

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 29TH JUNE, 2017

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 29TH JUNE, 2017 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Kevin Rodgers

Councillors John Healy, David Nevett (substituting for Paul Wray) and Andrea Robinson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Mawson, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director of Finance

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Gethin, Jane Kidd and Paul Wray

		<u>ACTION</u>
26	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>  None	
27	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>  There were no declarations of interest.	
28	<u>MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 23RD MARCH 2017.</u>  RESOLVED: That the minutes be agreed as a correct record.	
29	<u>A. ITEMS WHERE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS MAY NOT BE EXCLUDED.</u>  None.	
30	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>  Tim Knowles a Scawthorpe resident and a Member of the Bentley	

	<p>Community Partnership expressed his thanks for being able to make the following statement and comments.</p> <p>Mr Knowles expressed his concern with the disappointing way Doncaster looked and the poor impression it was giving. He felt it was a little down trodden and required some much needed investment and support. He outlined that his background was in retail and was saddened by the lack of good quality shopping throughout the whole area of town. He wished to see all partners talking and moving in the right direction to help reduce the number of empty properties. He wanted to live in a town that the community was proud of.</p> <p>He explained that he was aware that there were many issues that required addressing including help for people who were homeless. He confirmed that he was aware that regular discussions were held between the Council and South Yorkshire Police with regard to a number of issues, including anti-social behaviour and was of the opinion that neighbourhood policing was essential, would go a long way to helping.</p> <p>He continued by stating that people had said to him that they feel intimidated when they visited town, as they were often approached by people who were acting in an antisocial way or asking for money.</p> <p>He concluded by stating that he hoped the Committee would take this issue on board.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Knowles for attending and confirmed that the Committee would take his statement on board when addressing such issues.</p>	
31	<u>2017/18 BUDGET UPDATES</u>	
	<p>The Assistant Director of Finance gave a detailed explanation of the 2017/18 budget update to the Committee with more detailed discussion in the areas detailed below:</p> <p><u>Improved Better Care Fund</u> – An additional £7m had been provided by the Government in the Spring Statement, which would be reported to Full Council in July. Members addressed the emerging pressures, which were being addressed with partners, detailed in the report.</p> <p>The Local Authority and partners would be addressing areas that would no longer be funded, once the period of additional funding concluded.</p> <p>Members noted the assistance however expressed concern that public perception would be that this funding was unlimited however, it was only for 3 years and stressed that Members needed to ensure their</p>	

	<p>communities were are aware of this.</p> <p><u>Homelessness Grant</u> – the Committee noted that the new homelessness support grant would be ring-fenced for homelessness prevention, £0.207m in 2017/18 and £0.227m for 2018/19. It was also noted that the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Panel, following it’s review last year, would be receiving an update on the effectiveness of the Navigators who would be working with people who had chaotic lifestyles.</p> <p><u>Planning Fees</u> – It was noted that the legislative planning fee increase by 20% from July was sizeable and would lead to a house extension application fees increasing from £172 to £206 with a new house build from £385 to £462. Additional income was to be spent on improvements to services, for example, discharging planning conditions, pre-application advice and internal specialist advice.</p> <p><u>Business Rates</u> - Frustrations were highlighted that the Local Authority has a financial settlement to 2019/20 however it is unclear what the Government would do from 2020/21 to 2021/22. The Assistant Director provided an explanation of how things might operate from 2021 and how this would be achieved. However it was stressed that there were always areas that could not be controlled, for example, inflation.</p> <p>The report detailed very prescriptive business rate changes for small medium and large businesses. With regard to public houses the several descriptions were noted, particularly that they could not be restrictive, for example, having a membership removes working mens clubs from the list, it was noted that the Government guidance does provide local authorities with a remit to design a scheme to support priorities.</p> <p>Rateable values were addressed, particularly following re-evaluation, noting that they had fallen generally, however, there were some large exception to that. It was noted that in London there had been a 23% general increase. Doncaster had been provided with funding to aid the transition for businesses to the increased business rate fees with the Council currently looking at the easiest way to limit the increase.</p> <p><u>Budget Position</u> – The current position was noted and it was stressed that there would be areas that may require amendment to ensure, for example, the elderly were supported in a responsible manner and providing the community more personal choice.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be noted and thanks be give to the Assistant Director of Finance for the detailed information provided during discussion.</p>	
32	STATE OF THE BOROUGH ASSESSMENT.	

The Committee received a presentation relating to the core annual “define and deliver” cycle which linked the following annual processes:

- State of the Borough debate
- Policy and budget setting
- Service Planning and staff Performance and Development Review
- Corporate Performance Monitoring.

Following an amendment to the Council’s Constitution, the Full Council would now receive an annual State of the Borough assessment to inform the policy and budget framework.

All areas were covered by Overview and Scrutiny and had indicated that it wished to contribute by ensuring Members provided quality evidence and information about their communities and it was stressed that residents’ experiences would offer key geographical information to inform the process. It was suggested that Members receive training on how to positively assist the process and be provided with a prescriptive format to follow/utilise.

Bench Marking – would be undertaken with the nearest statistical neighbours with data collated and assessed to ensure it was as up to date as possible. National data sets were currently used however, Members were made aware that some information could be 2/3 years old, due to the style of performance indicator. Concern was expressed by the Committee that decisions could be made using old data and that the Council needed to be operating on current data to inform the budget process.

Members stressed that some communities were not receiving the success that others were, so any positive achievements needed to be promoted no matter how small.

State of the Borough Format – Members supported the proposed simple infographic format and acknowledged that not all ward information could be included.

The Chair concluded the debate by expressing the need to consider local level data and that the Committee would appreciate an update on progress early in 2018.

RESOLVED: that the presentation and discussion be noted and 2 progress with the state of the borough debate be provided to Overview and Scrutiny in the early part of 2018.

	<p>The Committee considered a change in Membership to the Scrutiny Panels.</p> <p>RESOLVED That the following changes to Scrutiny Membership, be agreed:</p> <p>Councillor Steve Cox replace Councillor Jane Cox on the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Panel; and</p> <p>Councillor Jane Cox be appointed to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.</p>	
34	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2017/18.</u></p>	
	<p>The Senior Governance Officer circulated the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan developed following the Scrutiny Work Planning meetings undertaken in June. It was noted that the Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Panel work planning session be scheduled to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> July.</p> <p>The Forward Plan was also considered and Members noted the current position with each key decision.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that the Work Plan report be noted and that a briefing note be requested on the Strategic Investment forward plan item.</p>	