

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 28th February, 2017 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Friday, 3rd March, 2017

The end of the call in period is 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 14th March, 2017 and therefore, the decisions can be implemented on Wednesday 15th March, 2017

Present:

Chair - Mayor Ros Jones (Mayor of Doncaster with responsibility for Budget and Policy Framework)

Cabinet Member for:

Councillor Joe Blackham	Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Transportation
Councillor Nuala Fennelly	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Councillor Pat Knight	Portfolio holder for Public Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Chris McGuinness	Portfolio holder for Communities, the Voluntary Sector and Environment
Councillor Bill Mordue	Portfolio holder for Business, Skills, Tourism and Culture
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio holder for Housing

Apologies:-

Apologies were received from Vice-Chair, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillor Tony Corden

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements.

There were no public questions or statements made at the meeting.

Decision Record Forms from the meeting held on 14 February 2017 for noting (previously circulated).

Decision records dated 14th February, 2017, were noted.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Approval to enter into funding agreement with Sheffield City Region to be able to draw down SCRIF approved funding for the delivery of St. Sepulchre Gate West Scheme.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) supported the progression to Funding Agreement stage and the subsequent acceptance of £7.5m SCRIF funding (subject to the negotiation of acceptable terms and conditions with the grant sponsor in relation to Phase 1 and 2 of the St Sepulchre Gate West project; and
- (2) delegated the negotiating and agreeing the terms and conditions to the Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Mayor and Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report seeking the approval to enter into a funding agreement with Sheffield City Region to be able to draw SCRIF approved funding for the delivery of St Sepulchre Gate West Scheme.

It was reported that Doncaster Railway Station was a key economic asset providing enviable connectivity across the region and the UK; however, currently the environment around the station provides an unattractive and poor sense of arrival into Doncaster. A proposal is being developed alongside Virgin Trains East Coast to enhance and improve the sense of arrival by the redevelopment and public realm upgrades to the station forecourt and resulting changes to the surrounding infrastructure, as part of the wider St Sepulchre Gate West scheme.

Members were advised that the project would be a 3 phased scheme summarised as follows:-

Phase 1: A package of demolitions that enable the regeneration of the St Sepulchre Gate West area;

Phase 2: The regeneration of the station forecourt and improvements to the surrounding infrastructure to support the scheme, as a catalyst and enabler, creating a key gateway to the town centre as detailed in the Town Centre Masterplan; and

Phase 3: The redevelopment of the wider St Sepulchre Gate West area, utilising parcels of council owned land to create further business opportunities and link to the Town Centre Masterplan.

Work on the Phase 1 demolitions had commenced and was due to be completed by March, 2017. To support the delivery of Phase 2 of the scheme, SYPTE had funded work relating to the public transport provision and modelling. AECOM had been commissioned to undertake the transport modelling of the preferred scheme

layout to assess its impact and highlight highways impacts that require mitigation through refinements to the Scheme. It was also noted that the public would be consulted on the transport model and proposals for the public realm.

Cabinet were advised that through the agreement with Virgin there would be no loss of car-parking as it would be relocated onto the former Sorting Office site which was due for demolition under Phase 1 of the scheme.

The Mayor and Cabinet welcomed the report as the scheme presented an improved gateway to Doncaster that the borough could be proud of which would also lead to further initiatives in the future. The Mayor stated that it was imperative that reasonable conversations should be had to address any outstanding issues and was pleased to note that the public would be consulted and their input would be taken into consideration.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – Do Nothing

This option would see little or no investment in upgrades at St Sepulchre Gate West. The project would be mothballed and the Station would continue to operate under current arrangements. This would continue to give a poor first impression of Doncaster upon arrival at Doncaster Station and would not help to meet the ambitions of the emerging Urban Centre Masterplan.

Option 2 – Reduced SCRIF funding

A reduction will directly impact the quality of the scheme with a reduction in the specification which will diminish the potential impact for the impression for those arriving through the station. Reduced investment will support some improvements to the area with lower investment costs but will not produce the desired effects or benefits to the surrounding area. Individual elements of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project could in theory be removed but this approach would put in danger the overall objectives by not delivering the comprehensive sense of change required. It would potentially be possible to remove Phase 3 from the scheme, but that would miss out on the level of jobs and GVA created which have been used to justify the scheme.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Peter Dale, Director of Regeneration and Environment.

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. Finance and Performance Improvement Report: 2016/17 Quarter 3.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) noted areas of performance and financial information;
- (2) noted the write-offs of outstanding debt detailed in paragraph 41;
- (3) noted the virements approved by the Chief Financial Officer and approved the virements over £0.5m for Cabinet, detailed in Appendix B;
- (4) retrospectively approved the fees detailed in paragraph 43; and
- (5) noted the new additions to the Capital Programme, as detailed in Appendix D.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet was presented with the latest financial and performance information that indicated the Council's position towards the 2016/17 budget and progress towards the outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan.

Overall the third quarter report showed that the Council was making good progress but still faced challenges both financially and for it to improve its performance activity across key areas of the Council's business.

