

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 18th July, 2017 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Friday, 21st July, 2017

The end of the call in period is 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 1st August, 2017 and therefore, the decisions can be implemented on Wednesday 2nd August, 2017

Present:

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

Cabinet Member for:

Councillor Nigel Ball	Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Leisure and Culture
Councillor Joe Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services
Councillor Nuala Fennelly	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Councillor Chris McGuinness	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment

Apologies:-

Apologies were received from Vice-Chair Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Rachael Blake, Bill Mordue and Jane Nightingale.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

In accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 3.2, Mr Tim Brown asked Mayor Ros Jones the following question:-

‘Mayor Jones, following our convivial conversation at the People's Powerhouse Conference, can you clarify whether the proposed Community Engagement Framework / Policy is an attempt to address a gap of more than 7 years old? If this is the case and given the Twitter exchanges involving DMBC Chief Officers' and a former DMBC Chief Officer can you explain the rationale for DMBC not having a community engagement plan for so many years and what effort has been undertaken to understand how such corporate neglect impacts on BME citizens rights to collaborate, innovate and challenge DMBC/ Team Doncaster race equality performance?’

The Mayor Ros Jones, gave the following response:-

Effective Community engagement is already happening across the Borough in many forms. Indeed many of the Borough's achievements over the last four years would not have been possible without it. There are a whole host of examples such as the excellent work our communities teams do day in day out, the community library service delivering over 132,000 volunteer hours in 15/16, the extensive consultation on our waste contract, the community led model that is making a success of 'Well Denaby'. I could go on. In these and many other cases engagement is successful, timely and effective. But I want us to go further and be more ambitious.

The Council has a consultation policy and a communication and engagement framework in place. However it was clear to me that we can go further and needed to take a fresh look at our approach to engagement that took account of the latest evidence and best practice. That's why I asked my Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities, Councillor Glyn Jones for a Community Engagement Framework to be developed and the policy direction to be set out as soon as possible in the new Mayoral term. This allows us to build on what we are already doing well, learn from other places and crucially bring greater consistency to our approach.

The Community Engagement framework will bring this consistency by;

- Developing a policy that sets out what community engagement means and why it is important to the Council,
- Developing a Strategy which details how we will achieve our policy aims but more importantly consults our people in the process,
- Refreshing the Community Engagement Toolkit so there are clear tools and guidance available to all our staff.

The first part of this framework is agreement of the Community Engagement Policy. The policy has been created using evidence of best practice such as the LGA guide to New Conversations (developed through analysis of a range of sources) and we've incorporated feedback from the Inclusion and Fairness Forum.

But deciding what is important and what we want to achieve is not enough. The next stage will be to develop the Community Engagement Strategy, with local people, which will show how we will achieve the policy statements that we want to agree today.

The fact that the Engagement Framework is being agreed at today's Cabinet meeting has not stopped the Council and its partners from engaging with communities and taking effective, timely action. The examples already cited plus the development of a BME needs assessment and subsequent action plan (signed off by the Health and Well-Being board in June 2017), the tremendous success of the Tour de Yorkshire, and the work of the independently chaired Fairness and Inclusion Forum are further examples of this commitment to effective engagement.

Thank you for your question.

At the discretion of the Chair, Mr Tim Brown asked a supplementary question but the Mayor reiterated that his supplementary question had been answered.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Establishment of a new Special School for Communication and Interaction Special Educational Needs in Doncaster.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the proposal to establish a new Special School for Communication and Interaction in Doncaster in conjunction with the Department for Education and appropriate sponsor;
- (2) agreed to provide the successful school sponsor with a 125 year lease on a peppercorn rent for 5 acres of land currently designed for commercial use at Hungerhill Enterprise Park, Edenthorpe; and
- (3) delegated authority to the Director of People and the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools to negotiate terms and enter into the lease and grant funding agreements with the Department of Education.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Damian Allen, Director of People presented a report to Cabinet seeking approval for the establishment of a Special School for Communication and Interaction in the Borough. He stated that this was a good news story for Doncaster. The school would be a free school which would legally be an academy and so be a state funded school. Such schools are held accountable through a Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State for Education and the Academy Trust which operates the school. He reported that the Local Authority had previously identified a shortfall in provision within the Borough for specialist places for complex needs under Communication and Interaction with related Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs.

The report stated that within the time constraints set by the DfE a bid had been put forward for establishing a 100 place Special School for Communication and Interaction. The bid included provision of a site for the school by the Council on the basis of a peppercorn rent with a 125 year lease. The provision is expected to provide up to 80 places for use by Doncaster Council as well as 20 places for usage by neighbouring Local Authorities.

Cabinet welcomed the report stating that this was a good news story for Doncaster and the proposed special school would ensure children within the borough have the best possible start.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Currently a number of SEN pupils are educated outside of the Borough, are educated other than at school or are attending schools in the Borough but would benefit from specialist provision within the area. Whilst this may continue there are a number of benefits to opening a new Special School for Communication and Interaction within the area outlined within the report.

Site analysis

In order for the proposal to go ahead to the feasibility stage with the DfE a long list of 10 possible sites were considered in light of the following criteria:-

- Proximity to a Mainstream School – It is intended that the school will be closely associated with another mainstream secondary school to enable pupils to easily access a mainstream curriculum where appropriate. Being on the same site or adjacent to another mainstream school would allow for pupils to interact between the two sites.
- Planning (Site accessibility) – The accessibility of the sites was assessed taking into account the ability for pupils to access the school using public service routes and access into the site from the road network.
- Ownership – The land would be subject to a peppercorn rent and any loss of income was assessed.
- Planning (Public consultation) – It was important that the chosen site had good positive relationships with its neighbours from the outset or placed within a new development. Previous experience from similar developments have led to delays and rejections of sites due to residential objections.
- Size (4+ Acres) – The expected size of the school required is in the region of 4 acres.
- Central Location – The school would address the needs of pupils for the whole of Doncaster and beyond. Sites were considered only within a central location of the Town Centre and with easy access, with the maximum distance being 3 miles from the town.

The identified site scored highly in each criterion, in particular in terms of site access both for pupils and local planning constraints and its proximity to an outstanding mainstream school.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Damian Allen, Director of People

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. Community Engagement Framework: Policy.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the Community Engagement Policy at Annex A of the report; and
- (2) noted the Community Engagement Strategy Consultation and Due Regard Statement at Annex B and C of the report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Chris McGuinness, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Vountary Sector and the Environment presented the report stating that the next stage will be to develop the Community Engagement Strategy, with local people, which will show how we will achieve the policy statements that we want to agree today.

He stated that the policy describes Community Engagement as “the conversations we have with people about decisions that affect them”.

We then need to decide which conversations need to be had, who with, and how. He expressed that this is nowhere near as easy to do as it is easy to say. The next part of the process will help to make those decisions and by agreeing this policy today, it will be the first step in ensuring that the right people at the right time help to shape what we do.

Cabinet welcomed the report stating that this was just the start of the process that the Council can build upon to ensure the introduction of the strategy.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1: Do nothing

This option is not recommended as it will not allow the co-ordination and improvement of engagement activity consistency across the Council. There will be a continuation of the current system which is not fit for purpose as we embark on an ambitious programme of reform, potentially minimising what we can achieve in the long term.

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 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Sprinkler installation to HRA High Rise Flats.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the procurement and installation of a fit for purpose sprinkler fire suppression system to the flats in all 9 HRA high rise blocks in Doncaster; and
- (2) agreed that the project be added to the Regeneration and Environment capital programme, the exact value will be included into the programme as part of the quarterly Finance and Performance reporting following the outcome of the procurement exercise.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Following the recent tragic events at Grenfell Tower in London, local authorities across the UK have had to take immediate action, such as having the cladding on high rise blocks checked and the sector as a whole has been considering some of the wider and more long-term implications for them and their communities.

It was reported that in consideration of those tragic events, it has become important to assure tenants that their safety is of paramount importance. St Leger Homes currently carry out regular fire safety checks at all Doncaster's HRA high rise properties, in addition to carrying out regular fire risk assessments. These have been reviewed in conjunction with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue.

Members were advised that St Leger Homes and DMBC colleagues have been working closely with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue to further alleviate any fears of residents in Doncaster's high rise blocks. Whilst working together it has become more apparent that fire suppression sprinkler systems have been proven to reduce the impact of fire and a potentially lifesaving tool that bring many benefits.

It was stated that it is intended that subject to approval the exact specification will be based on expert advice and subject to consultation with tenants and residents.

The Mayor and Cabinet stated that their thoughts were with the families and communities affected by the Grenfell Tower fire. That tragedy had sharpened the focus on all local authorities to look carefully at their own buildings to ensure residents were safe within their homes.

Cabinet were advised that none of the 9 high rise buildings within Doncaster have the same cladding as Grenfell Tower but it is felt that safety was paramount for residents and the proposed installation of sprinklers systems had been welcomed by Fire and Rescue. The Mayor also stated that Councillor Glyn Jones, Portfolio for Housing was also very supportive of the sprinkler system being installed which will enhance the safety of residents.

At this point, the Mayor requested that the Press and Public leave the room whilst Cabinet were given the opportunity to consider the exempt appendix to the report.

Cabinet then discussed the financial aspects of the proposals and officers answered a range of questions from members on issues surrounding the report.

The press and public were invited back into the meeting.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1

Do nothing and rely on current fire safety provision and controls.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Appendix A to the report contains exempt information within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Peter Dale, Director of Regeneration and Environment.

DECISION 4.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

9. Strategic Investments.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted and approved:-

- (1) to proceed with the legal process to secure the purchase of the two care parks using IMF funding;
- (2) delegated authority to the Council's Property Officer, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Director of

Regeneration and Environment, to negotiate terms and enter into conditional agreements using the Property Investment Guidelines as a target;

- (3) to proceed with feasibility work to identify significant town centre regeneration proposals;
- (4) the addition of the car parks to the Regeneration and Environment Capital Programme for 2017/18; and
- (5) the addition of the virement of the Finance and Corporate Services Capital Programme, which contains the Investment & Modernisation Fund allocation, into the Regeneration and Environment Capital Programme, where this scheme will be delivered and monitored.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet were presented with a report which sought approval to proceed with the acquisition of two strategic car parks to further enhance the Council's ability to regenerate the town centre. It was noted that if approved the Council would look to bring forward regeneration proposals for the benefit of the town centre.

Councillor Joe Blackham stated that the proposal meets the requirements that the Council had set itself for both Capital and Revenue and presented a favourable opportunity to assist the Council to meet the Government cuts to the Council's revenue budget.

At this point, the Mayor requested that the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst members considered the exempt appendix to the report.

Members were provided with further details in relation to financial aspects of the report.

The press and public were invited back into the room.

In conclusion, the Mayor and Cabinet felt that the proposals presented sound economic strategy for the borough.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1: Not to acquire the car parks.

Should the Council do nothing then the sites will be sold to an unknown third party and the Council will lose the opportunity to purchase two strategic sites within the town centre.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

The Appendices to the report are not for publication, as they contain details of third

party commercial interests, which are exempt information within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended) information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Peter Dale, Director of Regeneration and Environment.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker