



# Doncaster Council

Councillor Kevin Rodgers  
 Chair  
 Overview and Scrutiny Panel  
 c/o Scrutiny Office

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Dear Kevin

## UPDATED CORPORATE PLAN 2018-19

Thank you for your letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February expressing Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's general support for the 2018/19 Corporate Plan.

Several amendments have been made to the Plan in response to the constructive feedback provided by OSMC, and I believe it is an even better quality document as a result. Please see the table below for my responses to OSMC's specific feedback:

	OSMC Feedback	The Mayor's Response
1.	<p><b>Doncaster Learning</b></p> <p>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 was receiving focus.</p>	<p>Doncaster secondary schools have consolidated the improvements they made in previous years, and in 2017 have narrowed the gap between Doncaster and our benchmarks in terms of young people's attainment. However there is still more to do and we will continue to support our schools and deliver our Social Mobility Opportunity Area Action Plan which sets out the key ways in which we will address inequalities in education with four key priorities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building solid foundations for all children</li> <li>• Brilliant leadership and teaching for all secondary school pupils</li> <li>• No career out of bounds</li> <li>• Opportunities extend to all</li> </ul> <p>We have included this and more in the 'Learning section' of the Corporate Plan.</p>

	OSMC Feedback	The Mayor's Response
2.	<p><b>Doncaster Working</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Members were reminded about the Doncaster Inclusive Growth Plan 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.</p> <p>Maximisation of benefits and other supports were highlighted as a way to help residents who are 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.</p>	<p>There continues to be tough financial conditions and in particular wage levels have not stayed pace with inflation. We need to work with our regional and local partners to create the conditions in Doncaster for quality investment in quality jobs connecting our residents to those opportunities. To strengthen the foundations for a more productive and inclusive economy, we need to deliver improvement across all the DGT themes – for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting residents to gain the skills firms need and to improve their earning power through training and development</li> <li>• Providing more integrated support for residents to access quality job opportunities and for in-work progression to earn higher wages. This includes strengthening the link between health and work, including supporting residents with health issues to be economically active.</li> <li>• Continuing to upgrade our infrastructure and delivering our major projects.</li> <li>• Ensuring Doncaster is modern, well-connected and environmentally sustainable with quality housing, leisure and cultural offers.</li> <li>• Developing a system of creativity to support entrepreneurship, problem solving and to improve products and services. As part of this, harnessing the power of arts and culture to support our economy.</li> </ul> <p>As set out in the Council's budget, £349 million will be invested in projects across Doncaster over the next four years to stimulate economic growth and job creation, as well as improve housing, roads, schools, leisure facilities and living conditions for tenants and vulnerable residents.</p>

	<b>OSMC Feedback</b>	<b>The Mayor's Response</b>
		<p>We are developing an inclusive growth plan which will set out our plans for growth across the borough over the medium term and how we can connect people to that growth. As this plan is developed I would see the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as having a key role in shaping this strategy so we get the right economic growth plans for our borough.</p>
3.	<p><b>Doncaster Working</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>I agree that the different levels of apprenticeships allow people to access the right training for their needs whilst opening up potential progression routes between different apprentice opportunities. The council now has degree level apprentices for the first time reflecting the new and improved range of opportunities available to people in this borough.</p>
4.	<p><b>Doncaster Living</b></p> <p>Members heard how Doncaster had been reported one of the most inactive boroughs 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.</p>	<p>I am pleased that members welcome the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) status for Doncaster. We have been chosen as one of only 12 areas for a pilot to support residents to have healthy, active and productive lives. Although there is more work to do to flesh out the detail, I am sure residents of this borough will benefit from this pilot.</p> <p>We have also agreed our 10 year physical activity and sport strategy setting our long term aspirations for the borough.</p>
5.	<p><b>Doncaster Caring</b></p> <p>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. 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</p>	<p>Although I agree that there continues to be tough financial conditions in the public sector, I would not agree with the term 'thread bare' social infrastructure.</p> <p>For example, the council and partners supported the '<b>How you can</b>' campaign to share the stories of residents who were close to reaching a crisis point before being supported to re-connect with their communities.</p>

	<b>OSMC Feedback</b>	<b>The Mayor's Response</b>
	<p>organisations might provide the vital bespoke solutions to this vital part of the Doncaster Growing Together.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>One of the campaign's lead stories features 84-year-old June, who found her mental health affected due to social isolation. June was supported to access a new local community group which hosts weekly meet-ups for residents who are lonely and match them with volunteer befrienders. As a result of attending, June has managed to rebuild her social circle.</p> <p>We will always strive to ensure the people who need services the most get a good service. For example, Doncaster's Children's Services have improved significantly and are now rated 'good', which recognises Team Doncaster's commitment to supporting vulnerable young people.</p> <p>We must also stimulate the market and support communities to help themselves considering all options to ensure that people have the right support they need.</p>
6.	<p><b>Doncaster Caring</b></p> <p>A Member raised concern that this theme was so critical that progress in one area could be adversely affected by progress made 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.</p>	<p>I would agree there are interdependencies in the work we do and this is exemplified by the breadth of work set out in the council's corporate plan.</p> <p>The example you use on housing is about getting the right housing provisions for people and is key to many of the aspirations we set out in the plan. One of the key programmes within Doncaster Growing Together is a 'Homes for all' Programme which aims to deliver the right homes whilst understanding the interdependencies you describe.</p>

	OSMC Feedback	The Mayor's Response
7.	<p><b>Connected Council</b></p> <p>A Member raised concern about transports links to the Civic Building, which for some is difficult to reach and that it might be useful to improve connectivity to the Civic Building through a shuttle bus.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>I would be happy to hear the detail about any concerns about access to the civic office and how we could improve things if they are not working.</p> <p>I agree with the panel member on the importance of value for money and ensuring that the services we provide meet the needs of our residents. The corporate plan sets out;</p> <p><b>'Our Council purpose</b> is to ensure Doncaster and its people thrive, whilst ensuring value for money is at the heart of everything we do.'</p> <p>The cost of agency staff and consultants is monitored on a regular basis and actions assigned to review this for each directorate.</p>

Much of the work that the Council contributes to is done in partnership, and through this partnership working, we can achieve better results for the residents across our Borough.

I am pleased that Members felt that the updated Corporate Plan was going in the right direction, especially by being broken down into different sections. I would also welcome OSMC involvement in any subsequent reviews and monitoring of the Corporate Plan.

Yours sincerely



**Ros Jones**  
**Mayor of Doncaster**

