

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 2019

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE on THURSDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 2019, at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Majid Khan
Vice-Chair - Councillor Linda Curran
Mayor - Ros Jones
Deputy Mayor - Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Nick Allen, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, Steve Cox, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, Martin Greenhalgh, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Richard A Jones, Kenneth Keegan, Jane Kidd, Nikki McDonald, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Andy Pickering, Tina Reid, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Derek Smith, Frank Tyas, Sue Wilkinson, Jonathan Wood and Paul Wray.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Cooke, Jane Cox, John Gilliver, Charlie Hogarth, Cynthia Ransome and Austen White.

54 Declarations of Interest, if any

Councillor Kevin Rodgers declared a non-disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda item 8, 'Director of Public Health Annual Report 2018', by virtue of his involvement with Bentley Urban Farm and Good Food Doncaster, as referred to in the report.

55 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22nd November, 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday, 22nd November, 2018, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

56 To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council, the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, made the following announcement:-

"Colleagues,

Today I launch my draft revenue budget proposals to Council and commence the consultation process.

It is another prudent financial plan, aligned to the Doncaster Growing Together strategy approved by Council, which focuses on protecting the vulnerable in our communities within the reducing resources we have available as well as investing in Doncaster's future.

In the current climate, that is no easy task. As everyone in this Chamber knows, we continue to face difficult financial challenges.

I have to inform colleagues that there has been no let-up by the Conservative Government. Their continuing cuts to Council budgets have left us with another significant budget gap. So much for Theresa May saying that Austerity is over, I can guarantee that Austerity is certainly not over where Local Government is concerned!

Government grant cuts, rising demand for services and an increase in costs, will see us face an estimated £21 million budget gap in 2019/20, and a further £13 million in 2020/21 taking into account the impact of using one-off funding in 2019/20. By 2021, this will take the total budget gap the Council has had to bridge to a staggering £272 million, since Government austerity measures started in 2010/11.

A paper to be published shortly states Northern Cities budgets have faced the biggest cuts. Doncaster is ranked the third hardest hit by Austerity in percentage terms.

Through hard work, expertise and the use of one off funding, the proposals set out the plan to balance the books for 2019/20, but within this it is clear that the focus on finance is never ending.

In light of the economic challenges we continue to face, it doesn't get any easier to prepare a budget which invests in our future, protects the most vulnerable and maintains the services that matter most to our residents.

This draft budget also includes a Council Tax increase of 2.99% and a further 2% increase through the government's social care 'precept' which contributes towards the pressures for adults social care. Together these will generate £5.3 million. The overall increase equates to an additional 82p per week for Band A and £1.23 per week for Band D.

These budget proposals continue to deliver the Council's priorities and the priorities of this Labour Administration to:-

- Increase jobs, apprenticeships, inward investment and grow our economy, including more well paid, high skilled jobs that local people can access;
- Deliver more new homes that meet the needs of everyone;
- Developing our Town Centres and the arts, culture and leisure offer;
- Increase physical activity, including through cycling, to improve population health and well-being;
- Raise education standards, and bring our education system and business community together, to give our young people more opportunities to flourish;

- Deliver vital services for children and vulnerable residents, joining up health and social care, focusing on prevention and support, and transforming our adult services; and
- Supporting and working with our communities, to help keep them clean, green and safe.

Doncaster has made great progress in recent years, but we can and will do more.

However, we must of course look to the future and there is plenty to look forward to in 2019, including:-

- The return of the Tour De Yorkshire;
- Welcoming the UCI World Championships to Doncaster in September;
- Work continuing on our new library and museum;
- More new house building across the Borough, including new Council housing;
- The progression of our railway station 'City Gateway', markets regeneration and quality streets schemes; and
- Work commencing on the new University Technical College, Cinema & Restaurants in the Civic and Cultural Quarter.

Residents across Doncaster will benefit from capital investment from the Council of £330 million by 2021 in projects to further improve education, housing, infrastructure, retail, leisure and culture, as well as attracting investors and visitors to the Borough. All of these will contribute to growing Doncaster's economy and improving people's ability to access opportunities.

However, I am extremely disappointed at the Government's complete failure to deal with the national funding problems facing local authorities, particularly with regard to adult and children's social care.

