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DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 2019

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 2019 at 10.00 AM

Vice Chair (In the Chair) – Councillor John Healy

Councillors John Healy, Neil Gethin, Jane Kidd and Andrea Robinson and Councillors David Nevett and Kevin Rodgers (for items 6-8 only)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Majid Khan, Nikki McDonald and Tosh McDonald.

Damian Allen	Director of People
Patrick Birch	Strategic Lead for Adults and Transformation
Peter Dale	Director of Regeneration
Lee Golze	Head of Business Transformation & Strategic Commissioning
Debbie Hogg	Director of Corporate Resources
Louise Parker	Head of Service, Strategy & Performance
Rupert Suckling	Director of Public Health
Steve Waddington	Director of Housing Services, St Leger Homes

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Wray.

		<u>ACTION</u>
22	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
23	<u>MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2018</u>	
	<u>RESOLVED</u> that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th December, 2018, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
24	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	

	There were no public statements made at the meeting.	
25	<u>2018-2019 QUARTER 3 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT & 'DELIVERING FOR DONCASTER' BOOKLET</u>	
	<p>Debbie Hogg Director of Corporate Resources introduced the report informing the Committee it represented a positive position for the Council as it forecast a balanced budget and the majority of Performance Indicators were on target. There had been improvements over the quarter in home building and an increase in wage rates however, significant challenges remained in terms of reducing absenteeism and improving attainment of schoolchildren. Where the Council was responsible for delivering services this generally worked well. Key challenges remained in delivering a number of complex services with key partners and in meeting the 2020/21 budget gap.</p> <p><u>Connected Council</u></p> <p>The Committee considered issues relating to Corporate Resources and the Connected Council theme.</p> <p>Further information was sought on local authority spend with local businesses through procurement processes and asked if there was benchmarking information to assess our performance. The Committee was informed this measure took account of consumable spend which excluded spend such as staffing. Whilst there was no local benchmark the ambition was to spend as much locally as possible and this target would be subject to further review.</p> <p>Members asked if there were plans to increase unallocated reserves. Debbie Hogg acknowledged the importance of reserves for unforeseen expenditure but also to support transition in the delivery of services. Notwithstanding the significant budget challenges, consideration would be given to increasing the level of reserves.</p> <p>Concern was raised that Universal Credit would affect Collection Rates. It was reported that the Council was working with the Department for Works and Pensions and the Money Advice Service to support people in managing their finances, and to mitigate against a reduction in the collection of Council Tax.</p> <p>In reviewing measures to reduce the number of agency staff, it was noted that 20% of agency staff had been with the Council over 6 months and 15% over a year. Clarity was sought on how this was being managed and whether agency staff working for the Council for over 12 months would be eligible for employment rights.</p> <p>Debbie Hogg noted the concerns and explained the Council was</p>	

actively seeking to reduce these figures. Over the last quarter the number of assignments of agency staff had reduced. The increase in spend from the last quarter had been due to the submission of late invoices that related to Quarter 2.

Damian Allen acknowledged the need for agency staff within social care and to support the Adults transformation programme. The numbers had been reducing with agency staff now accounting for 8-10% of staff in this area. This figure compared favourably with other local authorities. A number of long-term agency staff contracts in AHWB would be terminating at the end of the financial year and future interim staff would be limited to 3 months wherever possible. This was considered appropriate for the nature of work undertaken.

Members noted the downward trend in relation to sickness absence but raised concern that only 36% of sickness triggers were actioned on time. The Committee was informed that addressing sickness absence could be complex and needed to be managed sympathetically where there were genuine cases, managers and staff entering the organisation needed to be clear of their respective roles and responsibilities. Due to the wide range of services, each Directorate had its own sickness target, which could be affected by a number of factors such as seasonal variations. Although the corporate target had not been met the aspirational target helped to ensure a downward trend in overall sickness levels Directorates were all seeking to manage this appropriately by reminding managers and staff of their duties and responsibilities in respect of sickness, holding challenge meetings with managers, escalating issues where necessary and working closely with Human Resources.

Doncaster Working and Doncaster Living

Peter Dale Director of Regeneration and Environment identified a number of key highlights and challenges.

The Committee was informed of the increase in the number of new homes built, an increase in the average resident-based weekly wage rates to £519.60 this was an increase of £39.60 (8.3%) from the same period in 2017/18. Employment rates were currently 71% compared with 68% in 2014/15. Generally, service indicators within Regeneration and Environment were on track.

Fly tipping had improved over the last quarter but remained a challenge. There was a natural increase in fly tipping incidents during Spring and further efforts to discourage this would need to be undertaken.

The Committee sought details on the positive impacts of exceeding the building of new homes target. It was reported this helped fill a housing

need in the Borough, helped improve the economy and provided affordable housing. Members were informed that the housing needs survey would help identify the effectiveness of our housing in the borough including whether development was taking place in the right areas and the right types of houses were being built. The affordable housing delivery programme update would be considered by the Regeneration and Housing Panel on 13th March.

