

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

13TH JUNE 2013

A MEETING of the REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 13TH JUNE 2013 at 10 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Tony Revill

Councillors John Sheppard, David Nevett, Yvonne Woodcock, Ted Kitchen, Bob Ford, Ken Keegan, Chris McGuinness, Eric Tatton-Kelly and Jane Kidd

Invitee: Paul Smillie (Unite)/Paul O'Brien (GMB).

Also in Attendance:

Peter Dale (Director of Regeneration and Environment), Scott Cardwell (Assistant Director of Development), Gill Gillies (Assistant Director of Environment) and Judith Jones (Director of Housing Services and Deputy CEO - St Leger Homes)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Paul Wray, Richard Cooper-Holmes and Deborah Hutchinson

ACTION

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

51. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18TH MARCH, 2013

RESOLVED that: -

The minutes of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meeting held on 18th March, 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the correct spelling of Councillor John Sheppard's surname.

52. VERBAL REPORT FROM

Councillor Bob Johnson, portfolio holder for Regeneration and Growth, Tourism and Veteran's Champion, Culture / Leisure

attended the Panel meeting to respond to questions regarding the key priorities and challenges within his area.

The Cabinet Member outlined his portfolio priorities which included: -

- Refresh Economic Strategy quickly in line but ahead of Sheffield City Region.
- Delivery of 750 apprenticeships over the next 3yrs
- Higher level skills and developing out long term game changers like the Airport
- Update Master planning work for Town Centre and rest of the borough
- Continue to improve and develop infrastructure
- Lobbying for an Enterprise Zone through positive productive relationship with SCR
- Continue to build on our growing tourism industry including more events and activities in the Town Centre
- Ensure effective and productive partnership arrangements (Chamber College, Private sector etc.)

Concern was raised by a Member of the Panel that Doncaster Free Press was publicising York more than Doncaster. In particular, it was felt that more publicity should be carried out for Doncaster Events such as the Dragon Boat Race challenge which is taking place in July. The Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of using ourselves as champions for marketing out events etc.

The Chair referred to the selling of tickets for the recent Aurora charity event at the Dome. The Panel was informed that although arrangements had been made whereby the tickets could be marketed and sold through the Blue Building Tourism Office, it became apparent that a charge would be made. It was reported that as a result, the event organiser chose not to pursue this avenue due to the significant charge to be made in comparison to the ticket price which was raising money for charity. The Cabinet Member agreed that charges should not be made to tickets being sold through the Tourism office for charity events and that this was no longer occurring.

Regarding apprenticeships, members of the Panel welcomed the new scheme in place. One member enquired how many the

Council will be taking on which the Cabinet Member responded that he was unaware of at this time. A brief discussion took place about the strict criteria in place, which the panel was informed was a national criterion which would have to be adhered to. Members were informed that lobbying was taking place around some of the criteria as it was channelling apprenticeships to NVQ Level 2 and a lower valued economy.

Concern was raised about the retention of apprenticeships once their scheme had ended. The Cabinet Member was of the opinion that having an apprenticeship was important as it meant that a trade would be learnt and that as a business it was not possible to predict workforce requirements for the next 2 to 3 years.

Next, Councillor Joe Blackham, portfolio holder for Neighbourhoods, Enforcement and Trading Services attended the Panel meeting to respond to questions regarding the key priorities and challenges within his area.

As part of the discussion, the following issues were raised: -

- Delivering efficiencies for the year.
- One Enforcement Team – that there will be a single team for enforcement (operating under Karen Hanson) that will cut across all directorates
- Having a fully costed 3 year plan and financial plan that sits beside it.
- Developing a better interface between Planning and the customer.
- The introduction of a 'living wage' by April 2014 which was welcomed by the Panel.
- That Dog Fouling/Litter and Fly tipping will fall within the remit of the single enforcement team. It was commented that this may result in changes to working times.

There was a discussion around Council Owned property and fly tipping taking place.

The different requirements and specialisms of those operating within a multi-functioning enforcement team were briefly discussed and the Cabinet Member agreed that it was something that needs to be undertaken in the correct way.

It was also queried why enforcement is undertaken for bins but not cars parked on pavements. Regarding parking, one Member referred to a new scheme where members of a local Neighbourhood Watch are involved in issuing parking fines. It was commented that any schemes should be viable and safe and that the Council is looking at in-house solutions.

RESOLVED that the Panel:

- i. Note the update of the priorities as presented by Councillor Bob Johnson and Joe Blackham.

53. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (QTR. 4) 2012/2013
– ST LEGER

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 four 2012/13 were either off target or of concern.

It was noted that of the 13 Key Performance Indicators at the end of Quarter four, all 5 of the strategic priorities contained within the St Leger Homes Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) have met target (green). Of the 12 Key Performance Indicators contained within the ADP, 2 are data only, 3 have met target (green), 4 are within tolerance (amber) and 3 are out of target (red).

