



Doncaster
Council

Councillor Kevin Rodgers
Roman Ridge Ward

Tel: 01302 786331

E-Mail: kevin.rodgers@doncaster.gov.uk

Date: 22nd February 2018

Mayor Ros Jones
Floor 4
Civic Office
Waterdale
Doncaster
DN1 3BU

Dear Ros

CORPORATE PLAN 17-18 UPDATE

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held a meeting on the 8th February, 2018 to consider the updated 2018/19 Corporate Plan. Members provided their support to the plan and provided the following comments. I would therefore be grateful if you could take account of these additional comments and suggestions when presenting the Plan to Full Council.-

- **Doncaster Learning;**

Progress in wider results across the board had been made, but that an achievement gap with statistical neighbours still persisted. However, the wider review of education undertaken by the Authority had identified priorities, and work to improve areas such as attendance levels were receiving focus.

- **Doncaster Working;**

Concerns were raised in relation to wage levels and it was questioned how the Doncaster Growing Together partnership strive to increase wages for Doncaster Residents. Comments were made in relation to the role of larger local employers in making a big impact on this area. It was acknowledged that the Council will be experiencing further cuts resulting in a slimming down of the workforce, this along with past reductions and wage freezes have all presented challenges in improving this situation for residents. Members heard that it was being considered as to how the partnership can stimulate a number of local economies which may support this area.

Members were reminded about the Doncaster Inclusive Growth Strategy which will provide an opportunity for new ideas to be put forward as well as an outline of what the local economy will look like in 10 years.

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Maximisation of benefits and other supports were highlighted as a way by which residents experiencing lower incomes in work. In combination with approach was a firm view that employers across the Borough needed to consider flexible working to allow individuals from groups with protected characteristics, such as disabled people, to tackle socio-economic disadvantage.

In terms of apprenticeships, it was heard how there were different levels of apprenticeships available and it was about setting the right aspirations to allow residents to achieve their full potential in the world of work.

- **Doncaster Living**

Members heard how Doncaster had been reported one of the most Inactive Borough with around one in three of Doncaster's adults falling into this category. Members were interested to hear that Doncaster has been chosen by Sport England as a pilot area to work with on a bold new approach to build healthier, more active communities across England. It was also commented how society has made it much easier to be inactive through reliance on such things as cars and that sports clubs such as golf were experiencing dwindling numbers.

- **Doncaster Caring;**

It was commented that the Borough's social infrastructure was, in places, 'thread bare' and in the future we could consider the use of a locally based social enterprise should be made. In particular the use of the Council's Powers of General Competency under the 2011 Localism Act to create community based mutual organisations with the NHS and other public sector organisations might provide the vital bespoke solutions to this vital part of the Doncaster Growing Together.

A Member raised concern that this theme was so critical that progress in one area could be adversely affected by progress made enough in another. For example, they spoke of a local extra care housing facility that accommodated individuals as part of their end of life care, however, this had resulted in less numbers being able to live there to remain independent for longer and be less socially isolated as there was less availability. It was recognised that more was being done to look at housing solutions in the borough and identify what people need.

Members raised concern how it was difficult to break cyclical decline and referred to how Social Education Centres had been closed with little available elsewhere. It was viewed that this was something that could be provided by the market rather than the Council, but that stimulation of this market remained a key challenge.

- **Connected Council**

It was explained that this is what the organisation needs to be like whilst spending money as the best we can.

A Member raised concern about transports links to the Civic Building, which for some is difficult reach and that it might be useful to improve connectivity to the Civic Building through a shuttle bus.

In terms of managing and improving the quality of data held and used, it was explained that this was about making the most out of the information held on different systems.

A member of the Panel stressed the importance of value for money and raised concerns about how much had been spent on consultants who often lived outside of the Borough and therefore took money outside of the local economy. It was also commented that posts that had been made redundant and were now agency staff were being employed to fulfil those voids. It was added that this could prove expensive to the Council at a time when significant cuts are being made as well as becoming at risk of not being able to provide quality frontline services.

It was felt that the plan was going in the right direction and that good partnership working is essential for it to work. It was also felt that the areas of focus were good although with many decisions to be made there would need to be a fine balance with what is taken forward.

In terms of the areas of focus outlined under each area, it was commented that a key role of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was to ensure progress was made against the priorities in the Corporate Plan.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Allan Wiltshire, Head of Policy and Partnerships, for outlining in detail the information contained in the Corporate Plan. I would be grateful for a response by no later than the 21st March 2018.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Rodgers', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Councillor Kevin Rodgers
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

cc OSMC Members
Cabinet Members
Jo Miller, Directors and BAs.
Steve Mawson
Scott Fawcus