Whilst recognising the positive increase in the average weekly wage Members were concerned this was still below the national average and sought assurances that this improvement would continue. It was explained that the increase was due to a number of positive factors including an increase in the number of high-level technology jobs and wage rates and employment. Members sought clarification on the Government's measure for identifying employment figures. It was agreed this information would be further considered at the Quarter 4 performance review meeting.

The Committee asked what impact the 10-point action plan was having in the town centre. It was reported that by working in partnership, the number of rough sleepers had reduced from 60 to 12 and there was a greater Police presence. A new housing pathway had established a local lettings agency, a specialist navigator for people sleeping rough and supported lettings to assist rough sleepers and homelessness. The initiative had demonstrated a positive partnership approach. Members also referred to the positive work undertaken by the Complex Lives team to help people in crisis.

Members enquired about the risk of un-ring fenced £19.9m SCRIF funding allocation in the capital programme being reallocated to other projects by the Sheffield City Region (SCR). It was explained that if the Local Growth funding allocation was not used by March 2021 it would be returned to the Government. As a fall back measure there was a list of reserve projects within the City Region identified for funding if these allocated projects could not be met within the timescales. Risk management processes were in place to monitor the programme and the Council worked closely with the SCR to ensure spend was allocated appropriately.

The Committee asked about the potential of using the High Street Fund in areas outside the town centre to support wider regeneration in the Borough. It was explained that up to £25m was available under the scheme and successful bidders would be announced in September. The Committee was informed that whilst opportunities for developing areas outside Doncaster town centre were always considered the funding could only be used in those areas where it met the criteria. Members were reminded that the allocation of funds for the Capital Programme was a Council decision and whilst there were significant projects taking place in the town centre other areas also benefited from major projects such as the Great Yorkshire Way and DN7 off junction 5

of the M18.

Doncaster Caring

Doctor Rupert Suckling Director of Public Health updated the Committee on key public health issues and the impact of managing increasing demand with reduced resources. Future challenges would also include taking decisions around whether to reduce provision in some high performing or well-regarded services such as sexual health provision because of a lack of resources.

Dr Suckling updated on the “Get Doncaster Moving” programme initiated to encourage greater activity levels across the Borough. Members were encouraged to support this initiative through their interactions with communities and residents. Members were also updated on the Place Plan and its effectiveness in joining up services to ensure residents stay healthy, well and independent.

Members asked about the effectiveness of current partnership arrangements in addressing the Place Plan and how they could be developed further.

It was reported that whilst partnership infrastructures were generally effective, the pace of change in some areas was slow and a key challenge was to ensure partnerships focused on the individual and not organisational structures. Effective partnership working was identified as a key element in addressing some of our most complex issues particularly where responsibility and accountability were shared between a number of organisations.

Members asked if there was likely to be more pooled budget arrangements to support partnership working in the future. It was reported that this was the likely scenario although there were issues around the complexity of funding arrangements and sharing risks. Reference was made to utilising shared arrangements for out of authority placements for vulnerable children and the use of pooled budgets to support this.

Members asked how this would be addressed going forward as it had been an issue for a number of years. It was reported that this required a significant change to achieve economies of scale and ensure quality placements were available. Officers explained the need to ensure the Council, Doncaster Children’s Trust and relevant health partners worked together with individuals, families and communities to address this.

Damian Allen provided an overview of Adults, Health & Well Being issues. Some of the positive areas identified were an increase in direct payments, reducing delays in hospital discharges, ensuring people were returned quickly back in their own homes. Increased demand for

services continued to be a pressure on the Council, the number of people in residential care was currently 1251 it was considered demand had now bottomed out and was likely to remain at this level.

Members asked for more detail on actions to encourage and support the take up of direct payments and were informed that ongoing training had taken place to ensure clarity on the appropriate and effective use of direct payments. It was expected that numbers of direct payments would increase going forward. The Money Management Service had been retendered and a provider secured to assist and support clients in understanding the system of direct payments and to reduce administration. It was expected take up of direct payments would remain around 30%.

In respect of the Your Life Doncaster Programme, Members enquired if there were any gaps in provision or areas of unmet need specifically due to its impact on a wide range of individuals and communities. It was reported that meeting individual needs was a challenge and the various initiatives and structures within the programme would need to be appropriate and focused at the right level to have the necessary impact. It was reported that the Community Investment Fund (CIF), an alliance of partners whose purpose was to reduce social isolation and loneliness provided access to seed corn funding to support community groups in establishing themselves. The lead partner for the CIF was Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT).