Their answer, which is to underfund vital services and yet increase the financial burden on local taxpayers, is wrong. It places strain on to those who can least afford it, through a regressive tax system that benefits wealthy areas over places like Doncaster and South Yorkshire.

Unfortunately, Government policy on Local Authority funding means that Council Tax rises are assumed in order to sustain vital services.

But Council Tax increases do not bridge the funding gap; far from it. So in Doncaster, like elsewhere, people will see their Council Tax rise as the Government squeeze on hard working families continues.

Doncaster will still have one of the lowest Council Taxes in Councils of our size in the country. We were the seventh lowest in 2018/19 and the lowest in South Yorkshire.

Our only course of action is to grow our way out of the situation.

The good news is that in Doncaster, we are continuing to grow.

I want to thank all of the staff, partners and colleagues in this Chamber who have helped us to deliver our successes, in often difficult circumstances.

These budget proposals continue our prudent and effective, but ambitious, approach to delivering services and supporting our Borough.

I will of course also listen to any budget proposals brought forward by Councillors.

If colleagues do wish to bring forward any alternative proposals, I would encourage them to do so at an early stage, so that they can be discussed in detail in advance of the budget meeting in March.

Thank you.”

57 Questions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13

There were no questions from the public received for this meeting.

58 Proposals for Localised Council Tax Support from 1st April, 2019 (the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme)

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the proposals for the Localised Council Tax Support for 2019/20.

It was reported that from 1st April, 2013 Council Tax Benefit was replaced by Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). Under LCTS, billing authorities had to decide for working age claims, who was eligible for a reduction in their Council Tax and what level of support they should receive. Support for people of pensionable age and other aspects of the scheme were prescribed by regulations and the Council had no discretion in relation to these matters.

Members were informed that approximately 24,200 households currently received a reduction in their Council Tax from Doncaster Council's Local Support Scheme; of these 10,760 were of pension age and 13,440 were of working age on a low income.

It was noted that the Authority was required to consider whether to revise or replace its scheme on an annual basis. Local changes to the scheme were proposed from 1st April, 2019 to make it easier for people on Universal Credit to claim support and to disregard some additional income and earnings when working out support in a small number of cases.

Further changes to the scheme had been applied based on matters arising from The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 which were laid before Parliament on 14th December, 2018 and came into force on the 14th January, 2019. Some of the rates and allowances used to work out support for claims from those of working age, had also been uprated in line with the Government rates that applied to Housing Benefit. The Council's LCTS scheme had stipulated that the Authority would apply this uprating on an annual basis since it was introduced in 2013.

In conclusion, the proposed LCTS scheme from 1st April, 2019, continued to provide 100% support to the poorest households in receipt of 'passported' benefits such as Income Support and most unemployed people on Universal Credit which remained a priority for Doncaster Council. It was noted that this Authority was one of only a 'handful' of Councils in the country that continued to provide maximum support to those on the lowest income levels.

RESOLVED that

- (1) that the requirement for people claiming Universal Credit to make a separate Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTS) claim to the Council where they have indicated on their Universal Credit claim, that they also want to claim LCTS and this information has been passed to the Council by the Department for Work and Pensions, be removed;
- (2) the information provided by the Department for Work and Pensions for someone claiming Universal Credit about their income and personal circumstances, be used to work out the person's LCTS rather than the claimant having to provide separate information to the Council;
- (3) the LCTS claim period be extended to six months so that claimants do not have to reapply for support following a short period of non-entitlement, for example, following a one-off or short-term wage increase which can occur frequently where the claimant receives Universal Credit;
- (4) the Bereavement Support Payment be disregarded when working out how much support someone is entitled to which would align the treatment of this income with the Housing Benefit scheme; (This proposal would only affect a very small number of claimants (3 currently) at minimal cost);
- (5) an additional prescribed amount (currently £17.10 per week) from the earnings of a couple where one of the partners is disabled, regardless of which partner is working to align the treatment of earnings in these circumstances with the Housing Benefit scheme, be disregarded; (This proposal would only affect a very small number of claimants (around 200 nationally) at minimal cost);
- (6) it be noted that any increase in Council Tax liability for the Council, its major preceptors and local parish preceptors, will increase the cost of LCTS; the assumptions used in the cost of the scheme for 2019/20 are an overall increase of 4.99% for Doncaster's Council Tax;
- (7) the public consultation outcome summarised at Appendix 1 of the report, as part of the decision making, be noted;
- (8) the Equality Analysis and Due Regard Statement attached at Appendix 2 of the report, as part of the decision making, be noted; and
- (9) the revised scheme linked at Appendix 3 of the report, which incorporates the proposed changes at (1) to (5) above, and which has also been amended to take into account The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018, be

