

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 2016

A MEETING of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 2016 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor John Mounsey

Councillors Charlie Hogarth, Neil Gethin, Jane Kidd and Paul Wray and Cynthia Ransome (substitute for Rachael Blake)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Karen Johnson, Assistant Director, Assistant Director, Communities
Matt Cridge, Head of Stronger Families

		<u>ACTION</u>
33	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.</u>	
34	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
35	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest raised.	
36	<u>MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 6TH OCTOBER, 2016.</u>	
	The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record.	
37	<u>A. ITEMS WHERE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS MAY NOT BE EXCLUDED.</u>	
38	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS.</u>	
	There were no public statements.	
39	<u>STRONGER FAMILIES UPDATE.</u>	
	The Scrutiny Panel gave consideration to the National Troubled	

Families Programme that was introduced in April, 2012 for a three year period. During the first phase Doncaster agreed to help and turn round 870 families, who had been supported to gain employment, improve school attendance or stop any involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour.

Members noted that families had been encouraged to tackle the root of their issues and be full partners in the process, and have therefore felt listened to and taken initiative to be active in their improvement. Therefore this has reduced the need to access high cost services in the future.

The first phase was successful therefore Doncaster had been invited to participate in the second phase programme running from April 2015 to 2020. Each area has a set target through the indices of deprivation with 2950 families that required support in Doncaster.

The programme was based on 6 family themes which families must have at least two, to be eligible but some would fall into each of the six categories. The themes are:

1. Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour;
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly;
3. Children who need help;
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness;
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse; or
6. Parents and children with a range of health problems.

A presentation was provided to the Panel addressing the following issues:

The six family themes - Families have to meet a target and sustain it for a six month period but at least one year for education targets. Therefore, whether it be 1 or 6 targets, the family had to meet all, to ensure they reached their appropriate stage. If any of the targets were not met then the funding could not be drawn down. For example, the school attendance percentage had increased from 85% to 90% and if there were 2 out of 3 children that met the DfE 90% target but one failed to do so then funding could not be achieved.

School Attendance – the children of families that were assisted sometimes had a very low or zero school attendance record, due to the complexities the families faced on a daily basis. Some children were now reaching excellent attendance. Community initiatives were being undertaken to ensure enhanced school attendance and the DfE saw Doncaster's efforts as good practice.

Budget – It was noted that it had been reduced to less than half of the money available for phase 1, £1,800 instead of £4,000 and there was

still a mix of attachment fees and reward claims. Due to the high numbers of families in Doncaster that required assistance there was still a significant amount of income that could be secured. It was stressed that families are not left without support if the Authority is not successful in achieving a claim. To be successful in drawing down funds, it was acknowledged that partners would need to work with double the allocated number of families.

It was noted that every claim was audited before going for claim.

Evidence Improvements – The claims for aiding families to improve their lives were important but if they were not successful the need to evidence improvements was imperative.

Service transformation and sustaining the current service – Members were reminded that Doncaster partners agreed not to establish a separate service to support families, but support existing services to change the way they work with whole families in a more co-ordinated way, as a whole family approach around a single lead practitioner which also results in saving money.

The Authority must evidence how it is changing the way services work to be more pro-active and co-ordinated addressing whole family co-ordinated approach. It was noted that this year the Authority had only claimed for 34 families due to meeting the new Government targets. Very low claims had been made nationally therefore the authority was not dissimilar to other authorities. It was noted that some authorities had made higher claims but many had used the funding to set up a dedicated service. The risk with this direction was authorities were now having to transform the service. It was noted that if claims process for the programme was not required, the service would still be provided in the same “whole family” approach.

There is a commitment from all partners to change approach and cultures.

Data returns – these were required to be provided to the DCLG detailing progress data. This provided a deeper understanding of the Borough’s families and is required to be reported regularly through the year.

Data Analysis – Authorities have to show how they were measuring success and that they have a much richer understanding of the people they are working with. It was noted that Doncaster was an authority that provided comprehensive data and analysis but this was difficult to compare because other authorities did not provide such detail. Doncaster was again seen as a good practice authority.

It was recognised that data was provided by partners who were all working to improve the monitoring process. One area was highlighted

that required improvement, that being, the provision of a central monitoring system as the current system was undertaken on Microsoft XL and becoming very lengthy. A single computerised management system was required to record progress with each family that the Authority worked with. Independent companies had proposed different systems and Liquid Logic was also being investigated as to whether it could be used to record whole families. Data recording was essential to provide evidence of outcomes for the auditing process.

Tracking Families – Members recognised that families with complex need could be difficult to monitor and keep track of their whereabouts. Some families could split and reform with different partners in very short periods and therefore monitoring was challenging.

Families making progress – Since 1st April 2015

- 213 families have improved against outcome 1 - parents and children in crime or anti-social behaviour;
- 93 families have improved against outcome 2 – children who have not been attending school regularly;
- 147 families have improve against outcome 3 – children who need help;
- 198 families have improved against outcome 4 – adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness;
- 58 families have improved against outcome 5 – families affected by domestic violence and abuse;
- 68 families have improved against outcome 6 – parents and children with a range of health problems;
- 29 individuals who were in receipt of an out of work benefit (JSA, IS, ESA etc) have secured a job but have not yet hit the required timescale for payment by results to be claimed.

Crime and anti-social behaviour – There were a large number of families benefitting from assistance with this in addition to those that were classed as requiring help through the Stronger Families programme.

Feedback from clients – the service generally received positive feedback simply because the work undertaken with families improved their lives. One particular comment that was regularly received was that “we/l were listened to”.

Outcomes and measuring success were addressed with Members noting that it was no longer based on outcomes but it was stressed that this, for families was important.

The Government set criteria in phase 1 but now there is greater freedom and to ensure it is met, an Outcomes Plan has been developed as required by the Governement and agreed with Internal

	<p>Audit, working with partners, to agree Doncaster’s priorities.</p> <p>Other areas addressed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who were carers that did not attend school, because parent’s were their priority and the need to understand the “whole family” issues. • Priorities are to improve the families and at the current time, the financial assistance through claims is helping to do it a bit better. • It was noted that some posts were funded by money received through the Stronger Families programme. • There were problem areas across the whole of the Borough. • Domestic Abuse – this was a frequent problem but exact figures were not available however, it was noted that the Stronger Families partners worked closely with IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advocates) and Growing Futures. • Senior Managers were supportive of the stronger families programme, with strategic issues reported frequently through the Team Doncaster Partnership structure. • Equality implications – it was noted that the Stronger Families programme was a very inclusive programme for all families in the Borough however it was noted that single families are double the ratio in the general population of Doncaster. • Neighbourhood Officers – Members stressed that these officers were an invaluable part of the stronger families programme. <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Members workshop be provided from June, 2017 to outline how the Stronger Families Part 2 scheme has been extended and what effect there had been. Partners are to be invited and look at which partners are referring families. 2. Support the speedy resolution of a case management system to assist with data recording. 3. The success in Doncaster be publicised. 	
40	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2016/2016 - UPDATE</u></p>	
	<p>The Committee considered the Scrutiny Work Programme and Panel Chairs updated Members on areas considered since the last meeting.</p> <p>Each item set out on the Plan was addressed with and amendments made to ensure the plan for the rest of the year was realistic.</p> <p>Resolved:- That the Scrutiny Work Plan be noted and amended as discussed.</p>	