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DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2015

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on WEDNESDAY, 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2015 at 10.00 AM.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor John Mounsey

Councillors Rachel Hodson, Richard A Jones, Jane Cox, Neil Gethin and Cynthia Ransome.

Invitee: - Paul O'Brien.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Cooke, Tony Revill and Craig Sahman.

| | | <u>ACTION</u> |
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| 13 | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u> | |
| | Councillor R.Allan Jones declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 by virtue of being a Board Member of St Leger Homes of Doncaster. | |
| 14 | <u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u> | |
| | There were no public statements made at the meeting. | |
| 15 | <u>FINANCE & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2015/16 - QUARTER 1.</u> | |
| | <p>The Chair welcomed Mayor Ros Jones and Deputy Mayor Glyn Jones along with Officers to the meeting and invited Steve Mawson, Assistant Director, Finance to introduce the item and provide the Committee with any additional information that was of relevance.</p> <p>Members were provided with an overview of the current situation with regard to the Council's finances, and it was reported that currently the Council were in a reasonably good financial position going into Quarter 2. The Committee noted that the current projected overspend at the end of Quarter 1 was potentially £0.9m for 2015/16 which placed the Council in a favourable financial position with a stronger hold on its difficulties. However, there was still a long way to go in terms of</p> | |

delivering further transformation and long term sustainable savings. Additionally, it was noted that the Council was expecting to have to find further savings in 2016/17 with the possibility of up to 40% of the Council's budget being reduced over the next 4 years which would prove challenging for the Council and all its services.

The Chair informed the Committee that a representative from each Directorate had been invited to the meeting and they would address each area in respect of budget and performance independently.

FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

Members raised a number of questions that they asked for reassurance and clarity on including the following:-

There was a shortfall in Regeneration and Environment of £2.5M, and Members queried where this was going to come from? Members were informed that without doubt it was going to be a challenging future, and Officers would be able to provide more information on this once they had a clearer picture of the 16/17 forecast. There were a number of options that they were looking at but there was no easy answer.

The Chair had a number of issues that he wished to raise, and queried the Doncaster 2017 programme, which was a programme that was to deliver the Council's £109m savings over the next 3 years. Within the report, it talked of being 'not on track', and the Chair queried how this was going to be addressed. The Mayor, Ros Jones, responded, and stated that the Council were expecting further cuts from Government to be imposed following the forthcoming spending review in November, but it was important that Council worked to deliver the best services they could although it could mean further reductions to services in the coming years. Further to this, The Assistant Director of Finance commented that there would be a lot that the Council wouldn't be able to deliver long-term, and it would prove to be a huge challenge.

Following on from this, the Chair raised a question regarding the delivery of Digital Council Savings – it was labelled as a key risk and Councillor Mounsey queried what this risk was? The Committee was informed that this was a subjective analysis and there had been a marked change in this last year. A lot of services were now available on-line and it was important to encourage people to move towards this new digital approach and change people's mind-sets.

The issue of poor PDR Management was raised by the Committee, as with only 78% of PDRs carried out, it demonstrated that managers were not managing their staff effectively. This was seen as a grave concern as PDRs should be seen as an opportunity to identify skills, development needs, and future issues that may arise. Officers acknowledged this issue, and stated that there was a lot of work to do on this. Members, however did request that it be placed on record that

they were not happy with only 45% of PDRs being completed within Children's services, and felt that this needed to be followed up.

Agency staff was raised as an ongoing issue of concern, as in times of austerity, there were still a huge amount of temporary and agency staff employed by the Council. This, it was reported, was an on-going problem and continuous pressures on the workforce meant that this wasn't an easy problem to address. However, the Council was above the national benchmark, but further ways to address this would be looked at.

Members noted within the report that a number of internal audits had not been done on time. Out of 24, only 9 had been done on time, with others either late or not carried out. Additionally, with regard to the Health and Well-Being Audit recommendations, 0 out of 5 had been completed. Members were informed that this was a huge piece of work and were working hard to improve these. A number of actions had been put into place and it was hoped improvements had now been made.

ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The Committee moved on to the Adults, Health and Well-Being Directorate and address their concerns to Pat Higgs, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care.

Members queried what was being done around the issue of drug and health checks in Doncaster. It was reported that the NHS Health Checks were offered to eligible people in Doncaster aged 40-74. The service had been recommissioned and the new provider had had a slow start but the uptake was improving. The new model delivered NHS Health checks through GPs. With regard to substance misuse, the Committee was informed that the whole of the substance misuse treatment service was currently being recommissioned, although there had been improvements in the number of people being successfully treated, it had been hard to sustain those improvements.

Members queried what impact the work done by the service was having and was any of the work being done duplicated by the Children's Trust. The Director of Public Health, Rupert Suckling, commented that there was an extensive programme in place working with parents and children (MPACT) and this was showing good outcomes. As far as duplication of work went, it was reported that the makeup of services provided was now changing and they were working together with the Trust to provide better outcomes for all.

Infant Deaths was highlighted as an issue due to its amber warning on the indicators. Members asked what was being done to further prevent this in the future? The Director of Public Health reported that a lot of work had been undertaken with midwives to tackle this problem and

particularly target those who smoked and/or were classified as obese, as these were the two biggest contributors to infant death.

Childhood obesity was raised as an area of concern as this was a continuing problem. Members noted that there was now more focus placed on the school nursing service, and they were working together with the Early Years' Service to work on this issue.

One particular point that Members commented on, was direct payments, as this was an area showing to be under performing. A query was raised asking what timescales were officers looking at to address this? Officers reported that an Action Plan was being developed and improvements were being delivered to look to narrow the gap.

Finally the issue of long-term care for the over 65s was raised. Members queried why so many people in this age bracket were being permanently admitted to long term care? The Committee noted that there was an action plan in place to tackle this, and work was progressing on the 'help to live at home' model. This piece of work was ongoing.

LEARNING, OPPORTUNITIES: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

With regard to the Learning and Opportunities, Children and Young People Directorate, the Committee requested an update on the work that was going to be done in terms of attainment. Members were informed by the Assistant Director, that there were a number of aspects to this that would be looked at, with focus placed on increasing and improving the employability of young people, and would be tackling underachievement in order to ensure that achievement at post 16 education was improved. There had been an increase in levels of success at both A-Level and GCSE in Doncaster, but there was still a lot of work to be done. Early Years had also improved by 12%, but the figures for Key Stage 2 however were more discouraging as this had seen a decline and urgent work was required in order to address the issue.

Queries were raised with regard to absenteeism as this was a continuing area of concern. It was noted that work was ongoing in terms of this issue, and whilst Primary School Levels were stable, at secondary level it was far more challenging. Looked after Children (LAC) were often challenging and work was done with the Children's Trust and foster carers to look at patterns and behavioural barriers to try and address this.

A Member queried if it was realistic to ask that all schools reach the good/outstanding classification by 2017? Officers informed the Committee that all children deserve a good or better school, and the

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| | <p>construction of the new school improvement strategy would hopefully look to bring about change.</p> <p>The Chair queried as to what Doncaster was doing in order to try ensure there were more skilled workers into the area and how they would develop the workforce to guarantee that there was a high standard of employable individuals coming forward.</p> <p>Members were informed that work was being done with schools in order to attract people to learn certain skills and motivate young people. The quality of sixth forms needed improving, and it was important that education performed better. Communication was key to ensure that everyone knew what options were open to them and it was imperative that parents were alerted to the opportunities available to them.</p> <p><u>REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Peter Dale, Director of Regeneration and Development to the meeting and thanked him for attending in order to answer Members questions. Councillor Mounsey opened the discussion by querying what the Council was doing in terms of the number of retail units that were currently empty in the town centre as they were failing to meet their target. Peter Dale commented that footfall within the town was erratic and was an issue that needed to be addressed. A forum had been created to see what could be done with a number of activities, markets, fairs and events planned to try and attract people into the town centre.</p> <p>Recycling was felt to be an area of concern within the Regeneration and Environment Directorate, as this had fallen and was detailed as a red flag on the performance indicators. Members were informed that this was largely seasonal, as green waste was included in the recycling figure and therefore would impact on the figure through the winter months. However, it was added that this would change once the Waste Recycling Plant at Manvers was fully operational.</p> <p>The Chair and Committee thanked all Officers for their input and knowledge and felt that the report was a well produced document, and their queries had been answered by the relevant Officer.</p> | |
| 16 | <p><u>ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT 2015/16 - QUARTER 1.</u></p> | |
| | <p>The Committee welcomed the Chief Executive, Susan Jordan and the Chairman of the Board, Alan Tolhurst to the meeting, thanking them for their attendance to present the report which provided information on St Leger Homes of Doncaster's performance for Quarter 1. The report aimed to highlight areas in which SLHD were performing well and raise any areas of concern.</p> | |

Members welcomed the report and were pleased to see that SLHD was continuing to do well, and that there was a year on year increase with regard to tenant satisfaction, with this currently standing at 90.9% satisfaction.

Out of the ten key performance indicators, it was noted that five were currently on target, two were within the 'acceptable' tolerance levels, and three were below target, these being as follows

- Void Rent Loss
- Days Lost to Sickness per Full Time Equivalent
- Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days

Work was being done on all of these indicators in order that these were addressed and improvements made.

It was noted that there would be further challenges to face in the future with the 1% reduction in social housing rents which would result in a large loss of income and would have a long-term effect on the ability to maintain and improve council housing stock. However, SLHD would look to work closely with the Council in order to provide the best service they could in the coming years.

Members were pleased with the report and commented that they were extremely happy with the service provided by St Leger Homes.

RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- 1) Note the Quarter One performance information for St Leger Homes of Doncaster; and
- 2) Note the actions to deal with performance issues.