

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 2016

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 2016 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor John Mounsey

Councillors Rachael Blake, Jane Kidd and Jane Cox

Co-optees –

Invitee: -

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Cooke, Richard A Jones, Neil Gethin and Paul Wray and

		<u>ACTION</u>
23	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	No declarations were made at the meeting.	
24	<u>MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 7TH JULY AND 1 SEPTEMBER, 2016</u>	
	<u>RESOLVED</u> that the minutes of the meetings held on 7th July and 1st September, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
25	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	
	There were no public statements made at the meeting.	
26	<u>FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT: 2016/ 17 QUARTER 1</u>	

The Chair welcomed Officers to the meeting and invited Officers to address the Committee with regard to any new information, and address any queries in terms of budget and performance.

The report outlined that at quarter 1, the Council was forecasting a year-end overspend of £2.8m which included the Children's Trust £1.8m overspend and Regeneration and Environment overspend of £2.6m. It was noted that these overspends would be offset by £3.1m one-off underspends including Treasury Management £2.3m. The projection included the expected delivery of £36.3m savings towards the £40.2m target, leaving a shortfall of circa £3.9m mainly on Assets programme which was included in the Regeneration and Environment outturn figure and Digital Council savings allocated to Directorates.

Members were also advised that the overall performance of our the service measures were good with 89% exceeding or close to local targets which was similar to the previous quarterly figure. It was noted that Doncaster had it highest employment rate in 11 years, the time taken to process new Council Tax claims had achieved its target and 65% of the Council spend was with local providers. It was also noted that further improvements were required within Direct Payments, Care Leavers in Education, training or employment, sickness and channel shift to online services.

Finance and Corporate Services

Simon Wiles, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, was in attendance at the meeting and endeavoured to alleviate any concerns and respond to any queries on the matters raised by the Committee. Some of the areas highlighted included:-

- Days lost to sickness
- Digital Council
- Pensions
- Overspend within the Children's Trust

The Chair Councillor John Mounsey and Members raised their concern with regard to sickness within some Directorates and asked what interventions were being put in place to tackle this worrying issue. Simon Wiles indicated that didn't have a detailed understanding of the reasons why sickness had increased in two departments and it was perhaps a question Directors could provide a response to. Simon explained that it may be down to the nature of work carried out within those directorates. It was also thought that because of terms and conditions changes this may also have an effect on sickness absence. Clarification was sought as to whether meetings took place with Unions since the Employee Relations Committee had been disbanded. Simon responded to the query stating that the Doncaster Consultative Group meet on a regular basis of which there were representatives from the

Unions and Jill Parker, Assistant Director HR, Communications meets weekly with all Unions.

Kim Curry, Director of Adults, Health & Well-being stated that the service had carried out a significant amount of work on sickness and the main reasons for sickness within the directorate were stress & anxiety. She also advised that this was also the national profile from this area of work. She stated that access was provided to the Health and Well-being service and staff were given the options of phased returns to work. Kim went on to explain that whilst working practices were and would be in the process of change, members should start to see an improvement within Quarter 2.

In respect of the Digital Council, Councillor John Mounsey asked how the overspend would be addressed. Simon Wiles reported to Members that half of the Council's services can be accessed through digital means and it was envisaged that by the end of the year 85% of services would be accessible digitally. He did stress that there were fewer customers than what he would of liked to be using services such as e-billing and it was clear that further work was required to encourage customers to use digital services. Whilst customers were offered the opportunity and encouragement to access services digitally, the Council would still operate the other forms of contact. Questions were raised as to whether the system of reporting faults etc was working. Simon reported that the system does work, it was how the system was used by staff that required improvement. He stated that a process of enabling progress on jobs to be fed back to customers/complainants was being further developed.

With regard to pensions highlighted at page 22 of the report, Councillor John Mounsey asked what was being done to address this matter. Simon Wiles reported that whilst the costs of future service pensions and pensions deficit payments would increase in the current pensions revaluation, the Council were confident of keeping the total increase within the sum set aside in the provisional 2017/18 budget. It was noted that it would be false economy not to pay the deficit and he envisaged that payments would not be increased.

Members expressed concern and sought an update in relation to the current overspend within the Children's Trust and asked whether meetings between the Council and the Trust were robust and challenging and whether the Council would be required to fund the Trust further. Simon Wiles reported that because the Trust were independent, the Council were only liable for what was built into the agreement. He stated that the agreement was due to end in March 2018 and the Trust would be required to re-negotiate the underwriting of that agreement by next summer. He advised members that the meetings held between the Trust and the Council were fairly testing and there was good debate albeit difficult to pin down what the action plan was to alleviate the budget pressures. Simon also stated that whilst the quality of care had improved, it was noted that there was

concern regarding value for money.

The Chair thanked Simon for his attendance and for his valued input to the meeting.

Adults, Health and Well-being

The Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Kim Curry and Victor Joseph, Public Health Consultant were in attendance at the meeting and provided updates to the Committee with regard to any performance and budget issues.

The following areas were considered and discussed:-

Proportion of people using social care who receive direct payments – Members raised a number of queries with regard to performance around direct payments being low. Members were assured that this was being addressed and further training for staff was being provided to assist them with the promotion of the direct payment scheme to customers. It was also noted that this was also included within immediate business improvement projects being taken forward in the Transformational Programme.

Permanent admissions to residential and nursing care homes – Members were advised that the target for this performance indicator would be met and the Council would be closer than it ever had been to the national average. It was further advised that targets within this service had been met for each month since January 2016.

Further discussion took place on 3rd Sector infrastructure and members felt that that community groups established required the support of the Council in order for the service to be fit for purpose. It was advised that there had been debate on infrastructure support and a tender for a phase sector strategy had been started but recently stopped as further consultation was required. It was advised that a further report would be considered later in the year.

Further clarity was sought into how the service would look within 6 month time. Members were advised that as a carer there would be improved access for carer assessments and through discussion with Social Workers, people would live independently at home for longer and those natural forms of support would be provided through the community. The Council would be working more closely with the NHS and those early stage referrals would be identified quicker through assessments being carried out within local hubs in the community.

With regard to residential care, discussion took place around the suitability of some homes within the borough. It was advised that if

there were any concerns raised regarding a home, these would be identified and dealt with at the regular meetings and monitored through a sub-group. It was noted that the power to close a home lied with the Care Quality Commission. It was also advised that there was an over capacity for residential care nationally.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and for their valued input to the meeting.

Learning, Opportunities and Skills

The Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills, Damian Allen was in attendance at the meeting to provide updates to the Committee with regard to any performance and budget issues and how DMBC were working alongside the Doncaster Children's Trust.

Red Measure – Percentage of children's case file audits related requires improvement or better – Members were advised that following the Trust's inspection the quality of practice and assessments were deemed variable for monitoring of case files. It was noted that Ofsted had commented that the process of mediation was good and although a breakthrough of a 10% reduction had been recorded there was still improvements to be made. Members were also advised that in August there had been no inadequate monitoring recorded.

In relation to the meetings that take place between the Trust and the Council, it was asked whether those meetings were robust and challenging enough from the Directors point of view. Members were advised that due to availability of officers and inspection no formal meeting had taken place to look at the Quarter 1 figures albeit regular monthly budget/performance meetings had taken place. It was stated that an Annual Review would be carried out at the beginning of November and a report would be submitted to the Secretary of State by the end of the year. Members were advised that in addition to formal monitoring, the Trust were held to account through the Corporate Parenting Board and Overview and Scrutiny.

Concern was raised with regard to the £1.8m overspend within the Trust. Damian Allen shared those concerns and echoed Simon comments that although the quality of care had improved, the business management of the Trust required much improvement and the Council require an assurance that a strategy and action plan to deal with the financial pressures was being produced.

Percentage of Care Leavers in Employment, Training and Education – It was considered by Members that the target was too low to start with. Damian was in agreement with Members but some Care Leavers were not always ready for the employment market. He stated that the Team were working closely with Regeneration and

Environment on pre-apprenticeships and looking at alternative routes on traineeships.

The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and for their valued input to the meeting.

Regeneration and Environment

The Director of Regeneration and Environment, Peter Dale and the Assistant Director for Trading Services and Assets, Dave Wilkinson were in attendance at the meeting to provide any updates where needed on the areas Members felt were cause for concern.

Red Measure, number of Apprenticeships completing a level 3 or above qualification as part of the Council's internal apprenticeship programme – It was reported that the figures could be better but through the new programme aspirations were being achieved and it was envisaged that this would continue.

A query was made in relation to fly-tipping and what the reason was for the dramatic difference in the figures. Peter Dale stated that there had been an increase in numbers in June-August and this could also have been a result of resources being pulled away to focus on the alley ways within the borough, but through the establishment of the new street scene programme the figures were now back up to the target of 80%.

The Chair, Councillor John Mounsey asked when the infrastructure for a railway would be developed for the IPORT at Rossington. Peter Dale stated that he had asked the company the same question and the response was that it was expected to be within the next 12 months but he would continue to push them on this.

The Committee asked what the current position with regard to the Trading and Assets Revenue Variance. It was reported that action was being taken to improve the report position including general limits on expenditure and the Directorate were working alongside Learning, Opportunities and Skills on Passenger Transport. In relation to school transport although there was little control over this area, collaborative working with Learning, Opportunities and Skills was taking place to reduce the deficit which had already seen a reduction.

Concern was raised with regard to the rise in days lost to sickness and Members asked for an explanation for this. Members were advised that the 2 biggest factors for sickness within the Directorate were stress and muscular/skeletal. It was reported that Action plans were put in place, monthly meetings take place with the Assistant Director, the correct level of challenge has been established through referrals and return to work interviews and Officers were maintaining contact with those members of staff on long term sick. Members were advised that the figures were starting to

	<p>reduce and it was hoped that through the introduction of a stress/happiness survey that was being piloted by the Directorate the percentage would reduce further. It was also envisaged that depending on the outcome of the pilot the scheme would be rolled out across the whole of the Council. It was also noted that for those staff who suffer from muscular/skeletal problems, the directorate do give them the opportunity for carrying out lighter duties which would be highlighted within their action plan.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Officers for their attendance and for their valued input to the meeting.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that:-</p> <p>(1) areas of performance and financial information be noted;</p> <p>(2) the virements approved by the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder detailed in paragraph 28 and Appendix B be noted;</p> <p>(3) the new charges as detailed in paragraph 29 and the change to the charge approved in the 2016/17 budget detailed in paragraph 34 be noted; and</p> <p>(4) the new additions to the Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix D be noted.</p>	
27	<p><u>SLHD PERFORMANCE & DELIVERY UPDATE: 2016/17 QUARTER ONE.</u></p>	
	<p>The Chief Executive of St Leger Homes of Doncaster, Susan Jordan, was in attendance at the meeting, along with Stephen Thorlby-Coy, Head of Business Excellence in order to update the Committee with regard to any performance issues for Quarter 1.</p> <p>Key elements to note from the report were as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight of the ten key performance indicators were on target, two were within acceptable tolerance levels and there were no performance indicators below target. • Performance measure: void rent loss through vacant properties were performing well against its target. • Performance measure: percentage of current rent arrears against Annual Debit was performing well against target. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance measure: scheduled repairs % of premises kept was near its target. • Performance measure: Days lost to sickness per Full Time Equivalent was near target. <p>Following the presentation of the report, Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions and make comments on the performance report.</p> <p>Members expressed some concern with regard to the days lost to sickness and asked what measures had been put in place to improve the outcome. Susan Jordan, Chief Executive St. Leger Homes, reported that the target that had been set was challenging and it was envisaged that the outturn would stand at 8.4 days. She indicated that the main reasons for sickness within the service were Stress related and Muscular & Skeletal. She reported that since the writing of the report, the figures had already reduced so the service was going in the right direction. Susan advised Members that monthly meetings take place with Managers to address sickness and all members of staff within the service were members of Westfield, so there was access to Doctors opinions, Physiotherapists and Occupational Health. With regard to Stress, she stated that Stress Risk Assessment were carried out and training was provided. A stress assessment would be carried out with the member of staff and their Line Manager and a clear action plan would be put in place. Members were also advised that for those staff who suffer from muscular and skeletal problems, light duties would be offered to staff and in some cases working from home would be a solution.</p> <p>Discussion took place in regard to Void Rent Loss and Susan reported to Members that the service were working very hard on voids which had been reduced. Weekly meetings take place with the team to go through each void in turn and it was noted that there was a whole range of reasons why a property had become void but it was pleasing to see movement in the right direction.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Chair and Members thanked Susan and St Leger Homes staff for all the hard work carried out and were pleased with the outcomes within the report.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>RESOLVED</u> the progress of the SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting DMBC strategic priorities was noted.</p>	
28	<u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2016/17- UPDATE</u>	
	The Senior Governance Officer presented the current Overview and Scrutiny work plan highlighting areas of work undertaken by the Scrutiny Panels since the last meeting.	

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the 2016/17 Overview and Scrutiny work plan, be noted; and
- (2) deferred the verbal update from the Scrutiny Panel Chairs or Vice-Chairs on the work of the Panels to a future meeting.