

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY, 2020

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY, 2020 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Jane Kidd

Councillors John Healy, Neil Gethin, Richard A Jones, Majid Khan and Andrea Robinson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources  
Phil Holmes, Director Adults Health and Well-being  
Susan Hampshaw, Head of Service, Public Health  
Riana Nelson, Director Learning, Opportunities and Skills  
Julie Crook, Director of Corporate Services, St Leger Homes of Doncaster  
James Thomas, Chief Executive, Doncaster Childrens Services Trust  
Rob Moore, Director of Corporate Resources and Company Secretary, Doncaster Childrens Services Trust  
Alan Wiltshire, Head of Policy and Partnerships  
Matt Smith, Head of Financial Management

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Houlbrook

		<u>ACTION</u>
1	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None.	
2	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations made.	
3	<u>MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER, 2019</u>	
	The minutes of the meeting dated 16 <sup>th</sup> December, 2019 be agreed as a	

	correct record.	
4	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
5	<u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION OF THE MAYOR'S BUDGET PROPOSALS</u>	
	<p>The Director of Corporate Resources presented the Mayor's draft budget proposals 2021 to 2022/23 for Overview and Scrutiny's consideration prior to them being presented to Full Council on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.</p> <p>The Director outlined that the papers presented provided a balanced budget taking into account the maximum Council Tax increase of 1.99% and Social Care precept of 2%. Other additional income sources were also investigated to maximise the resources the Council has available to deliver services, for example the business rate base, rent from the increase in Council Housing and other grants available to the Authority.</p> <p>It was noted that the cost of service delivery was increasing and despite extra cost pressures, savings were still required. There was some growth where investment was required, for example, Social Care. Within the capital programme it was outlined that the actual number of new build properties over a ten year period was 560 but acknowledged the actual figure would be dependent on the final cost of land and construction.</p> <p>The following areas were discussed in detail by the Committee:</p> <p><u>Working with partners to provide front line services</u> – Members were informed that as part of the Local Authority's commissioning approach early preparation and discussions had been held with partners. These meetings outlined expectations and challenges relating to delivery and resource availability providing secure services that would complement each organisation. Soft market testing could also be used to explore how a service could be delivered in future.</p> <p>During discussions with partners it was noted that consideration was given to ensuring investment was reaching communities at the grassroots level with work being undertaken in a smarter way.</p> <p><u>LGA Review into fair funding formula</u> – following questions from Members relating to the impact it would have on Doncaster it was stressed that it was only part of the budget formula and the Council was also funded through, for example, Council Tax and Business rates. It was acknowledged that the percentage for adult social care had reduced however the Authority had been well managed financially</p>	

which gave cautious optimism for the next year or two.

Brexit – In relation to the impacts during the transition period and following withdrawal from the European Union, it was noted that a cross partnership working group had been established to review plans and challenges. It was noted that daily bulletins were being received from the Government with changes and developments that required responding to. A tracker had been developed to monitor possible impacts with a baseline created to work against.

With regard to childrens safeguarding a Polish employee was assisting the Children's Trust's Brexit Planning Group. EU nationality children in care would be supported through the settled status process, and families would continue to be supported. Data on referrals and presenting needs would be monitored to assess the change in demand and whether there was differing support required.

Preparation to support businesses had been undertaken some time ago and resourced accordingly and would continue. An amount of fixed funding had been received to provide support for businesses through Doncaster Chamber of Commerce for it's membership, however a similar mechanism had been established through the Local Authority's Procurement Team where links could be shared with any businesses across the Borough. Depending on the Trade Deal then reflection would be required as to how the broader community of businesses were supported.

Statement of Robustness by the Chief Financial Officer – It was noted that the budget posed challenge but there were substantial resources to support required services. Growth within the budget was more than normal at £14.7m, additionally with non-recurrent funding identified for Social Care £3.6m and Cleaner and Greener of £4.6m.

The Children's Trust explained it had undertaken a thorough consultation exercise prior to developing any budget proposals. It was confirmed that there was not one specific risk but a register that covered multiple areas and was challenging but being monitored. However, it was outlined that the Borough had an aging population and vulnerable children, therefore the two areas had the most prominent spend and held the biggest risk.

It was stressed that the Chief Finance Officer had a statutory responsibility to alert the Council if the budget was not sound and did not provide for key risks. If at any time this became an issue, it would be identified through the quarterly finance and performance monitoring arrangements.

Capital receipts – It was acknowledged that there was an expectation within the capital programme to achieve a number of capital receipts. Due to there being a little flexibility in the programme by either slowing

down financing or pausing capital programmes to ensure the best value from each sale was achieved.

Level of reserves – It was explained that reserves were used in a planned way, with some dedicated for certain activities. By creating the right environment and balance to manage the day to day spend, in turn manages the reserves.

New build properties – in response to a question relating to how many of the proposed 560 new build properties, referred to earlier in discussion, could be used towards housing the Borough's vulnerable children, it was explained that the properties would be built in line with the lifetime standards. Meaning the development of small family homes which could in theory be used to support the Borough's children in care through the Future Placements Strategy. It was acknowledged that this was a demanding strategy as it needed to meet the needs of children with varying, and sometimes complex needs, but there was an opportunity to use some of the new proposed homes or existing homes, but only when the right approach was taken acquiring the most appropriate property, safely and with wrap around support.

