

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 23RD JUNE, 2022

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 23RD JUNE, 2022 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Vice Chair – Councillor Jake Kearsley (In the Chair)

Councillors Jake Kearsley, Richard A Jones, Majid Khan, Sarah Smith and Gary Stapleton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

DMBC;

Debbie Hogg – Director of Corporate Resources
Dan Swaine – Director of Economy and Environment
Phil Holmes – Director of Adults, Health and Well Being
Riana Nelson – Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills
Dr Rupert Suckling – Director of Public Health

St Leger Homes;

Julie Crook - Director of Corporate Services, SLHD

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jane Kidd, Leanne Hempshall and Antoinette Drinkhill.

		<u>ACTION</u>
1	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations made at the meeting.	
2	<u>MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 31ST MARCH 2022</u>	
	<u>RESOLVED</u> that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 31 March, 2022, be approved	

	as a true record.	
3	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	
	There were no Public Statements made at the meeting.	
4	<u>2021-22 QUARTER 4 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT</u>	
	<p>The Committee received the 2021/22 Quarter 4 Finance and Improvement Report introduced by the Director of Corporate Resources, Debbie Hogg.</p> <p>It was noted that moving into a new Financial Year; the Council continued to deliver services whilst faced with a challenging and uncertain environment. The cost of living was at its highest for over a decade and many people were faced with worries about rising costs and bills. As a result of this, a decision had been taken to make a £100 payment in support along with another further £100.</p> <p>The report also touched upon the recent decision to bring Doncaster Children’s Trust back into the Council in order to address the improvements needs and this would be a key feature of the performance reporting moving forward into 2022/23.</p> <p>In terms of the financial position, there had been considerable volatility through 2021/22 and the budget planning had taken this into consideration and the financial position had been carefully monitored. The final outturn position was an underspend of £8.9 million, which presented an extremely positive year-end position in light of the financial pressures faced.</p> <p>Following consideration of the report, Members of the Management Committee were invited to put any questions to officers on the areas of work.</p> <p><u>Prosperous and Connected</u></p> <p>Members queried how as a result of the cost of living crisis, the Council would support their residents, and what impact this crisis would have on the Council as a whole in terms of collection rates. Members were assured that this had been considered and whilst it was a challenging environment, the Council would use its resources to support its residents as far as possible with a number of initiatives including free school meals, support from Citizens Advice Bureau, and various other areas of support.</p> <p>It was noted, that there was significant budget difference from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4, and Members queried the reasoning behind this, and why there had not been more accurate forecasting in terms of this. It</p>	

was reported that there had been volatility from Quarter 2 to 3, and a significant number of Managers from across the authority had risen to this challenge. However, moving forward, 2022/23 would be extremely challenging, and all Directorates across the authority would need to work together as a collective and choices would need to be made as to what were the Council's main priorities.

The recent announcement of Doncaster's City Status brought queries, with Members asking how this would attract business and funding into the area. It was recognised that there would be a number of challenges and demands that came with the status, but also many benefits, and would help to put Doncaster on the map, giving further confidence to businesses and the wider public as to Doncaster's ability to deliver. It was hoped that this would attract more business, which would bring additional money into the local economy and help to push projects forward. Concerns were raised regarding the rising costs of inflation, and ability to deliver on previously funded projects as building and supply costs rose. It was viewed, a very challenging time for all across the country, and there was a fine line to balance the costs against need but it was hoped a pragmatic approach would move existing projects forward as expected.

Greener and Cleaner

Queries were raised with regard to Fly Tipping as this continued to be an area of concern, and whilst the performance rate on this issue had improved, concern was voiced that keeping this down was not sustainable. It was explained that further resources had been put into place, and it had proven to be effective. It was hoped that the backlog had now gone and achieving target would be more manageable moving forward.

Healthy and Compassionate

The Director of Adults, Health and Well Being, and the Director of Public Health were in attendance at the meeting to respond to Members questions.

Questions were raised in respect of waiting times for assessments as this continued to be an area of concern, as it was preventing them from accessing the necessary care. Members were assured that people were still receiving adequate care and support, and whilst there were backlogs, things were improving. It was acknowledged that recruitment remained a major issue, and shared amongst other authorities, with services needing more hours and minds to deal with everything that was proving to be an issue. It was explained that many procedures and processes were not working as well as they could do, and a more joined up approach was required in order to connect all the areas and resolve the issues.

The problems with the MOSAIC system were commented on, and it was noted that those issues were historical. Members were assured that moving forward and it was intended that teething problems that had been experienced would be resolved.

In terms of recruitment, Members queried the effectiveness of the HR System currently in place due to the time it took to recruit new staff members, however Members were assured that this was no different and whilst it was important to vacant posts, there was a natural timeframe that was followed.

A query was also raised in respect of Direct Payments as this continued to be an area of concern. The Director of Adults, Health and Well Being reported that there was work to be done on providing individuals with more access but as a whole, people didn't take a lot of ownership or control. Although this needed to be improved moving forward it was recognised that it would not change quickly.

Skills and Creative

A subject of discussion in this area, was the transition of DCST back into DMBC control and how this was being progressed. There were a number of concerns and questions raised, to which the Committee was provided with reassurances that a significant amount of support had been put in place for the Trust. It was noted that recruitment remained an issue and the increase in demand for services further highlighted this shortfall but improvements were being seen.

The Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills highlighted the following issues that were of concern and the areas of work that were being focussed on:-

- In SEND, 50% more referrals being made, which translated as 10% of children and young people needing an ECHP. The increased demand and complexity has then placed pressures onto the service.
- Increased ECHPs - Not meeting the timescales of carrying assessments of ECHPS. Members were assured that this was being actively worked on through increased capacity within the SEND team.
- Other pressures around workforce, including recruitment, quality assurance of services and progressing with areas for service improvement where required.

It was explained how the authority provided support services for schools, with part of the strategy dealing with SEN and pressures on the system in terms of high needs block (all designated schools grant). It was explained that part of the strategy was to support schools to

	<p>keep children as long as possible within mainstream schools which had the most effective and best outcomes.</p> <p>It was verified that around 6.6% of children and young people with an ECHP was a Looked After Child. Assurances were provided that Looked After Children within our schools were known to services and known to schools. It was continued that they were supported by the Virtual School responsible for the educational outcomes of children.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that more needed to be done around placements, stabilising education, support and attendance although mechanisms were in place within the educational system and early help system.</p> <p>In reference to the 2450 children and young people on the early help pathway, it was noted that there were a number of different level and layers within this. It was explained that there was early intervention around those with SEN (that did not require ECHP) that sits alongside the early help pathway</p> <p>Members were informed that these children and young people were picked up by the triage function (that sits within localities) and picks up early intervention or families that require further intervention and if required they will have more co-ordinated support and will be put onto the early help pathway.</p> <p>It was explained that there were a significant number of staff working in relation to Special Education Needs, and whilst officers did not have the exact numbers, Members were informed that these would be communicated following the meeting but that additional staff had been recruited to join this team In terms of vacancies Members were assured that efforts were being taken to actively recruit to the team..</p> <p>Finally, queries were raised with regards to NEET and the concern that 6.8% of children and young people were considered to be in this category. The Committee were informed that Doncaster was currently outperforming other areas in terms of young people participated within learning, but the exact figure would be clarified and communicated to Members.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Officers for their time and the information provided in relation to Members concerns and questions.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Chair and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee note the content of the Quarter 4 Finance and Performance Improvement Report.</p>	
5	<p><u>ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER LTD (SLHD) PERFORMANCE & DELIVERY UPDATE: 2021/22 QUARTER FOUR (Q4)</u></p>	
	<p>The Committee received the Quarter 4 Performance and Delivery</p>	

Update, which gave an opportunity to provide feedback to Members on performance success and challenges.

It was reported that eleven of the nineteen Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had either been met or were within boundaries at the end of Quarter 4. It was noted that with targets set out of a very high standard, the expectation that the services provided were of a high quality. It was commented that whilst eight remained off target, some improvements had been seen.

Overall, it was felt that St Leger Homes was proving a high quality service at a low cost and whilst there were still improvements that could and would be made, the evidence was there that they were performing well consistently

With regard to rent arrears, it was noted that good progress had been made since the last update, hitting 'better than target', although void rent loss was not meeting its target with the number of voids standing at 178.

Following consideration of the issues touched upon in the report, Members were invited to raise any concerns or questions to officers. One of the particular concerns voiced was that many families or individuals were being placed in temporary accommodation in bed and breakfasts, due to a lack of suitable other accommodation. This, it was reported, was down to a reduction of privately rented accommodation due to many landlords leaving the rental market. Communication had been increased with private landlords in an attempt to persuade many to offer their housing to St Leger Homes for rent, and it was hopeful that this picture would improve moving forward.

Queries were also raised with regard to the time taken to re-let properties and why had taken so long when there were many vacant properties to be filled. However, it was explained that this was down to a number of reasons including staff vacancies of trades staff, some properties requiring a review by occupational health, repairs ongoing, and the balancing of suitability of properties to the correct tenants.

Finally, the Committee touched upon Staff Sickness as a KPI, as this was not performing well. It was viewed that this could be partly due to Covid absence not being counted into sick rates last year. It was also noted that there was a continuing amount of muscular skeletal absences. Managers were encouraged to remain in contact with their staff regularly and pick up any triggers and trends as well as ensure that absence was genuine, in order to get people back into the workplaces as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the St Leger Homes of Doncaster performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting Doncaster Council's Strategic Priorities.

6	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered the work plan for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, which aimed to support an outcome focussed scrutiny function based on meaningful scrutiny and transparent recommendations.</p> <p>OSMC and its Panels had held work planning sessions throughout June 2022 in order to identify review topics for the coming year and a copy of the latest work plan was attached as an appendix to the report.</p> <p>Additionally, the Panel considered the Council's Forward Plan, which outlined all key decisions, to be taken by the Mayor and Cabinet in the next four-month period and Members were invited to raise any queries they had.</p> <p>Finally, the Committee was asked to note the appointment of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire)</p> <p>In a query raised regarding Localities, Members were reassured that all Panels would touch upon these issues throughout the year and dates would be programmed in when more information was available to share. However, it was anticipated that it would be considered in autumn by the Management committee, at which point there would be a meaningful update to provide.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee approve the 2022/23 Work plan attached at Appendix A to the report; 2) The Councils Forward Plan attached at Appendix B to the report be noted; and 3) Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee note the appointment of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire) 	