

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2019

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on WEDNESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2019 at 10.30 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Kevin Rodgers

Councillors John Healy, Richard A Jones, Jane Kidd and Paul Wray

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors D Smith, F Tyas, E Hughes, N Cannings, T McDonald, L Curran and D Nevett

Christian Foster, Head of Service Strategy and Performance Unit
Dan Fell, Chief Executive Doncaster Chamber
Gill Gillies, Assistant Director Environment
Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources
Carole Fox, Senior Strategy and Performance Manager

Dominic Jeffrey, National Management Trainee
Olivia Mitchell, National Management Trainee
Mitchell Salter, National Management Trainee

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Gethin and Andrea Robinson

		<u>ACTION</u>
17	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.</u>	
18	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	There were no items where the public and press would be excluded.	
19	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	Councillor Jane Kidd declared an interest explaining that she had recently finished a project where she had been employed by the	

	voluntary sector.	
20	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	
	<p>MRS Ann Gilbert, a resident of Mexborough made the following statement:</p> <p>Thank you Chair and Committee for the opportunity to contribute to your discussions today on the Brexit issue. Whilst I have been unable to see the paper that is being presented today by the Brexit Team, I hope that the points I raise are addressed within their presentation. I do accept that Brexit feels as if nothing is happening and then changes on a daily basis. The lack of clear thinking from our national government does not help those who are responsible for the provision of public services or run their business.</p> <p>That said I have a number of areas I wish to raise and they are as follows:-</p> <p><u>Preparation for Brexit</u></p> <p>What guidance has been given by National Government regarding the preparation for Brexit to date, with particular regard to financial resourcing of the process?</p> <p>Whether there is a deal or not, scarce local government funding resources that have been cut substantially by National Government, have had to be used to support the preparation for Brexit and to identify and minimise the risks to the local economy and residents.</p> <p>I am therefore asking:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have those costs been identified, tabled and submitted to national Government for refund? Is the Government going to meet those costs or will it fall on Doncaster Council Tax payers and be included in their Council Tax payments? What arrangement has the Council made to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise the population of the costs? Who is paying – the Government or Doncaster Council Tax payer? And If no funding is available from Government, how will this affect services within the borough and potential job loss? <p><u>Business Sector</u></p> <p>Do we have any businesses in the supply chain to Honda, Nissan or</p>	

	<p>other Japanese companies who may be affected by a relocation of Japanese companies now that Japan has signed a trading agreement with the EU?</p> <p>What support is being offered by Government to assist those in the supply chains in maintaining their business in the UK?</p> <p>If there is a deal, does the Council know if any businesses based in Doncaster have plans to use the transition period to facilitate an orderly departure from the UK?</p> <p><u>Health Sector</u></p> <p>We are all aware how important the migrant workforce is to our area and the contribution they make to all sectors of the economy, in particular in the provision of social and medical care.</p> <p>Are we in a position to know how many EU migrant professionals we will lose across the Health sector – social care and medical.</p> <p>What contingency plans are in place to fill those vacancies.</p> <p><u>Medicine Supplies</u></p> <p>Are we in a position to know:- Which medicines are at risk? How many people does this affect eg. insulin dependent patients, cancer treatment patients?</p> <p><u>Food Shortages</u></p> <p>Has National Government given any real answers on how to deal with the potential for food shortages?</p> <p>What provision has been made to ensure that vulnerable people are protected and that food banks are ensured supplies for the poorest in our community.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>In conclusion may I again thank you Chair, for the opportunity to express my concerns and I look forward to the presentation by the Brexit Team.</p>	
21	<u>UPDATE ON BREXIT</u>	
	Further to the meeting held on 2 nd November, 2018 the Committee was provided with a presentation updating Members on the current position relating to Brexit.	

	<p>The information covered the impact of Brexit on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Borough and its economy;• Goods and services;• Community resilience;• Planning, risk assessment and co-ordination;• Building plans to mitigate impact; and• Planning for the future. <p>The issues below were addressed in more detail:</p> <p><u>Tom Riordon (Chief Executive Leeds City Council)</u> – co-ordinates Local Authority weekly report on Brexit issues on behalf of the Yorkshire and Humber region and makes a collaborative return each week to Central Government on specific issues.</p> <p><u>Local Resilience</u> – it was explained that Doncaster was part of the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum that undertakes strong strategic planning on a regular basis. The group addressed a whole range of possible impacts, including food, energy supplies and staffing in social care sectors. It was noted that as a region, it was as prepared as it could be as there were plans in place to deal with issues that could impact on communities that were dealt with on a year to year basis. It was recognised that plans were adaptable and flexible.</p> <p>With regard to fuel and transport links there was no current information to suggest that these would be affected.</p> <p><u>Local Resilience Forum</u> – meets regularly to ensure continued regional and local resilience.</p> <p><u>Community Tensions</u> – These were already monitored on a regular basis and this would continue. There were referral pathways for community tensions but currently no significant issues related to Brexit. Again it was an area the Local Authority already worked closely on with its partners.</p> <p><u>Reduction of Police Officers</u> – A member expressed concern that due to the reduced numbers of Police Officers, their ability to respond to an emergency could be affected.</p> <p><u>Boarders</u> – partners were working closely with Doncaster Airport Management Team who were not expecting any significant impact. Additional plans were being established for UK Ports, including the airport, to ensure the security and safety of imported and exported goods.</p>	
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Medical Suppliers – it was noted that a lot of medical supplies were provided through non EU countries and there was no current indication that there would be any significant impact.

