

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 2023

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER DN1 3BU, DONCASTER on WEDNESDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 2023 at 9.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Jane Kidd

Councillors Jake Kearsley, Gemma Cobby, Steve Cox and Glynis Smith

Co-optees – Antoinette Drinkhill (Church of England Education representative)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Rachael Blake - Children's Social Care and Equalities

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball - Early Help, Education, Skills and Young People

Lee Tillman, Assistant Director Chief Executive

Dan Swaine, Director of Place

Phil Holmes, Adults, Wellbeing and Culture

Riana Nelson, Director of Children, Young People and Families

Rachael Leslie, Deputy Director, Public Health and Prevention

Dave Richmond, Chief Executive (SLHD)

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Majid Khan and Councillor Leanne Hempshall.

		<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 12TH OCTOBER 2023</u>	
	<u>RESOLVED</u> that the minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 12th October, 2023 be agreed as a true record.	
3	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	

	There were no public statements made at the meeting.	
4	<p><u>ST. LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER LIMITED (SLHD) PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY UPDATE QUARTER 2 ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023 (2023/24)</u></p>	
	<p>The Committee received a report providing performance information for Quarter 2 of the 2023/24 Financial Year. The report provided feedback on successes and challenges against the 2023/24 Key Performance Indicators.</p> <p>Dave Richmond, Chief Executive of St Leger Homes was in attendance at the meeting in order to respond to any questions and queries from Members of the Committee.</p> <p>Members sought further information in terms of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as in looking at the overall picture, many of these were showing as red, but yet the narrative indicated they were travelling in the right direction.</p> <p>The Committee were informed that whilst many of these were showing as red, they were in fact in the top quartile of performance nationwide, but as targets locally were very stringent, this meant they were showing as red.</p> <p><u>KPIs 2 and 3 – Void Rent Loss</u> - Members noted that whilst this performance was showing as red, St Leger Homes was continuing to perform well in this area. It was explained that this was in the top quartile for the country and whilst performance was good, the aspiration was to continually do better.</p> <p>It was noted that there had been a huge increase in the number of homeless across the country over the past year. Members were informed that this was within the region of 125,000 individuals in temporary accommodation, and Doncaster was following national trends in this area. It was recognised that this continued to be an issue that needed focus going forward.</p> <p><u>KPI 6 – Complaints</u> - This was acknowledged as an area of concern, and in reflection there remained to be too many complaints relating to repairs and maintenance. The targets that St Leger Homes faced within this area were seen to be challenging and it was considered important to remain focused on this area and improve its position.</p> <p><u>KPI 11 – Sickness</u> - This KPI continued to fluctuate and whilst it was a higher level than CDC due to the number of target days, they were tracking on the same level.</p> <p><u>KPI 12 – Local Expenditure</u> - Members noted that this was an ambitious target, and not always achievable as the skills and</p>	

	<p>availability of contractors were not always available locally. Members were informed that whilst a national company may be contracted to undertake a project, they would still look to sub-contract local tradesman, therefore meaning this KPI was still fulfilled indirectly.</p> <p><u>KPI 13 – Number of ASB Cases</u> - This was recognised as a major concern and it was outlined that a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Team was now in place, and some improvements were now being seen. This continued to be higher than the Yorkshire and Humber expectation.</p> <p>Members learnt that this was often a difficult target to manage, as incidents of anti-social behaviour tended to peak through the summer months, raising the levels, before falling again through the winter.</p> <p>Largely, the Committee accepted that the overall picture was still positive, and whilst the methodology was measured differently with hard to achieve targets, this did not take away from the positive work that St Leger Homes was continuing to achieve. Dave Richmond, Chief Executive St Leger reported that they were working continually to stretch themselves and were continuing to perform better than any neighbouring local housing authorities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>RESOLVED</u> that: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Overview and Management Committee acknowledged that the targets and performance indicators that St Leger Homes were working to were currently very hard to achieve; and 2) Members note the progress of St Leger Homes of Doncaster’s performance, and the contribution St Leger Homes of Doncaster makes to supporting City of Doncaster Council’s strategic priorities. 	
5	<p><u>QUARTER 2 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT</u></p>	
	<p>Lee Tilman, Assistant Director, was in attendance at the meeting and provided an update on the current financial position at the end of Quarter 2 for the 2023/34 Financial Year.</p> <p>There were a number of issues that continued to have an impact on the current economic climate, including the war in Ukraine, conflict in the Middle East and whilst the inflation rate was falling, the cost of living remained high, compounded by higher interest rates and the cost of borrowing. All this impacted on the Council’s finances and would see resilience plans tested over the coming months.</p>	