It was also explained that the Future Placements Strategy had already been provided for within the capital programme ensuring the right investment was being made.

Likewise, Members were concerned with ensuring this budget allowed for right properties being made available for older people as demand increased, for example, to reduce the reliance on a person requiring two people to support them, to continue living at home for as long as possible. It was explained that the new build properties was for general need however there had been some properties adapted for families and bungalows.

With regard to extra care units it was proposed that Overview and Scrutiny undertake a review into the policy and approach addressing a broad mix of housing required for the Borough.

Public Health – It was explained that the public health budget was balanced and with good contract management, services were being well managed with sophisticated commissioning arrangements and continuous conversations with providers to work collectively. It was noted that there had been announcements relating to the broader NHS budget however there was no certainty relating to the Public Health aspect which could create additional pressures, for example, the cost of any pay increase that could arise for health visiting and school nursing staff.

Improvement in healthy life expectancy – in response to how this budget would maximise the Local Authority's potential to achieve this, it was outlined that poor decision making could have an impact on

outcomes. Therefore, there was a necessity to ensure commission requirements were monitored.

Vulnerable people within the Borough – It was noted that early development work was being undertaken to address improving vulnerable people’s lives through improved health and being work ready. It was noted that there was ambition to undertake work in this area and a proposed project was currently being scoped. It was stressed that the number of people in Doncaster with a learning disability was higher than in other areas but still needed to be more ambitious.

Support for educational attainment and school attendance – The Committee acknowledged that a change in practice was required whilst working within the budget, to support children and young people to attend school more regularly where persistent absence was a problem. It was stressed that when children were in school educational outcomes were much improved.

With regard to the budget being sufficient enough to ensure Doncaster was the most child friendly borough in the Country, it was explained that the budget enabled the Authority to continue with that trajectory whilst working within the financial constraints. It was however noted that the Council’s Young Advisors were undertaking an excellent ambitious programme to ensure this was being addressed.

Generally there was confidence with the budget proposed and acknowledgement that more work was required on out of authority placements and associated transport costs, however the largest risk was unknown service demand and complexity of need. With regard to management of social care, early help and ensuring the borough’s children were attending school it was being influenced by a change in practice, working with families and providing early and useful interventions.

Health and Adult Social Care – again it was stressed that the budget proposals were adequate whilst the right balance was being maintained, which assisted managing difficult challenges. The largest consequence that required intervention was ensuring support for the communities affected by the recent flooding emergency. The focus remained that the most vulnerable residents were protected with early intervention and supportive pathways to help people to continuing living independently.

RESOLVED that the:

1. Mayor’s proposed budget be supported;
2. Proposals are supported by evidence, for example the Corporate Plan and outcomes from Doncaster Talks;

	<p>3. Proposals are managing possible risks;</p> <p>4. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee continue to monitor the quarterly finance and performance reports; and</p> <p>5. Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be given delegated authority to agree the Committee’s response to the Mayor’s budget proposals.</p>	
6	<u>DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2020-21</u>	
	<p>The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence relating to the updated Corporate Plan 2020/21, providing clear direction for the work of the Council for the forthcoming year.</p> <p>To reflect the latest priorities and challenges posed by the budget, the following changes were proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearer focus for the six imperatives that guide transformation work, supported through new priorities and exiting pieces of work, for a better borough; and</li> <li>• Under each DGT theme, the key priorities that resources would support had been updated.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee addressed the following issues:-</p> <p><u>Housing Development</u> – Following a Member referring to a piece of research from UCL entitled “Housing design audit for England” it was noted that the Government had announced that it wished for a White Paper to be developed addressing the issue.</p> <p><u>Fairer Funding Formula</u> – additional to the budget discussion above, it was explained that in Appendix A of the budget report, it outlined the different funding components which were matched against the cost pressures of service delivery and the shortfall was an amalgam of the two. It was reiterated that the Authority’s biggest pressure was the cost of delivery.</p> <p><u>Climate Emergency</u> – In response to concern, it was explained that the issue was being addressed and a Members seminar in March was being suggested, but time was required to ensure the right things were being developed for the Borough.</p> <p><u>Service Responsibility</u> – it was stressed that the Local Authority had worthy ambitions and strong commissioning however, concern was expressed that sometimes it may not be clear to residents that the</p>	

	<p>Council was not responsible for some services and the scale of work that could be delivered needed to be clear.</p> <p>The Chair concluded by suggesting that Directors be requested to identify areas that Scrutiny could review to assist with the 6 imperatives detailed, and this was supported by the Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Corporate Plan, be supported; and</li> <li>2. The Executive give consideration to providing possible areas for Overview and Scrutiny to review during its 2020/21 Work Plan.</li> </ol>	
7	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW EMPOWERED, ENGAGED COMMUNITIES WITH DEVOLVED BUDGETS</u></p>	
	<p>The Committee gave consideration to the Empowered, Engaged Communities, with Devolved Locality Budgets Overview and Scrutiny Review undertaken during the Autumn 2019.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that the Overview and Scrutiny Review be approved and forwarded to the Executive for consideration.</p>	
8	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Committee gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan and Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions. The Scrutiny Panel Chairs also provided an update on recent work undertaken.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>	