Contract Management – was being regularly reviewed ensuring priority activities continued.

Military – is on standby for additional assistance if required, for example, logistical and welfare support at ports.

Doncaster Chamber – is an independent organisation that works with Local Authority colleagues, and is monitoring business effectiveness in the light of Brexit, for example:-

- Economic Behaviour - nothing is showing red but there were a number of areas that were showing amber on the risk assessment register.
- Business confidence – was good in Doncaster with strong momentum. Those businesses that worked in isolation needed to interact with others and find innovation out of the Brexit challenge. Businesses still held plans for the future but momentum may have slowed, for example, employment of apprentices may have been delayed.
- Investment Plans – were slowing but opinion was that businesses were watching and waiting to see what happens.
- Business planning – for post Brexit still showed a third being proactive, a third watching with interest and a third not interested. With regard to stock piling, there was some evidence as there could be an impact from supply chains.

Micro-businesses tend to find it difficult to plan years in advance.

- Business relocation – it was noted that a number of foreign owned businesses were based in Doncaster Borough and that partners were always alive to the risk that they could relocate, however, it was noted that deepening relationships with such businesses were continually forming.
- Trade Facilitation – this could become a very active and live issue for the region.
- Uncertainty – Businesses dislike uncertainty, and with the Chamber have strongly canvassed for a no-deal to be avoided.

Financial Assistance – It was noted that a ringfenced National Brexit Preparedness Fund had been made available with Doncaster receiving £210,000. It would be split over two years and the Executive was

investigating how this could be used. Members stressed that Officers were expecting to undertake a lot of additional work but the Council was not being recompensed properly.

Care Workers – intelligence has shown that 3% of the direct care workforce in Doncaster were EU nationals but across all sectors within Doncaster the percentage was slightly lower. It was a priority to ensure that local carers were prepared.

Inclusive Growth Strategy – The Local Authority approved this Strategy in November, 2018 with export being a key driver.

The Chamber reported that it always assists businesses with increasing their export capacity and it was recognised that this had slowed down recently, however this was also in line with the value of the pound.

Citizens returning from the EU – It was noted that the workforce had slightly reduced but not anything that is causing alarm, however being realistic, a significant reduction would create an impact on delivering priorities.

Employment of all workers from UK and EU – following concerns expressed with regard to some workers having to overcome certain barriers, for example, cultural, it was noted that there were some great businesses in Doncaster that help people and employ anyone who offers and provides a skill. Doncaster Chamber worked with businesses to present themselves as attractive to all workers and forming strong relationships with the workforce. It was also recognised that the Local Authority had targets that they performance manage, and were presented quarterly to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Future Government funded projects – It was recognised that Doncaster had received and somewhat relied on EU funding and questioned whether the Government would continue to support improvements in the Borough. Unfortunately it was reported that there had been no indication of the Government's intentions at this stage.

It was stressed however, that how projects were funded would require an overhaul and that in and around the Doncaster area needed to demonstrate and showcase the region's excellent opportunities.

Disruption to food provision – it was noted that 30% of food was imported from the EU and there may be some disruption with it not arriving as quickly as it should, i.e. being held up in ports. Members therefore stressed that this could inflate food costs and have an impact on those people that were already relying on Food Banks. It was highlighted that this would also have an impact on the support required

by the voluntary sector.

Representation of local communities – Following concern expressed by a Member, it was explained that MPs and Councillors, who have links with many organisations and communities, represented the electorate during Brexit discussions. Businesses in turn represented their workers. The Executive and Council represented the strategic direction for the Local Authority.

Investment in Doncaster following Brexit – it was outlined that Doncaster Chamber continued to lead on and worked tirelessly on bringing investment into the Borough both within Europe and across the wider world. Practically businesses were supported with training on how to help people export their businesses. The Local Authority was continually supporting internationalisation and encouraging businesses to relocate to Doncaster Borough.

Mayflower 400 Event (400th Anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower from Plymouth UK to Plymouth Massachusetts) - In response to a Member's query it was explained that the business community had doubt with regard to the commercial opportunity but had gripped on to areas that were faster growing including the Yorkshire Wildlife Park and the Cast.

RESOLVED that: an update on the Brexit performance dashboard be reported at the next Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee quarterly performance meeting.