

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 1ST JUNE, 2023

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER DN1 3BU, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 1ST JUNE, 2023 at 11.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Jane Kidd

Councillors Jake Kearsley, Gemma Cobby, Steve Cox, Richard A Jones and Glynis Smith

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- Riana Nelson, Director of Children, Young People and Families
- Andy Hood, Strategic Lead (Practice and Improvement)
- Helen Jones, Service Manager Young People's Services

		<u>ACTION</u>
1	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.</u>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leanne Hempshall and Majid Khan.	
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>YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023/24</u>	
	The purpose of this report was to present the statutory Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24, covering the work of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) in Doncaster. An outline of performance against last year's plan	

was provided around performance indicators such as Reoffending data and First Time Entrants.

I have detailed below, for your information, some of the key areas and comments raised by the Committee during the meeting.

Finance – Members were reassured that with the current allocation of grants remaining unchanged and no unforeseen financial pressures, and there would be sufficient funds to continue the positive work being undertaken and meet the necessary targets. It was commented that there was often a delay in the allocation nationally of the Ministry of Justice grants. Members were also informed that the Council continued to provide its contribution, which overmatched the grant and that partners in health and the police continued to be supportive with either the allocation of direct resources or through financial means. Finally, Members were informed of the allocation of Turnaround funding which would provide further opportunities going forward. Members welcomed the strong partnership working currently in place and recognised how that has helped ensure better value for money across the service.

Support for Children (before or when they come into contact with the Criminal Justice System) – Members stressed the importance of providing good support to children either prior or during the period when they come into contact with the Criminal Justice System. It was explained that the delivery model was based on knowledge of what had worked well within the Youth Offending Service and included assessment of individual needs. Reference was made to the benefits of the interventions delivered through the Turnaround Programme and how it had helped improve outcomes for children at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System such as the use of a whole family assessment, looking at financial pressures in the home and supporting parents. Members also heard about the value and benefit of speech and language interventions and systematic family therapy. It was explained how this model could help young people within the statutory service out of offending and with those at risk of offending. In terms of speech and language therapy, Members were informed about the dedicated resource in place that supported this and how it was hoped that this provision would be expanded in the financial year of this turnaround.

A Member asked about what opportunities were available to broaden the experience of young people and spoke about the benefits of such schemes as the National Citizen Service (NCS). Members heard that young people did not always want to engage with universal services. Reference was made to EPIC who engaged with those young people at risk of entering the system through the work they did within the communities and schools.

Transfer of Children's Social Care – Members were pleased to hear

about the benefits and opportunities that had arisen from the transfer of the Doncaster Children Services Trust to the Council. Some of the key benefits included closer working and greater access to a wide expanse of expertise that supported the long-term deliverability and sustainability of the strategy. Reference was made to the challenges that had been experienced with the Mosaic system due to there being two separate organisations trying to work together. Members were informed that improvements had been made since the system had been transferred over.

EPIC Hub and Partnership Working – Members heard about the continued success and positive feedback of the EPIC hub for young people that was based in the Frenchgate Shopping Centre. It was explained how the hub was used as a space not just for the Council but for other partners such as Doncaster College, to engage with young people around areas such as education and careers. Members received an insight into the initiatives undertaken and better opportunities to access services through working in partnership and forming positive relationships.

PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence) Beds – An outline was provided to Members around the purpose of PACE Beds and the arrangements that Doncaster had in place with Sheffield and Manchester. It was commented that PACE Beds presented ongoing challenges for many local authorities nationally including Doncaster.

Restorative Justice - Members heard about the role of the Restorative Practitioner as well as the process and options involved. It was recognised that although restorative justice could work well, it might benefit further from increased victim involvement. It was noted that the pandemic had resulted in delays to cases moving forward, resulting in less victim involvement which was seen as a national issue, it was commented this was now seen to be improving.

Links between Youth Offending Scheme and Schools - Members heard that there was an Education Co-ordinator who advocated for young people to ensure that they had suitable provision in place. Reference was made to the EPIC school that supported those young people at risk of permanent exclusion through a 12 week offer and prepared them for a return to mainstream school. This could include speech and language assessment and assessment of needs. A Member enquired whether anything like restorative practice took place in schools with children. It was responded that this only took place in the event where the offense directly resulting in the exclusion that a similar approach might be used. It was continued that as part of a restorative offer, schools themselves may adopt principles of restorative practice but it was not possible to deliver through the Council with limited resources in this area. It was viewed that overall, the children's system was moving in that direction.

Employment, Education and Training - Members were provided with

assurances that there were strategies in place to ensure that those leaving the youth justice system had opportunities to access employment, education and training. In terms of apprenticeships, it was explained that the Council and St Leger Homes Doncaster (SLHD) offered apprenticeships as part of dedicated Careers Advice Support to those within the Criminal Justice System (up to 19 years old for any child referred into the Pathways to Progression Programme). A Member spoke about the benefits of involving young people who exhibited challenging behaviour in undertaking housing repairs. It was felt that as well as developing useful trade skills, this had also given them positive responsibilities and helped develop a level of personal accountability. The Strategic Lead (Practice and Improvement) responded that there was potential in engaging these young people into something similar with the Council and SLHD as part of the reparation offer.

There was a brief discussion around areas that maybe of interest to scrutiny such as YOS triage and PACE beds.

RESOLVED: That the draft Youth Justice Plan 2023/24, be approved