

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 1ST DECEMBER, 2022

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 1ST DECEMBER, 2022 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Jane Kidd

Councillors Jake Kearsley, Gemma Cobby, Leanne Hempshall, Richard A Jones, Sarah Smith and Gary Stapleton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Riana Nelson - Director of Children, Young People and Families  
Rachel Leslie - Assistant Director of Public Health  
Dan Swaine - Director of Economy & Environment  
Phil Holmes - Director of Adults, Health & Well  
Debbie Hogg - Director of Corporate Services  
Dave Richmond - Chief Executive, St Leger Homes

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Majid Khan, and Invitees Antoinette Drinkhill and Bernadette Nesbit.

		<u>ACTION</u>
28	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations made at the meeting.	
29	<u>MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH SEPTEMBER 2022</u>	
	<u>RESOLVED</u> that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September, 2022 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.	
30	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	
	There were no public statements made at the meeting.	

31	<p><u>2022-23 QUARTER 2 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT</u></p>	
	<p>The Committee received the 22/23 Quarter 2 Finance and Performance Improvement Report, introduced by the Director of Corporate Resources, Debbie Hogg.</p> <p>Members noted that the new style of report also now included the content formerly included in a separate report of the Doncaster Children’s Trust following the transfer of these services back into the Council. Officers had endeavoured to simplify the report and commentary had been provided on each area in an effort to make it clearer to digest for all readers and clearly outline what was going well and what was not.</p> <p>In terms of the Performance, this remained on track with the previous Quarter 1 report, and 30% of indicators were highlighted as red. With regard to the budget, the Council’s finances remained consistent with Quarter 1, but these were off track and it was important that moving into the New Year, when the budget was agreed in February that this was balanced. Currently, the budget was £8.5 million off track and looking forward, there would be difficult times ahead whilst trying to manage service delivery with this costing more to deliver. There would be implications for future periods, and the cost pressures as a result of inflation would be felt.</p> <p>The following areas were raised through discussions and consideration of the report:-</p> <p><u>Regenerative Council</u></p> <p>Queries were raised as to delivering on service standards and how this would affect the achievement of a balanced budget. Members were informed that steps would be taken to address costs. A decision had already been taken to stop any non-essential spends, and all vacancies would be looked at and only filled if essential. Business would be slowed where possible and consideration would be given to as to what changes could be made to service delivery moving forward but there would be a lot of pressure in the future with utility costs, supply chain costs, pay, and tough decisions would have to be made in terms of priorities.</p> <p><u>Developing Skills to Thrive in Life and Work</u></p> <p>Members made comments with regard to the strategy used for addressing absenteeism and queried whether the use of fixed penalties were effective tools. Whilst this was part of the approach, it was noted that addressing absenteeism was a multi layered plan where schools</p>	

were required to work with families in order to get children back into education and keep them there. As a final step, fixed penalties were issued as a measure to encourage a return.

Elective Home Education (EHE) was raised as an issue and whether there was a correlation between this and EHCPs as the number of EHEs had increased significantly since Covid. It was acknowledged that there was no direct link, but there were a number of children who were behind in their learning and would need help catching up, but this related only to children with more prominent needs. Annual checks were in place and support was provided.

#### Nurturing a Child and Family Friendly Borough Everyone Belongs

As the report only covered one month since the Children's Trust had transferred to the Local Authority, Councillors queried had there been any unexpected issues that had not been detailed within the report.

The Committee noted that the transition of the Trust back into the Council, had been relatively smooth and the pressures had remained consistent with no increases. Further down the line, there were areas where improvements could be made, but most importantly, Members noted that children remained safe.

Moving on from this, Dental Checks had always been an area of concern, and clarity was requested as to how these were being progressed. The Director of Children, Young People and Families, Riana Nelson, reported that the picture looking ahead was improving, but still low; however, the Corporate Parenting Board had included this within their work plan and were actively progressing improvements in this area.

#### Promoting the Borough and its Cultural, Sporting and Heritage Opportunities

Members discussed how communities were being consulted in terms of identifying leisure needs and encouraging their use of the local leisure facilities. The Get Doncaster Moving Strategy had been refreshed, a number of areas had been identified, and had focused on a number of ways that better opportunities could be provided. There had been good examples in the borough of how this had worked, and the cycle track at the Dome was a great example of how leisure facilities could become a valued community asset. However, it was acknowledged that moving forward into next year it would be a challenge to keep all centres open with the costs faced and there could be some changes to running schedules and operations.

Following on from this, queries were raised in terms of social prescribing and how this was or could be utilised. The Assistant Director of Public Health, Rachel Leslie, reported that it was something

that was becoming more prominent, with the investment into this area, and Primary Care Networks would be considering what they could do to support this.

#### Building Opportunities for Healthier, Happier and Longer Lives for All

The Committee noted that the service area of Adults, Health and Well Being continued to be an area requiring improvement with many areas not performing as they should. Particularly, home care was an area of concern discussed through the course of the debate. There were 5 indicators within this service displaying as red, and Members noted that there were many contributing factors, with too many people still moving into care homes, early discharge rates from hospital and A and E, inadequate home care amongst the reasons behind this. The Hospital Discharge Funding would be accessible in the coming weeks, so it was envisaged that this would go some way to provide support in this area.