The Committee raised concern that the proportion of older people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services appeared to be inconsistent with the overall satisfaction survey. It was reported that this indicator was influenced by the demography and the increased complexity of needs of those being discharged from hospital. Members requested additional information in respect of this indicator to be forwarded to the Committee outside of the meeting.

Doncaster Learning

The Committee was informed there had been improvements this quarter in the number of children accessing good or better education. This was set to improve further as recent Ofsted inspections had moved two schools from “Requires Improvement” to “Good”. Persistent absence still remained a challenge however; attendance rates for those in care and in secondary schools had improved. A number of meetings with academies had taken place in respect of reducing absenteeism and a number of schools were undertaking audits to identify further areas to be addressed.

In terms of access to schools deemed “good” or “better”, Members identified that sometimes the rating awarded by Ofsted may be influenced by issues not relating to teaching or learning e.g.

safeguarding. Members considered that the focus on educational attainment was not a true reflection on the quality of the school or the child's experience particularly where they may excel in non-academic areas such as arts, drama and sport. The Committee suggested that a key challenge moving forward would be to identify an appropriate measure of the quality of the education received rather than just the Ofsted rating.

Feedback following the inclusion summit in January with Doncaster Schools was provided, the event gained support for signing up to a charter and for data sharing. There would be a further summit in May to track progress and continued engagement with secondary academies.

Following consideration by the Committee, elected Members who were not Members of the Committee were provided an opportunity to raise issues regarding the report and the following points were raised.

Concern was raised that the measure used by the Department for Work and Pensions to measure unemployment rates had been changed and this would not truly reflect numbers of people in work.

A Member expressed the view that more should be done to identify businesses within the Borough employing staff on zero hour's contracts.

Information was requested on the number of local staff being employed in the building and construction of some of the major town centre projects.

Further information was requested in respect of the acquisition of properties on Scott Lane. Members were referred to a Cabinet report which set out the reasons for this decision and it was agreed this would be forwarded on to the Member concerned.

In respect of the town centre, Peter Dale informed the Committee of the support available to small and independent businesses through Business Doncaster.

The Chair thanked those present for their contribution and to officers for responding to the issues raised by Members.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Overview & Scrutiny Management Panel receive the quarter 3 performance and financial information and note;
 - the changes to the Strategic Risks as detailed in paragraphs 42 to 45 and Appendix B;
 - the new additions to the Capital Programme, detailed in the Appendix A –Finance Profile;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide £0.6m funding to the Doncaster Children’s Services Trust based on the projected overspend for 2018/19, as detailed at paragraph 34; and • the carry forward of one-off staffing underspends in Corporate Resources to 2019/20 for temporary staffing of critical technology projects, as detailed in the paragraph 36; and <p>2) That the Committees comments and consideration of the report be received and noted.</p>	
26	<p><u>SLHD PERFORMANCE & DELIVERY UPDATE: 2018/19 QUARTER THREE (Q3)</u></p>	
	<p>Steve Waddington, Director of Housing services St Leger Homes Doncaster (SLHD) summarised key areas of performance identifying the continuing challenges resulting from the impact of welfare Reform and the collection of rent. Payment of rent was a particular challenge for tenants in the lead up to Christmas.</p> <p>A key challenge moving forward was SLHD’s ability to collect rent from 3000 tenants on Universal Credit who had their housing benefit paid to them directly.</p> <p>Members discussed the number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation and it was acknowledged that this was used where it was deemed necessary. Often this was a short-term measure for individuals fleeing domestic violence or for personal safety. Reference was made to the number of children that were in bed and breakfast accommodation.</p> <p>Members were informed that bed and breakfast was a temporary measure often a last resort to meet the short term housing needs of individuals or families. The minimum stay in bed and breakfast could be one night however; this could be significantly longer particularly if housing needs could not be met for example, if they were awaiting accommodation with special adaptations or specific accessibility arrangements. The Council has contracts with hotel providers to keep costs to a minimum level.</p> <p>Members sought clarity on the properties eligible for consideration under the right to buy scheme including types of properties that were exempt and the point at which right to buy would not include the building costs.</p> <p>Members who were not on the Committee commented on the valued service provided by SLHD in dealing with housing matters and particularly in working with communities.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Steve Waddington for his attendance.</p>	

	<p><u>RESOLVED</u> That the Committee's comments in respect of the progress of SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting DMBC strategic priorities be received and noted.</p>	
27	<p><u>OSMC WORKPLAN UPDATE FEBRUARY 2019</u></p>	
	<p>Andrew Sercombe, Governance and Member Services Manager presented the Overview and Scrutiny work plan for Members consideration.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The updated work programme be received and noted; 2) The forward Plan be received and noted; 3) The correspondence attached at Appendix C be received and noted; and 4) Robert Ellis (UNISON) replace Tom Fent (UNISON) as the workforce representative on the Community and Environment Panel with immediate effect. 	

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