The Council's overall performance remained good and not in the same position as many other neighbouring local authorities. It was noted that whilst Doncaster was still facing an overspend, the financial position was relatively stable. In terms of performance, it was reported that a small number of indicators were off target, but these would be kept under review moving forward.

The following areas were highlighted through questions from Members:

Regenerative Council

Members queried how the Council was liaising with schools regarding the devolution of elements of the Dedicated Support Group (DSG) to ensure that locally there were the right services in place to support children, improve outcomes and reduce costs as this was an area of concern. Members noted that SEND funding was allocated at the earliest stage which proved more successful. The new system currently in place was more coherent and with an improved decision-making process worked well. It was explained that the SEND strategy had a graduated approach, ensuring that hubs at schools worked to keep children supported in schools with the correct provisions on offer. It was raised that the DSG budget, however, was not enough and there was a continued need to fund additional capacity.

Due to time restrictions, it was requested that written information be provided to the Committee on a question not asked around CAMHS and urgent referrals outside of the meeting.

Councillor Rachael Blake Children's Social Care and Equalities

Members raised the Choose Kindness initiative that Councillor Blake was championing, and concerns were noted on the small budget on offer to support this. It was responded that the scheme was largely supported by people's good will alone and was working to promote Doncaster and its people, and that the time and effort needed to ensure that this was a success, cost nothing. It was felt that this initiative was already proving to be successful, and it was hoped this would grow as a well celebrated initiative in the future.

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball - Early Help, Education, Skills and Young People

Members asked Councillor Ball for an update on 'Your Family Offer' as this was a new scheme and clarity was requested on how this would work. It was viewed as an exciting scheme and a service embedded within local communities, with a range of areas of support and information that local people could access. Members heard that there were teams located in areas across the borough, including Woodlands Library and the Vermuyden Centre at Thorne. It was outlined how this scheme supported families in need of early help and enabled many

Director of
Children,
Young
People and
Families

problems to be solved at local level at an early stage.

Councillor Ball was also questioned in relation to SEND provision at Post 16 Level and how it was supported. Members noted that young people were put in contact with all the support they needed and given access to Careers Advisors, support and advice to assist them and ensure their needs were met as well as helping with placements for employment or further education. It was explained how the Skills Strategy was also helping in the way in which the Council supported further learning and work. Members learnt that SEND Co-ordinators had been appointed and were working with the Doncaster Chamber to provide opportunities for all.

DEVELOPING THE SKILLS TO THRIVE IN LIFE & WORK

In relation to this theme and regarding children missing in education, Councillors asked whether the Council was aware of any barriers, such as language skills, and what was being done to address them. Members noted that this was largely reported by schools and sometimes simple outcomes were available that could help overcome this problem, such as ensuring that interpreters were in place to support new families arriving from other countries.

NURTURING A CHILD & FAMILY FRIENDLY BOROUGH EVERYONE BELONGS

Comments were made in relation to the cost of future proofing education in terms of providing new schools. This continued to be a challenge and the budget for schools continued to be an issue. It was felt that there were not enough places for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and that this should be monitored closely. It was felt that this continued to be a complex and challenging area, and to manage this, the Council needed to focus on providing tailored care packages to meet the student's needs.

PROMOTING THE BOROUGH & ITS CULTURAL, SPORTING & HERITAGE OPPORTUNITIES

It was noted that Doncaster had a rich and diverse cultural heritage which was worth celebrating. Reference was made to the Windrush celebrations as a powerful event and acknowledged the diverse culture and the wealth brought to Doncaster.

