

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REGENERATION & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

FRIDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2019

A MEETING of the REGENERATION & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on FRIDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2019 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Majid Khan

Councillors Duncan Anderson, Iris Beech and John Mounsey

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

DMBC

- Allan Wiltshire - Head of Policy and Partnerships
- Pat Hagan - Head of Localities and Town Centre

		<u>ACTION</u>
1	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.</u>	
	From Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel, apologies for absence were received from Councillors Eva Hughes and Steve Cox. From Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel apologies were provided from Councillor Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Nigel Cannings and Jane Cox.	
2	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None	
3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest made	
4	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
5	<u>DONCASTER HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2024</u>	

Members received an update on the Doncaster Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024. It was explained that this strategy sets out the strategic ambition for how services and the wider system could prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in the Borough.

A presentation was provided that covered the following areas;

- Purpose
- The Story so far
- Key findings from the review
- Key Facts
- Draft Strategy Objectives
- Cross-cutting enablers
- Governance and Accountability
- Next Steps

During its consideration, some of the issues raised as part of the discussion included;

Support to prisoners following release – Members raised questions about what support was offered to prisoners and whether the amount of prisoners released without accommodation were a contributing factor towards levels of homelessness in the borough. It was recognised that this was a particular area of concern due to the number of prisons in the Borough. Members were assured that work was being undertaken with the South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company and the National Probation Service to work upstream with prisoners prior to their release. Members were informed that weekly meetings were taking place with those partners. It was also noted that due to the work being undertaken by South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company, there were few individuals engaged with locally that had arrived from other parts of the country.

Impact of Universal Credit – Members raised concern as to how the Universal Credit and the under occupancy charge had influenced levels of homelessness. It was advised that as indicated through national publications and work undertaken by the local steering group, those reforms may have resulted negatively on levels of homelessness.

Dispersed Provision - Members were informed that the delivery of the strategy aimed to ensure that the right accommodation was identified for the individual and had been reconfigured to a more centralized model. It was explained that the dispersed model was contained within the delivery plan and recognised that it needed to consider Care and Support services and the same time (around specific areas such as female rough sleepers and young people). It was acknowledged that there was a need to look at those areas and review what services could be made available in the future to reduce numbers and address the complexity within that. Members were informed that Doncaster

was not an outlier in terms of the complexity of issues compared to other places. Members were informed that a local authority (with similar issues to Doncaster) had requested to come to Doncaster to look at the positive work being undertaken.

The report outlined the strategies to maximise opportunities and further develop a dispersed accommodation offer within this area.

Prevention – Concern was raised in relation to those individuals and families that had been evicted by a private landlord (Members were informed that homelessness had mostly resulted from tenancy’s ending). It was responded that working upstream at an earlier stage would look to prevent such issues. It was noted that those who may be evicted were encouraged to engage with the Council as early as possible who would endeavor to work with those people as best they can.

In terms of the Task Group, assurances were provided that the right people were holding discussions around the table and that it was about being proactive rather than reactive.

Members supported the importance of work around prevention and the potential benefits that could be gained from this approach. It was recognised that the strategy included the objective to ‘deliver a “whole system” wide plan for Homeless Prevention’ and Members emphasised the importance of this to be taken forward as soon as possible.

Members recognised the positive work that had already been undertaken through preventative work resulting in the reduction in the number of those presenting (by 76%) and the number of nights spent by people rough sleeping in Doncaster (by 56%).

Engaging with wider groups – Members commented that in addition to the groups identified in the strategy, there may be other groups effected by this issue. It was felt that in light of Doncaster’s industrial heritage, that consideration should be given to those organisations that aimed to support ex-employees who may benefit from the implementation of the strategy.

It was also commented that more engagement with Town Councillors would be welcomed around the issues concerning the town centre. The Head of Localities and Town Centre offered to take this issue up outside of the meeting.

The Panel expressed its gratitude for the valuable and successful work undertaken by the Complex Lives Alliance and frontline services. It was felt that the local government MJ Award for Care and Health Integration, received earlier this year had been well deserved.

The Panel expressed their support for the strategy and commented

<p>that it was good report that was readable.</p> <p>The Panel resolved that consideration be given to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The delivery stage taking account of Doncaster's industrial heritage and engages with relevant charitable and welfare organisations (established to support those who have retired from specific large sector service industries, for example, former miners and railway employers); and2. The objective identified in the strategy to "Deliver a "whole system" wide plan for Homeless Prevention" is prioritised when forming the delivery;3. The Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel undertaking a further meeting to look at the draft annual action plan, detailing the specific resources allocated to achieve the strategic ambition within the strategy, prior to February 2020.	<p>Senior Governance Officer/ Head of Policy and Partnership s</p>
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