes including noise, fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling and an increase in successful legal action (e.g. Fixed Penalty Notices & prosecutions).
- Issued 2,852 fixed penalty notices, over 2,600 of which were for litter. Non payment of fixed penalty notices had resulted in 189 successful prosecutions.
- Conducted 2614 investigations into fly-tipping which had resulted in the Magistrates handing out over £12,000 in fines.
- Improved the way that the authorities deal with poorly maintained properties (Section 215 notices). 142 complaints have been dealt and 27 notices been issued which have resulted in improvements being made. Also, 1,024 untidy gardens have been addressed.
- A major success was outlined in tackling anti social behaviour where calls reported to the police fell in 2011/12 by over 13.1% which equates to 3,240 fewer incidents. This year the trend was continuing and there had been a reduction reported in anti-social behaviour of 30% compared with this time last year. That equates to 2,445 fewer incidents reported in the first four months alone.

#### 2012/13 Priorities

These included: -

- The continuation of looking for new and innovative ways of improving the number of successful prosecutions for fly-tipping.
- The issuing of on-the-spot, fixed penalty fines for noise nuisance alongside our existing enforcement processes to maximise and make most use of the tools available to deal with perpetrators.
- Continue to issue fixed penalty notices for litter and Section 215 notices for poorly maintained properties.
- The continuation to drive down and tackle Anti Social Behaviour – taking robust and joined-up enforcement action when this occurs.
- Alcohol – tackling issues such as the evening and night time economy and street drinking as well as youth drinking. Working with public health, the police, health

and others we want to address alcohol issues particularly where this seriously impacts on people's health, nuisance behaviour and crime.

- Troubled families – focusing on the families with the most complex issues and taking a new approach. It was reported that many agencies were all working with the same family's generation after generation although no progress appears to be made. It was noted that there was a need to stop things from escalating, tackle anti-social behaviour and crime, get the children and young people back into schools and break the generational cycle that seems to affect a significant number of families in Doncaster.

### 2011/12 Achievements - Strengthening Communities

Members were notified that following the review of Neighbourhoods, the Area Teams were established in August last year and have focused on enabling and building stronger communities, prevention and early intervention and enforcement within communities.

Some key successes included:

- Dealing with nearly 500 ASB cases proactively.
- Engaging with over 53,000 local people in a wide range of community engagement initiatives and events.
- Supporting over 1,300 community and voluntary sector groups with 73 brand new groups formed.
- Recruiting 532 volunteers involved in a wide range of activities.
- Carrying out almost 8,000 patrols in the neighbourhoods
- Supporting over 1,000 diversionary activities.
- Through joint work with Active Doncaster the "Get Doncaster Walking Scheme" engaged over 500 residents have so far got involved and 32 more walks were planned over the summer.
- Focusing on many prevention initiatives and activities such as 'Scambusters' and other Trading Standards initiatives, helping vulnerable and isolated older people within the community to get out and about, helping young people to get involved in positive activities etc.

### 2012/13 Priorities

The Cabinet Member reported that her priorities for this year would be to continue to build on this work in neighbourhoods to:

- Enable communities to do things for themselves.



- Strengthen volunteering in communities.
- Improve people's pride in their neighbourhood; and
- For local communities to take responsibility.

It was stated that the current year was proving to be equally challenging with further budget savings and big changes to partnership working such as the police and crime commissioner.

One Member expressed their gladness at the interest that had been shown by other local authorities of the 'Love Where You Love' campaign to learn further about how the authority engages with people and carries out enforcement. It was confirmed that although Birmingham Council had not been charged, that the arrangement was about sharing benefits which would assist us and that it why care was being taken in selecting which authorities we would be working with. It was also noted that as the campaign had now run for 3 years that no further resources would be placed within it but that it was about encouraging further involvement from Members as well as Parish Councils who had shown that they were keen to be involved.

Finally in respect of litter, there was a brief discussion about the work done with schools and it was stated that although work with schools had gone on for a while and had been very helpful it was now more about enforcement which was proving a very useful deterrent.

RESOLVED that the Panel note the verbal presentation.

19. ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 1 2012/13.

Members received a report informing them of the latest St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) performance information. The report highlighted the main areas of performance that in quarter one 2012/13 were either off target or of concern.

It was noted that of the 13 Key Performance Indicators contained within the ADP, 2 were data only, 1 was an annual indicator, 2 were on target (green), 3 were within tolerance (amber) and 5 were out of target (red).

Concern was raised over the following areas:-

- Objective: % of rent lost through dwellings becoming vacant.