Doncaster Pride was considered as a huge celebration, and it was reported that this year, Doncaster had been named the UK City of Pride, reflecting again the diversity in the City and marking the positive work in terms of inclusion and equality.

BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHIER, HAPPIER & LONGER LIVES FOR ALL

In response to what was being done to improve the numbers of mothers to stop smoking, as data showed that 12% of expectant mothers continued to smoke during pregnancy, which was still too high. It was explained that the Smoking in Pregnancy Service, supported many women in helping them to achieve success with stopping, and supported expectant fathers too. Focus was placed on early engagement and extra resources available to encourage individuals to stop. Members learnt that this target continued to be a challenge, and more needed to be done to help individuals engage with the service but it was hoped further improvements would be seen.

CREATING SAFER, STRONGER, GREENER & CLEANER COMMUNITIES WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS

A question was raised in relation to high-risk referrals to the Domestic Abuse Hub flagged and what was being done to address this? The Committee noted that this continued to be a concern and it was important that these problems were addressed quickly and effectively. When allegations were received, it was important to act quickly and provide continued support for victims to ensure that they were advised and supported. It was important that people were encouraged to report incidents and agencies took a zero-tolerance approach to this issue. Again, a lot of work needed to be done in this area to ensure further success moving forward.

MAKING DONCASTER THE BEST PLACE TO DO BUSINESS & CREATE GOOD JOBS

Members heard that an improvement in the number of people with a learning disability to gain employment, would hopefully be seen during 2024/25. It was explained that a job coaching model was being developed and would provide good examples to support individuals in finding employment.

The Council was committed to ensuring that 28 people gained employment over a two-year period and was looking to the future as it was hoped that big employers would look to engage with this sector.

BUILDING TRANSPORT & DIGITAL CONNECTIONS FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Throughout the course of the discussion in this area, Members asked what Officers information could be provided with regard to the Superfast SY Programme and Project Gigabyte and how and when would Doncaster benefit. Members noted that this would be integral to growth and would provide greater accessibility and better coverage across South Yorkshire.

Additionally, it was stated that work was being done to improve digital

	<p>literacy across the region, and how barriers could be overcome to ensure that accessibility was available to all. It was reported that the Digital Inclusion Programme would look to overcome problems and provide targeted support to individuals whilst balancing the provision of services based on client need. It was continued that this was an ongoing scheme that would look to provide channelled and directed support.</p> <p>It was offered that further information on the work taking place as part of the NHS digital inclusion programme (targeting older residents), be circulated to the Committee.</p> <p><u>TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE</u></p> <p>Officers were asked when the Council would expect to see an improvement in the number of houses retrofitted. It was hoped, that improvements would be seen before the end of the year, with 269 undertaken. Funding was acknowledged as a problem, and with the Councils housing stock ageing, there were different areas of work to be completed from differing funding streams. Members heard that whilst the work was challenging, materials were not getting any cheaper whilst facing rising costs but that the Council were committed to working on this and progress was being made.</p> <p>Queries were also raised as to how achievable hitting the 2030 target for carbon neutral was. It was shared that this was an aspirational target although there was no certainty if this was achievable. It was recognised that this couldn't be accomplished by the Council alone, and businesses, schools and other sectors all had to work together to achieve this.</p> <p>It was requested that further details to be provided on the number of businesses that were engaging with the Council following the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee had engaged in a thorough and robust debate on the issues contained within the report to ensure that everything was properly scrutinised, and all areas of concern were adequately and concisely addressed for Members information.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that the Chair and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee note the information contained within the Quarter 2 Performance and Financial Information report.</p>	<p>Assistant Director of Policy Insight and Change</p> <p>Director of Place</p>
6	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN AND COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Committee gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan and the Council's Forward Plan of key decisions.</p>	

Members noted that the Health and Well Being Strategy would be considered at a meeting in the New Year, with more information to be communicated to Members in due course.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Signed: Chair _____

Dated: _____