approved; these amendments in the main are to increase certain figures which are used in calculating whether a person is entitled to a reduction and the amount of that reduction. These increases relate to pensioner claims and most of the rates used in the calculation of working age claims have been frozen in line with the rates for Housing Benefit. The Regulations were laid before Parliament on 14th December, 2018 and come into force on the 14th January, 2019 for application in the Council's revised local scheme from the 1st April, 2019.

59 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2018

Dr Rupert Suckling introduced to Council, the Director of Public Health Annual Report for 2018, which was delivered as a short video which would be made available online, and was supported by 2 standalone documents. The document entitled 'No health without mental health' supported the video and the second document entitled 'Public Health Annual Report 2018', provided an update against the recommendations from 2017.

It was reported that this is the fourth annual report authored by Dr Suckling, but this year's report was different as it focused on a particular topic. Dr Suckling explained that he had been able to do this as the Council now had the State of the Borough report, describing the overall picture of the Borough, and the Public Health function which was well embedded in Council finance and performance management processes.

Members were informed that the focus for this year's report was 'No health without mental health'; this was the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively, and was different from mental disorder that included mental illness, learning disability or personality disorder. Mental disorders and mental illness in particular, had been reviewed this year by both the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Doncaster Health and Wellbeing Board.

Members noted that even if people had a mental disorder, mental health could be improved and that the three key factors which improve or create mental health were 'our circumstances, our resources and the activities we focus our time on'. The report concentrated on 'the activities we focus our time on' and the 5 ways to wellbeing which were:-

- Learning;
- Connecting;
- Being active;
- Giving; and
- Taking notice

Dr Suckling hoped that Members in the Chamber obtained an indication of the 5 ways to wellbeing in action and the way the Council was changing to support these approaches.

In conclusion, Dr Suckling outlined the following 4 new recommendations which were detailed within the report:-

- Create, improve and protect mental wellbeing using the five ways to wellbeing to harness the role of arts, culture and physical activity, promote social connections and contribute to inclusive economic growth and the reduction of health inequalities.
 - DGT and the focus on inclusive growth; Get Doncaster moving and culture, were all in the right direction.
- Doncaster Council and partners should sign the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health as an indication of support for the mental wellbeing of both Doncaster people and Doncaster employees.
 - Doncaster Health and Wellbeing Board signed this last week
- Suicide was the biggest killer of men under 45 in the UK and today, 16 people would take their own lives which was why Dr Suckling was keen that in Doncaster, the Council pledge to become a zero suicide Borough and that the Council always asked twice when it was talking to people and asking about their mental health. This should be backed by rolling out Mental Health First Aid training across the Borough.
 - Suicide prevention strategy
- Continue to deliver mental health service improvements across the life course with service users as identified by Overview and Scrutiny reviews including:-
 - improving the mental health of parents at the time of the birth of a new child;
 - improving children and young people's mental health by responding quicker to all requests for support;
 - improving responses to crisis including better use of peer support;
 - reducing the need for and use of Out of Area placements;
 - Improve employment support for those with mental health issues to help them stay in work or return to work.

RESOLVED that Council note and publish the Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2018.

60 Annual Pay Policy Statement 2019/20

The Council considered the Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20, which was presented by Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services, which set out the Council's policy for paying staff, in particular its senior staff, namely Chief Officers, and detailed the relationship between the highest, lowest and average paid employees in the organisation.

It was reported that the policy statement was a public document and was published on the Council's website each year, and clearly demonstrated a willingness to increase accountability, transparency and fairness in setting pay. It also included information about where more detailed salary information was published as part of the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts.