Members expressed their astonishment concerning the high number of 413 void properties reported at the end of June 2012 and that it was not any lower, in particular in light of the decency

work that had been carried out. The group was informed that the figure reported included long term void properties and those pending a decision on demolition. It was noted that without long term void properties the figure would be 228. It was acknowledged that to address this issue weekly meetings were taking place which focused on individual cases.

- Objective: Rent collection and arrears recovery

Members expressed concern that rent arrears would substantially get worse once universal credit was introduced in 2013. There were also concerns that the target was too low and the Chief Executive of St Leger Homes responded that low baselines have been established as the forthcoming years to come would present a different picture.

RESOLVED that the Panel: -

- 1) note the Quarter 1 performance information; and
- 2) note the actions to deal with performance issues.

20. FINANCE & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT - QUARTER 1 2012/13

The Panel was presented with a report which provided them with the financial and performance information for the first quarter of this financial year 2012/13. The report highlighted the main areas of performance that in quarter one 2012/13 were either off target or of concern.

Members were advised of some errors within the report that the Panel had received and were therefore asked to note the following changes: -

Page 39 - Paragraph 17. That 'fifteen' of the priorities were on track (not 'fourteen')

Page 44 – Chart 'Objective Status'. Should be green and refer to '15' not '14' priorities were on track.

Page 46 – Directors Comment – That '3' not '4' performance indicators were red.

Page 46 – That Item 2. Overall Investment target was not 'red' and therefore the comment should have been removed.

Members were also advised that following Members comments, future Appendices detailing performance progress would be supplied in colour.

Policy &  
Performance  
Manager

The Panel was informed of the action being taken to address the 3 performance indicators that are Red. It was noted that the

target for enforcement action being taken for fly tipping was high compared to the national picture. The Panel was informed that work was being undertaken with the Head of Service Environmental Protection and the relevant Corporate Policy and Performance Manager to revise this target and ensure that it was set more realistically.

RESOLVED that the Panel: -

- 1) note the Quarter 1 Finance and Performance Information.

21. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PLAN REPORT 2012/13

Members received a report that updated them on progress with the work plan for 2012/13 and any updates from the last meeting on 29th June 2012. As a live document the work plan allows the Panel to review it in order to develop and reprioritise items where necessary.

Responding to a Members question about the overall cost of £1.44 million that was awarded for the additional 34 pitches, the Director of Regeneration and Environment responded that further to the recommendations made by the Panel following the presentation of the Gypsy and Traveller Review at its meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2012, a review of these costs were taking place. The Panel was reminded that the cost of £90,000 per pitch also included costs of installation etc and also this figure could be reduced as a result of the tendering process.

The Scrutiny Officer informed the group that a meeting had taken place between the Chair and Vice Chair of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny and Officers to discuss potential housing topics to be considered by the Panel. Various topics had been discussed and a decision was made by the Chair that the Panel should take forward as part of the workplan the following review looking at:-

'How can we improve access to finance for developers to meet our housing target and to assist buyers to purchase their own homes within Doncaster?'

It was noted that further scoping work would be undertaken in the near future and that the work would be carried out by a small working group made up of five members of the Panel agreed at the meeting.

The group was informed that work had progressed with the draft Environmental Strategy and a meeting of the working group

took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012. At this meeting, Members met with Officers and reviewed the Themes and Priorities of the draft Environmental Strategy and made a number of recommendations and observations. The Panel noted the observations and ratified the recommendations made.

Members were made aware that the meeting to take place on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012 had been changed to the 19<sup>th</sup> November at 10.00 am. This would enable the Environmental Strategy to be considered prior to it going to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that: -

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1) the progress made against the work programme; be received   | All to note      |
| 2) the Annex to Appendix A which details outcomes and impacts of the Panel's work; be received   |                  |
| 3) the activities undertaken since the meeting held on 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2012; be received   |                  |
| 4) the correspondence between the Executive and the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Gypsy and Traveller Review; be noted   |                  |
| 5) the update on the progress made with the Environmental Strategy and Working Group be noted and recommendations agreed;  |                  |
| 6) a working group to consider the following piece of work "How can we improve access to finance for developers to meet our housing target and to assist buyers to purchase their own homes within Doncaster?" be agreed and the following Members of the Panel be appointed: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Councillor Bob Ford</li><li>• Councillor Yvonne Woodcock</li><li>• Councillor Paul Wray</li><li>• Councillor Richard Cooper-Holmes</li><li>• Councillor David Nevitt</li></ul> | Scrutiny Officer |
| 7) the November meeting date had changed to the 19 <sup>th</sup> November, 2012 at 10am so that the Panel would be able to receive the final draft of the Environment Strategy; be noted.  |                  |