The 3 out of target indicators performance included the following:

- Theme 1: Driving and Delivering Value for Money/Performance Measure: Percentage of Current Rent Arrears against Annual Debit
- Theme 2: Welfare Benefit Reform/Performance Measure: Number of Evictions due to Rent
- Theme 6: Additional KPI's/Performance Measure: Proportion of Planned Repairs against Responsive

One Member of the Panel questioned why the agency staff were employed and was informed that the intention was to keep the number of agency staff to a minimum and advance permanent members of staff into those posts where possible.

Concerns were raised about those who were in arrears and the Panel was informed that St Leger were moving services more to help them identify what lies behind the rent arrears and try and work with those in this situation. It was commented that there will be times when those who will not work with St Leger to address such problems would still be taken through the enforcement route. It was also noted that only a small number of evictions had been made at a level of 0.17%.

Regarding IT issues, it was acknowledged that they had existed with both DMBC and St Leger but were now being addressed.

In view of the increase in complaints, Members were informed that these were down to the IT problems that had been experienced not down to planned repairs.

There was a discussion around the impact of the Welfare Reform and Members were informed that monitoring was being undertaken of the difference between those on bedroom tax and those who were not. Some Members were concerned that there was not enough advice and support available as the CAB were being inundated with calls and that there was no welfare benefit service in place. Members were informed that courses were available to help people manage their budgets (including 'Eating On A Budget' and 'Healthy Eating') and that there was a Welfare Reform Support fund for those who wanted to move into a smaller property.

RESOLVED that the Panel:

- i. Note the Quarter three performance actions; and
- ii. Note actions to deal with performance issues.

54. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PLAN REPORT 2013/14

The Panel received a report which provided an update on its last meeting held on 18th March 2013 and sought approval of the workplan for 2013/14 which took account of issues considered at the informal work planning meeting held on 4th June 2013.

Members were reminded that the three key areas that the Panel agreed to focus on were as follows; -

- Regeneration (Next Wave of Projects) late (Masterplanning July/Early Aug 2013 then Sept 2013) – Informal session to be held with Members earlier on may lead to identifying a more specific area that Members would like to undertake more work on in September.
- Environment Theme – Provision of Future Service and Integration (Dec 2013)
 - Waste & Recycling

Also may encompass a range of areas of other areas including (further discussion to be held about how these are considered):

-
- Parking Charges/Changes
 - Street Lighting/Lighting Proposals And Adjustments to

Streetscene Operations

- Enforcement Issues – next steps/position statement
- Bus Service Review (Jan 2014 or later) - What are the options to improve quality and cost of bus services?
Looking at broader bus issues.

It was agreed that Members from the Panel would form a Policy Development/Strategy Working Group that would meet informally throughout the municipal year to consider a raft of policies and strategies. Following the informal meetings the outcome would be taken to the Panel members to ensure that all Members are kept in the loop. It was also recognised that the group membership should have some flexibility to allow other members to join it if they were interested in a particular policy/strategy.

In relation to Local Flood Management Strategy, comments were made about pumping stations, that 3 out of 4 did not work and that there were none in the East of Doncaster. The Panel was advised that when they consider this strategy it might be worthwhile inviting the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED that;

- 1) the Panel ensure the work plan takes account of best principles of Scrutiny work-planning guidance shown in Appendix A of the report;
- 2) the Panel note the feedback from the work-planning meeting which was held on the 4th June 2013 and outlined in Appendix B of the report;
- 3) the Panel approve its work plan for 2013/14 which takes account of issues considered at the informal work planning meeting held on the 4th June 2013 as featured in Appendix B of the report;
- 4) the Panel note that the work plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated at each meeting of the Panel to include any relevant correspondence, updates, new issues and resources available to meet additional requests;
- 5) the Panel agree to monitor progress against the work-plan at each formal meeting and to agree how often recommendations put forward to the Executive should be monitored;
- 6) the Chair and Vice Chair will identify any occasions as and when it would specifically wish the Executive to

attend its meetings and when it would wish to present its recommendations to the Cabinet;

- 7) the Panel note the correspondence received following its meeting held on 13th March 2012 in Appendices C to G ;
- 8) the Panel note the Action Points from Enterprising Doncaster Board Meeting 1st February 2013 Appendix;
- 9) the Panel receive the notes from the Doncaster Racecourse informal meeting with the Panel that took place on the 25th April 2013 in Appendix I;
- 10) the Panel agree the Terms of Reference of a working group for the current municipal year to make recommendations to the Executive regarding any strategy or policy development work in Appendix J the Panel notes the appointment of the Environmental Strategy Working Group as follows:
 - Councillor Paul Wray (to Chair)
 - Councillor Richard Cooper-Holmes
 - Councillor Bob Ford
 - Councillor Chris McGuinness
 - Councillor Eric Tatton-Kelly
 - Invitees Paul Smillie (Unite)/Paul O'Brien (GMB).

It was also noted that Councillor David Nevett and Councillor John Sheppard would be involved;

- 11) the Panel notes the appointment of the Chair, Councillor Tony Revill onto both the LDF Project Board and Enterprising Doncaster Board and that verbal updates will be provided to the Panel as appropriate.