Additional areas of concern included assessments, all of which were taking too long to process from start to finish. Members were concerned that these were impacting on care provision and packages being put into place. Staff were continuously striving for improvement and it was hoped that in the next quarter improvements would be seen. In terms of financial assessments, these too were not being completed quickly enough, but officers did not have the data for the Committee to give an accurate picture. This was completed between two teams currently and it was hoped that in the future a more streamlined approach would be managed to speed up the efficiently.

#### Creating Safer Stronger, Greener and Cleaner Communities where Everyone Belongs

The Committee was informed in response to a query regarding the Veterans Officer post that this had now been regraded and had been re-advertised to attract the level of applicant required. This post closely linked to health and well-being with the officer, directly supporting the needs, some of which could be complex and specific, of veterans across the borough.

In relation to a query regarding the time taken to complete S42s, Members noted that this was largely due to a backlog, and in quarters 3 and 4 they would expect to see these numbers reducing. As a result of police investigations and court proceedings, the S42s could often be delayed, and whilst they weren't completed as quickly as would have hoped, safeguarding remained paramount, and people were kept safe.

#### Tackling Climate Change

Members were concerned with regard to the drop in the number of homes retrofitted to improve energy efficiency. Officers informed members that 409 homes had been improved but the funding that had

	<p>not been used could not unfortunately be carried over to the next financial year and would have to be returned. This, it was reported was a national issue, but moving forward, this was not the main issue, as a large number of homes remained in the Private Sector, whereby nothing was known of the state of many of these houses.</p> <p>A further query raised in terms of Climate Change, was if the Council was still on track to meet its 2030 Climate Change Target. Officers reported that the Council was endeavouring to meet this target, and was working to decrease the carbon footprint but there was no guarantee they would get there.</p> <p><b>Making Doncaster the Best Place to do Business and Create Good Jobs</b></p> <p>In response to a query regarding what consideration had been given to create fully inclusive employment roles, as this was due to be considered by the Regeneration and Housing panel, more information would be provided when this was discussed at that meeting.</p> <p><u>Building, Transport and Digital Connections Fit for the Future</u></p> <p>Concerns were voiced in this area as to the Frenchgate Tunnel in town and its proposed closure as this would have a huge impact on the town centre. Members noted that this had originally been planned for February, but it was now anticipated to take place in springtime, commencing in March.</p> <p><u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives</u></p> <p>A question was raised as to equality, and if, there were any groups that needed more support, particularly in terms of care leavers. Members noted that there was a dedicated team who worked with care leavers who actively supported the needs of all individuals, particularly those with disabilities or of ethnic minorities. This was being picked up within the Regeneration and Housing Panel and would be discussed in greater depth at that point.</p>	
32	<p><u>ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER LIMITED (SLHD) PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY UPDATE - QUARTER 2 ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022 (2022/23)</u></p>	
	<p>The Committee received the Quarter 2 Performance and Delivery Update, which gave Members the opportunity to explore any issues that had arisen since the previous update.</p> <p><u>Bed and Breakfast Placements</u></p>	

	<p>Queries were raised as to the number of households and families being placed in Bed and Breakfast Placements, as it appeared that this had risen since September due to the target of 40 being way under the current figure of 62.</p> <p>However, Members were informed that this was a profiled target and whilst it appeared high and above target, numbers of families placed in Bed and Breakfast were decreasing month on month and it was anticipated that this would balance out as time progressed.</p> <p>- In response to queries regarding increasing the availability of properties, Officers commented that this was an ongoing problem and it was important that they did not look at housing in isolation. St Leger Homes simply did not nor would not have enough Council Properties to satisfy the need and it was important they worked alongside other sectors such as the private housing sector who were the biggest rental market.</p> <p>Members noted that there were huge pressures in the housing area at the current time, and the need for council housing was continuing to rise. Whilst it was good news that a number of properties had been let out to singles, couples and families, 120 households still remained on the waiting list and were housed in temporary accommodation. This pressure would remain, and the private sector, would be utilised more and more so it was important that the Council built relationships with private landlords and acquire immediate solutions. Although the costs in private were much higher, the demand was huge but there was still a long way to go in terms of ensuring housing was of the right quality. This was definitely an area that both officers and Members felt needed to be improved and good relationships built in order that there was greater faith in the use of the private sector in the future.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>RESOLVED</u> that the Overview and Management Committee note the progress of SLHS Performance Outcomes, and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting Doncaster Council's Strategic Outcomes.</p>	
33	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2022/23 AND COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Chair presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan and the Council's Forward Plan for information.</p> <p>Councillor Gary Stapleton requested that consideration be given to the addition of Asylum Seekers as an item for the work plan due to the predictions that this would become a much bigger issue in the coming year and it was imperative that all possible was done to support them.</p>	

	<p><u>RESOLVED</u> that the Work Plan and Forward Plan be noted.</p>	
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