

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 2020

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 8TH OCTOBER, 2020 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Jane Kidd

Councillors John Healy, Neil Gethin, Mark Houlbrook, Richard A Jones, Andrea Robinson and David Nevett (Substituting for Councillor Khan)

Invitee: - Paul O'Brien (GMB)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources
Dulcie Aulton, Head of Customer Service, Corporate Resources

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chapman and Khan.

		<u>ACTION</u>
6	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	There were no items.	
7	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest made.	
8	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
9	<u>COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20</u>	
	The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report summarising the Annual Complaints and Compliments Report for 2019/20 for Doncaster Council and it's partners. Members noted that overall analysis evidenced that the number of complaints received for the Local Authority and it's partners were 2552, a reduction on previous years. The key improvements resulting from feedback were set out in the	

report.

The following areas were addressed by the Committee:

Social Work Practice – in response to an example provided by a Councillor, relating to learning from customer feedback about individual practices, it was outlined that the Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST) provided its own complaints report, which fed into the Local Authority's. Within the DCST's response to social work complaints, it had focused training on how Social Workers interact with clients. It was noted that a lot of time and effort was put into listening to members of the public and ensuring the correct remedial actions and service improvements were developed.

Improving access for people to make a complaint or compliment — The Committee noted that the Customer Experience Team attended Management meetings and work with staff who deal with customer complaints and complaint trends to both improve how compliments and complaints could be made, and also how services could respond. This was an ongoing process.

It was stressed that the Local Authority and partners provided many services and sometimes they could not provide specific individual requests by residents and therefore it was imperative that how this was relayed was essential.

Members recognised that the corporate response target for any complaint was 10 days, however in the emerging modern world, residents expected a response to more simpler enquires as quickly as possible.

Waste and Recycling Service - A Councillor outlined that from her ward perspective residents were much happier with the Waste and Recycling service currently being provided.

Doncaster Cultural Leisure Trust (DCLT) – A Member raised concern that hygiene and cleanliness at the Dome was an area that had attracted many complaints and noted this was being addressed.

In response to concerns relating to the complaints process, it was noted that the organisation's compliment and complaints reporting mechanism was not yet in line with, or mirrored systems used by the Local Authority's and its Partners. It was acknowledged that the Local Authority was working closely with the organisation to provide a consistent level and approach.

It was recognised that over the last three years work had been undertaken with all other service delivery partners to ensure there was a consistent approach to complaints.

Councillors Enquiries – In response to a Member query relating to whether complaints about services made by a Councillor and enforcement breaches, were included within this report, it was explained that Councillor enquiries were dealt with separately and if not rectified a formal complaint could be made and addressed through the corporate complaints process. However, it was stressed that any poor service issues raised by a Councillor should be addressed in the correct manner by the appropriate Directorate to prevent any escalation.

Ombudsman Complaints – It was noted that the complaints referred did not hold any commonality, as set out below:

9 Referrals with 7 upheld:-

- Social Care x 3 – Upheld
- Waste and recycling x - 1 upheld
- Planning x 2 – 1 upheld and 1 not upheld
- Doncaster Childrens Services Trust x 2 – Upheld
- St Leger Homes x 1 – not upheld

It was noted that due to the increased customer service work being undertaken across the Local Authority and it's partners, complaints were being resolved at the complaints system stage 1 with very few reaching stage 2 or being referred to the Ombudsman.

It was noted that if the Local Government Ombudsman found that a complainant had not been given the opportunity to go through the Local Authority's full complaints procedure, including level 2, then the complaint would be referred back to the Local Authority for further investigation. The Committee acknowledged that not all local authorities and their partners included level 2 within their processes.

Commonality of complaints – It was explained that there were no trends in complaints but more a wide range, due to the number of services delivered. It was noted that occasionally there could be a flurry, for example, if major changes were made to service delivery and following the flooding in November 2019, the number of pot hole complaints had increased.

It was stressed that it was important to capture the good work and compliments the Local Authority and it's partners aldso receive. Members were reminded that this Annual Report covered up to March 2020 and it was highlighted that it would be interesting to note the compliments in next year's Annual Report following the support to communities through the Community Hub, when responding to the Covid – 19 pandemic.

	<p><u>Good Will Gestures</u> – The Committee was reminded that the Local Authority would not provide these in the same manner as a private company however, customers could be provided with compensation in response to an Ombudman complaint.</p> <p><u>Lessons learnt and service improvement</u> – In response to a Member's question it was explained that the Local Authority and its partners were improving when registering complaints, compliments and trends. For example, service improvements had been made to keep clients better informed with occupational therapist assessment progress.</p> <p><u>Compliments and Complaints during the Covid period</u> – it was noted that this Annual report covered the 2019/20 period and was due to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny earlier in the year, however, due to the pandemic the report was delayed. Information relating to complaints during the pandemic period would be included in the 2020/21 Annual report.</p> <p><u>Agency Staff</u> – The Union invitee stated that he believed having a stable workforce would reduce the number of complaints where capacity was an issue, for example, the reliance on agency staff to undertake the role of an occupational therapist.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED that:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The report, be noted; 2. The work being undertaken with partners to ensure the complaints system has a consistent approach across all service delivery, including level 2 within the complaints procedure, continue and be supported; 3. Progress with levelling the complaints procedure across all partners, be contained in the next report; 4. Information on the number of good will gifts offered to complainants, compared to the previous year, be detailed in future reports. 	
10	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN AND COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Panel reported that the Panel had recently met and held a very successful discussion relating</p>	

	<p>to public health with the remainder of the work plan progressing well.</p> <p>With regard to the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Panel the Chair outlined that Members were due to give consideration to the Environmental Strategy, Flooding that had occurred across the Borough in 2019 and Domestic Abuse.</p> <p>The Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel Chair explained that the work plan was progressing well with recommendations following meetings being forwarded to the Executive.</p> <p>Following this meeting the Regeneration and Housing Panel would be addressing the Housing Strategy and Housing Delivery Plan then the following week the Economic Impact arising from the Covid – 19 pandemic.</p> <p>A Member drew attention to the statement that had been made by the Union representative relating to agency staff but the Chair stressed that agency spend had been looked at previously by the Committee and the issue would not be discussed further at this meeting.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:-</u> that progress with the Scrutiny work plan, be noted.</p>	
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