At quarter 3, the Council was forecasting a year-end overspend of £3.9m. This included Regeneration and Environment £1.7m overspend, Adults, Health and Wellbeing £1.7m overspend and Children's Trust £1.2m overspend. In terms of overall performance, 86% of services were exceeding or were close to local targets which was an improvement on the previous quarterly figure of 80%. Further details were provided within Appendix A of the report.

Members noted that Doncaster was generally performing well and in some cases was above regional and national trends. Doncaster was currently within the top 10 cities for the fastest growth in private sector jobs and the number in employment remained at a level not seen for at least 12 years. The authority was on track to achieve its target of 920 net new homes in 2016/17 this year with 78 affordable homes completed. 68% of the Council's spend was with local providers, exceeding the target of 66%. It was further acknowledged that at the end of quarter 3, investment into Doncaster stands at £77.6m which exceeds the quarter 3 target level by over £30m. In addition, 772 new jobs had been created with the support of Business Doncaster against a target of 500.

However, it was acknowledged that the Council still had more work to do with regard to Direct payments, Care Leavers in employment, training or education, children's case file audit and overall staff sickness levels. Further detail was presented within Appendix A of the report

Councillor Nuala Fennelly made comments with regard to the Children's Trust stating that she felt assured that improvements would be made, particularly as the Trust was being overseen by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services along with the Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills (DCS). She stated that it was imperative that the Council received a detailed action plan from the Trust. Cabinet were advised that an action plan was promised to the Council during March 2017. The Mayor acknowledged that there were a lot of positives to take from the report, highlighting the improvements in stimulating the economy and education to ensure we provide jobs for young people of the borough

Councillor Pat Knight stated that it was pleasing to see how the Council had helped reduce the utility bills for our most vulnerable residents in the communities by enhancing their homes with Solar Panels and Cladding.

Councillor Joe Blackham applauded all those officers involved with the hard work carried out and thanked them for an excellent job.

Jo Miller, Chief Executive stated the report presented a good news story which had been a result of a strong political and managerial leadership showing that the Council were clear on the objectives set. She paid tribute to the workforce and partners, however she reported that the situation was only going to get tougher as it had been recently announced that the Government were seeking a further 6% savings from Local Authorities. She also highlighted the potential costs with the introduction of Universal Credit. Jo gave assurances to Members that the Adults Improvement Programme was on track. Referring to the overspends in Regeneration and Environment, Jo emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Council's trading agreements were fit for purpose and making money. In relation to the Children's Trust, she stated that continued pressure would be made to ensure a detailed action plan was put in place to address the current overspend within the service. In addition, she commented that in times of austerity there can be no part of a public service that was immune from being as efficient as it can be to ensure that the services provided to residents continue to improve.

In conclusion, the Mayor highlighted that prior to the Government imposing the introduction of the Children's Trust, the Council had made great strides in relation to Children's Services. However, as a Council it is imperative that we ensure the Trust provide the best service it can for our children. She pointed out that the service was part of the overall cost to the Authority and the Trust cannot continue to overspend as it had done. She applauded the Trust for the work carried out so far, but stated there was a need to further improve the service provided. The Mayor agreed that the report presented a good end of year position but stressed that the Council will continue to monitor and encourage the Trust to maintain and improve service delivery within budget.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

There were no other options considered.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Simon Wiles, Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

DECISION 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. St Leger Homes of Doncaster Performance and Delivery Update: 2016/17 Quarter 3.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the progress of SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting DMBC strategic priorities.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) Performance and Delivery Update for 2016/17 for Quarter 3 (October to December). Paul Tanney, Chief Executive, SLHD, was in attendance to present the report.

It was reported that at Quarter 3, six of the ten key performance indicators were on target, two were within acceptable tolerance levels and two were below target. Further details explaining notable areas of performance were provided within paragraphs 8.1 – 8.7 of the report and details covering the performance against all ten indicators were provided at Appendix A to the report.

Paul Tanney, Chief Executive highlighted the good performance in relation to void rent loss despite operating in challenging circumstances. He also stated that with the proposed introduction of universal credit further challenges lay ahead, however plans were in place to address any issues that may arise. In relation to scheduled repairs, 22 had not been completed which were largely due to the Christmas period and although considered amber, this performance was an improvement on the 2015/16 year end position. With regard to Number and % of households maintaining or established independent living, it was reported staffing within this area of the business had been challenging due to short term pressures linked to 'Tent City' and long-term sickness and vacancies to be filled. It was envisaged that performance would be back on track by the end of the year.

It was reported that with regard to number of households in temporary accommodation which were below target, it was noted that there had been a significant effect on the numbers entering temporary accommodation during November and December as a result of the work carried out around 'Tent City' and the joint Council/SLHD focus on homelessness in the town centre over recent months. It was noted that sickness had also increased which was a result of short-term sickness.

The Mayor and Cabinet welcomed the report which presented a good end of year position. However, the Mayor highlighted that whilst the Council had committed to addressing and responding to homelessness within the town, there was a need to ensure that relocation of people was dealt with sensitively and actively managed to avoid any problems or disruption to existing residents.

Further discussion took place in relation to stress related sickness and although this had dropped slightly there was still a requirement to monitor and listen to the needs of staff to ensure stress related sickness is reduced.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

There were no other options considered.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Paul Tanney, Chief Executive, St Leger Homes of Doncaster.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker