

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2018

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2018 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Kevin Rodgers

Councillors John Healy, Neil Gethin, Richard A Jones, Jane Kidd,
Andrea Robinson and Paul Wray

Invitee: - Paul O'Brien

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Other Councillors;

- Sue Wilkinson
- Tosh McDonald
- Nikki McDonald

DMBC;

- Debbie Hogg – Director of Corporate Resources
- Damian Allen – Director of People
- Howard Monk - Head of Service - Strategy and Performance
- Rupert Suckling - Director of Public Health
- Steve Mawson - Chief Financial Officer & Assistant Director of Finance
- Gill Gillies - Assistant Director of Environment
- Tracey Harwood - Head of Service Regulation and Enforcement

St. Leger Housing Doncaster;

- Steve Waddington - Director of Housing Services

| | | <u>ACTION</u> |
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| 1 | <u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.</u> | |
| | There were no apologies for absence made. | |
| 2 | <u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u> | |

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| | None | |
| 3 | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u> | |
| | Councillor Jane Kidd declared a nonpecuniary interest in Agenda Item No.6, by virtue of being employed by an association that provided services for those with disabilities getting into work. | |
| 4 | <u>MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH JUNE, 2018.</u> | |
| | The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 28 th June 2018 were agreed as true record. | |
| 5 | <u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u> | |
| | There were no public statements made. | |
| 6 | <u>2018-19 QUARTER 1 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT AND 'DELIVERING FOR DONCASTER' BOOKLET.</u> | |
| | <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was presented with the Finance and Performance Report for Quarter 1 2018/19, which provided an overview of progress made since the last report.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director of Finance were in attendance at the meeting, and responded to key issues of concern raised within the report.</p> <p>HIGHLIGHTS</p> <p>It was explained that performance and the overall position in Quarter 1 had shown a good start with the majority of performance indicators being on track. Highlights included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 243 new homes built this quarter; • Local authority spend with local businesses stable and on target at 73% at the end of the quarter. <p>It was outlined that areas for further improvement included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall staff sickness - which for year-end stood at an average of 9.19 days per employee, a slight increase from Q4 position. It was noted that an improvement had been made last year which had previously reduced this figure. | |

Reference was made to progress made in Quarter 1 around all aspects of Doncaster Growing Together, our partnership transformation. Highlights of that included the launch of the Post 16 Review of Education, the announcement that a Doncaster University Technical College (UTC) would be located in Doncaster and the opening of the second phase of Great Yorkshire Way

CONNECTED COUNCIL

Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST) Finance - Looking at the Councils financial position, it was commented that the picture across Council services was satisfactory. It was recognised that the Doncaster Children's Services Trust contract proved to be the biggest financial pressure for the Council and it was noted that the Council was meeting with the Trust on a regular basis to monitor progress, considering what actions could be taken and what further savings could be delivered in 2018/19.

It was explained that other Local Authorities were fairing worse than Doncaster due to increasing costs occurring across the sector. Members were assured that steps were being taken to produce an action plan, with a range of measures in place to achieve better outcomes. It was added that going forward there was now an arrangement in place that would benefit from the Council having a greater influence and closer control.

Members were reminded that the Trust had attended an OSMC meeting during February 2018 and recommended that the Trust be invited back to the Committee to provide an update subject to their financial performance. Members emphasised the need to get underneath the structure and nature of the Trust's finances to find out more about the challenges and expectations around the financial management needed to operate within their budget. It was recognised that there was a need to work with the Trust to ensure that the statutory function was delivered. It was acknowledged that Council reserves could be used although concern was raised around the longevity of that as a long term solution.

The Committee's union invitee raised concern about potential savings to be delivered through restructuring and questioned whether the Terms of Conditions would be affected. Concerns were raised as to whether such savings would affect just frontline services and could result in further spending on agency staff if redundancies were made.

Reference was also made to concerns raised over DCST performance indicators that included one that was red (where 70.2% of children were being seen within appropriate timescales against a target of 80%) and a target around Special Educational Needs (SPEN) which was Amber.

Homelessness and Out of Authority (OAA) Placements - Concern was raised that towns such as Peterborough had been transferring individuals into Doncaster and had resulted by placing indirect pressures on services and resources (such as on officer time as well as financially for the Council and its partners). It was commented that the Police had needed to deal with matters that had arisen from individuals placed in unsupported accommodation places. Members were informed that a meeting had been held with Peterborough, and following a number of interventions, there would be no more placements made within South Yorkshire. In terms of whether other Local Authorities were undertaking similar practices, it was clarified that this was not known.

A Member referred to 253 young people placed into Doncaster from Out of Authority Area Placements (OAAs) and Members recognised the challenge of reducing costs from these. In terms of process, it was clarified that it was the responsibility of the placing authority to locate individuals in a suitable place.

Agency and Consultants – It was explained that benchmarking and an analysis of spend was taking place with others directorates. It was recognised that more was being spent on agency staff (particularly within Adults Social Care). In terms of consultants, it was explained that ‘consultants’ covered a number of areas wider than consultants and included ‘legal’ and ‘shared service’ costs. Members were informed how the responsibility of recruitment had been delegated to Senior Managers. It was explained that a neutral vendor arrangement was now in place to reduce the arranging costs from around 30% to 12%.

Within Adults Social Care, it was explained that the bulk of spend on agency staff was to address short term recruitment challenges. In terms of Consultants, it was explained that these were mainly recruited on an interim basis undertaking specific strategic undertakings. It was felt by Members that there was an opportunity to maximise chances for staff development in-house.

Concern was raised whether certain posts were being paid more than the actual evaluated post and that contracts were lasting longer than planned. It was felt that there should be further due diligence and checks in place.

Assets – Regarding the disposal of assets, it was explained that regular meetings had taken place around this issue. It was stated that the actual amount would be less than that stated in the report.

PDRs – Concerns were raised during the meeting about the robustness of the PDR process and how the undertaking and monitoring of that process was not necessarily consistent across the authority

DONCASTER LIVING

Members were informed that the Vibrant Town Centres Programme was working to improve the co-ordination of activity and services taking place, initially in the town centre. Members were informed that during Quarter 4, the programme had planned and supported major events in the town centre namely Delicious Doncaster and Tour de Yorkshire. It was explained that the Integrated Town Centre Team had continued to work in partnership with teams from across the Council and businesses to focus on clean-ups within that area.

In respect of environment aspects, it was reported that there had been a positive performance of environment standards such as flytipping and 100% of licensing aspects processed.

Members were informed that the Directorates sickness performance indicators were above target.

Number of people who had been killed or seriously injured - it was explained that the reason the figures looked higher was that the definition of being “seriously injured” had broadened. Members were advised that overall the figure had significantly reduced; it was therefore due to this and the broadening of the definition that this indicator would be reviewed.

Grass-cutting – Members were informed that grass-cutting services saw a significant drop in performance from 98% to 85% due to unusual weather conditions this Summer and this has affected the number of grass cuts. It was reported that there was an intention to review this indicator to reflect the reduced number of cuts required and to react to a potentially longer grass cutting season.

Other highlights included the following. That;

- 100% of all Licensing Act applications were processed within statutory timescales; and
- 88% of all major planning applications were processed within required or agreed timeframes, significantly exceeding the target of 70%; and
- Highways were doing well in certain areas
- Doncaster’s employment rate has increased, however wage rates had not improved significantly.

Sheffield City Region - There was a brief discussion around this risk as part of the Council’s Strategic Risk Profile. Members were assured that plans would be reviewed in view of implications around devolution.

Affordable New Houses – Concern was raised about how many affordable new houses were being built within the number of new

houses being developed. A Member requested that information be provided around the number of affordable housing being built within the number of new homes being developed. Clarification was also sought on whether the numbers of disability friendly properties were being monitored when building new properties.

Streetcleaning – Concerns were raised around problems following the restructuring within Streetscene, brought about after the recent procurement of the Suez contract around route mapping. Members were assured that services were now communicating together to address those problems and adjust the routes.

DONCASTER LEARNING

Education Results - Members were informed that during Quarter 1, Key Stage 2 figures had improved across the board with the most significant being in reading and writing, rising 7% on the previous year of 2017/18 with the current figure at 60% and 4% below national average, although at a better rate than neighbouring authorities.

Reference was made to the Local Authority Improvement Strategy and investment out of the Dedicated Schools Grant compared to 2/3 years ago. It was added that grading had changed over the last year and there were therefore challenges in making direct comparisons. It was commented that the majority of schools had made significant improvements, however, there was still an expectation that they could perform better. Members heard that there had been significant challenges in terms of Maths and English although improvements had been made with Maths.

Members were reminded that these results had come in before Doncaster had been chosen as a Social Mobility Opportunity Area (SMOA) and therefore further impact should be seen.

In respect of 'A' level results, Members were informed that an early indication of provisional A-level results showed that Doncaster had improved on last year and was narrowing the gap nationally.

Persistent Absence – A Member raised concern about persistent absence connected to safeguarding issues. Members were assured that work was being undertaken to and that a report had been previously considered at a Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny meeting, when the Panel had the opportunity to comment on the strategy on Key Stage 2.

DONCASTER CARING

Employment – A Member sought clarification as to whether there was any co-ordination in place for the many support groups available to those with disabilities to help them back into employment. It was also

asked whether there were any gaps. Members were informed that a group was in place chaired by the Head of Stronger Families; in addition, steps were being taken to map and co-ordinate what was already available. It was commented that there was a gap in terms of co-ordination of health.

Direct Payments – It was shared that there were no mechanisms currently in place to measure how many people were receiving direct payments that paid for their own staff. It was explained that it would be very difficult to retrieve that detail of information.

It was commented that in terms of adult social care moving forward, it was important that such initiatives were pursued to reduce the number of people depending on both care and a relative amount of support.

It was recognised that partnership working such as that with Sports England, were taking steps for example, designing communities so that people would be directed towards becoming more active. It was further explained how the right conditions needed to be developed such as through the Local Plan. It was outlined that partners were looking for opportunities where support could be provided through additional funding for Doncaster. It was stated that £250,000 had been received so far and that officers were working with Sports England on the next phase. It was recognised that there were still challenges ahead to be addressed alongside health partners.

Training and Development – Concern was raised that not enough investment was being made in developing staff within adult social care and that staff needed to wait longer for training they had missed. It was recognised that more could be done including commencing the training process at an earlier stage, as it was felt it was highly important for staff to be engaged in the process.

Data Quality - Members were informed that a new system “DIPS” had been procured and would support both children, adults and education and look to supplying more rigour to improve data quality. It was explained that this information was being migrated onto the new system and would be more robust and used more regularly.

RESOLVED that

- the Quarter 1 Performance and Financial information be noted; including;
 - note the fee detailed in paragraph 42;
 - note the changes to the Strategic Risks as detailed in paragraphs 43 to 45;
 - note the new additions to the Capital Programme, detailed in the Appendix A – Finance Profile
 - the treasury management quarterly performance report

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| | <p style="text-align: center;">detailed within Appendix A – Finance Profile</p> <p>ii. that the Committee make the following recommendations to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing areas showing a high recruitment of agency staff of certain occupational group types and therefore resulting in significant spends (groups such as Social Workers, Care Workers and Occupational Therapists). That Managers are asked to review those areas identified and consider best practices from neighbouring authorities to look at what steps the Council should take to become the employer choice within the region. • Revising Council policy and procedures to ensure that Directors and Senior Managers endeavour to work towards using in-house resources in the first instance where possible. • That the report made available to Human Resources and Finance be looked at by Cabinet, and further work to address the issues are undertaken. <p>iii. That consideration be given to reviewing the robustness of the PDR process and that the Audit Committee be also made aware of the concerns raised by Members, should it wish to consider them within the remit of their workplan.</p> <p>iv. That an invitation is sent on behalf of the Committee to invite the Doncaster Children’s Services Trust to attend a future Committee meeting to present an update on the financial report.</p> | <p>Senior Governance Officer</p> |
| 7 | <p><u>ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY UPDATE: 2018/19 QUARTER ONE.</u></p> | |
| | <p>Members were presented with the Quarter 1 report for Performance and Delivery from St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) which provided feedback on performance against Key Performance Indicators for 2018/19.</p> <p>Officers provided Members with relevant updates on the issues contained within the report, and the Committee were invited to raise areas of concern in relation to the performance of SLHD. The following issues were raised during the course of the discussions:-</p> <p>Firstly the key performance elements for the Committee to note included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven key performance indicators on target (green) • Three indicators within acceptable tolerance levels (amber) • Two indicators below target | |

There was a brief discussion around the following indicators;

Performance Measure: Number of households placed in Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation (no target): It was commented that this area had experienced a rapid increase due to a number of reasons including complex lives, homelessness and rough sleeping. Members were informed that there was a great deal of partnership working being undertaken including that with adult social care commissioned housing related support. Members were assured that using Bed and Breakfast was only resorted to when no other option was available or when it was not safe to place those individuals into alternative supported accommodation.

Members were assured that actions taken by Peterborough to place individuals who were homeless in Doncaster was not in relation to costs but around supply and the authority meeting their statutory duty. Members were also informed that there had been no impact on SLDH in that they had not been able to place an individual in the borough (due to the additional numbers of those placed by that of Peterborough).

Performance measure of households maintaining or established independent living (within tolerance – amber); It was explained that this indicator was taken as a snapshot at the end of Quarter 1, when there were 41 households supported to maintain or establish independent living against a target of 46. It was explained that a staff vacancy in the team during Quarter 1 had presented a capacity challenge. The vacancy had been since filled and the figure behind the indicator had now risen to 52.

Performance Measures: Scheduled repairs, percentage of promises kept (within tolerance – amber) – Members heard how performance during Quarter 1 continued the improving trend from the previous year, with 99.46% of promises kept against a target of 100%.

Performance Measure: Percentage of Invoices paid within 30 days (within tolerance – amber) - Performance for Q1 was 94.35% against a target of 96.5% It was explained that a large proportion of relatively few invoices paid late were with a small number of suppliers and work was being undertaken to improve this.

Performance Measure: Percentage of Local Expenditure (below target – red); It was clarified that this indicator did not take into account the money spent on the number of staff, and £10million nearly of capital work. It was explained that at the end of Quarter 1, this percentage was down to 40.6%, a fair way off £2 in every £3. It was recognised that this indicator would struggle to hit that target given that money spent in house was not classed as local expenditure, however, SLHD would look to maximise spend and maintain a stronger focus on expenditure in Doncaster as much as is possible.

Concern was raised that the target around local spend could never be achieved and should be reconsidered. In terms of reviewing this target, it was clarified that SLHD recommended targets had been agreed by the portfolio holder and that targeting local spend was a mayoral target.

Performance Measure: Anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases resolved as a percentage of all cases completed (no target); It was reported that this was a new key performance indicator for 2018/19 with a view to agreeing a target with the Council in the near future.

Average Days to Relet Standard Properties (Red); – It was outlined that this indicator has been reported on regularly as part of SLHD’s presentation of void rent loss. It was stated that on average, it took 25.54 days to re-let a property during Quarter 1, against a target of 23 days. This was a reduction from over 30 days at the end of the previous financial year.

Performance measure: Percentage of Current Rent Arrears against Annual Debit (performing well – green); It was explained that 92% of universal credit cases were in arrears. It was explained that the vast majority at 82% had been in arrears prior to changing to universal credit and the organisation had changed the way it worked to adapt. It was explained that the number of tenants moving onto universal credits was impacting on performance, when the target was set we were anticipating 150 tenants a month moving onto universal credit, whereas (last Quarter) we had seen an increase to 220/230 applicants. Members were told that rent arrears were increasing significantly; however, benchmarking data for 2017/18 had shown that whilst arrears in Doncaster had increased by 0.2%, SLHD were outperforming benchmarked comparators, whose arrears on average had increased by 0.5%.

Members enquired about the set criteria set by the Department of Work and Pension for alternative payment arrangements (APA) (30% of UC cases are currently on an APA). Members were informed that some benchmarking had been undertaken to look at this further.

Reference was made to the work of the Sheffield City Region (SCR) Homeless Network And Temporary Accommodation Board. It was questioned whether Doncaster, in line with the Government’s Rough Sleeping Prevention Fund, could undertake something similar in Doncaster.

RESOLVED That the Committee note the progress of SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting DMBC strategic priorities

2018.

The Committee considered the Scrutiny Work Plan, noted the current position and work to be undertaken by the Committee and Panel's for the remainder of the 2018/19 Civic Year.

RESOLVED that;

- The 2018/2019 work programme be approved.
- The report and verbal update be noted