It was proposed that the same format be used this year as in previous years, with the following observations:-

- There had once again been a positive reduction in the ratios this year (the ratio being how many times greater a salary was compared to the lowest salary) between the highest and lowest paid staff;
- The current ratio between the highest paid salary and lowest employee salary had reduced again from 9.54 to 1 last year to 9.46 to 1 this year;
- The ratio between the highest employee salary and average employee salary had also reduced from 6.35:1 to 6.30:1; and
- These changes continued to reflect a positive reducing trend in the difference between the highest and lowest paid in line with the Council's commitment to reduce the pay difference and increase low pay.

It was anticipated that this policy would not need to be amended during the period it covered from April, 2019 to March, 2020. However, if circumstances dictated that a change of policy was considered to be appropriate during the year, then any amendments would be included in the following year's statement presented to Full Council.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 be approved.

61 Overview and Scrutiny Update - May to December, 2018

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC), Councillor Kevin Rodgers, presented a report which provided a summary of the key work undertaken by the OSMC and its four Standing Panels in the period of May to December 2018, and also any future issues to be considered.

The Chair conveyed his thanks to all Members, the Executive, Officers, partners, stakeholders and the public, who had taken the time to attend meetings and engage in the Overview and Scrutiny process.

Councillor Rodgers reported that there continued to be a real effort to focus on performance monitoring and review work through OSMC and Panels to ensure the Council had a greater impact on future policy development and improvement of services. Through work undertaken, Members had met with care leavers, Youth Parliament, Yorkshire Water, Environment Agency, Coal Authority, Drainage Board and partners including CCG, NHS, Children's Trust, St Leger Homes and South Yorkshire Police.

Members noted that outside of the formal meetings, the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs continued to meet regularly with the Mayor and respective Cabinet Members, to ensure they were kept up to date with developments in portfolio areas to effectively plan and manage Scrutiny work plan issues.

Councillor Rodgers commented that looking forward to 2019, the major issues Overview and Scrutiny needed to focus on were:-

- The function would be supporting a regional Health Scrutiny meeting addressing hospital services review;
- Continuing with mental health as a theme;
- Housing Investment;
- Behaviour Transformation in Education; and
- Crime and Disorder - undertaken by the Communities and Environment Panel looking at their performance and priorities.

Councillor Rodgers concluded by thanking all Overview and Scrutiny Members, Executive Members, Partners, Stakeholders, Officers and members of the public, who continued to contribute to the Overview and Scrutiny process.

RESOLVED that the work of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and its four Standing Panels for the period May to December, 2018, be noted.

62 Proposed Diary of Meetings - 2019/21

The Council considered a report which outlined the draft diary of meetings for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 Municipal Years

It was noted that the move to the four year term of office for Councillors had provided an opportunity to forward plan the Council's Diary of Meetings for a longer period of time, allowing for the better scheduling of decisions, meetings and events throughout the Council. Additionally, it was anticipated that it would prove helpful to Members in organising their schedules over a longer period when balancing their Council commitments with other working or caring responsibilities.

Members noted that the final version of the diary would be agreed at the Annual Meeting of Council in May, 2019 and any amendments between consideration of the draft diary and this meeting would be incorporated.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the proposed Diary of Meetings for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 Municipal Years, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- (2) the final version of the Diary of Meetings be presented to the Annual Meeting of Council in May, 2019, for final approval.

63 Questions by Elected Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 15.2 and 15.3

A. Questions on Notice

No questions on Notice from Elected Members had been received for this meeting.

B. Questions Without Notice

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.2, the Chair of Council sought questions from Elected Members during question time.

A. Questions to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones

Q. Councillor Richard Allan Jones asked the following question:-

“Mayor, last week I attended the Scrutiny meeting for Sheffield City Region and we have still not got the agreement between all of the four Councils about how the Mayor of the Sheffield City Region can actually operate. I wonder whether you can explain to me the reasons why we have not signed this agreement? Because you have talked about, in your budget proposals, the lack of investment. Lack of not signing this document seems to suggest that somewhere in the region of £20m plus is being lost by not actually agreeing to this. And, the Mayor actually said, ‘well I’m talking to these people in the four Boroughs to come to some agreement’. He has been saying that since he was put in place last year. I do not think that we are getting the correct answers to the issue. I certainly do not know, because I asked him that particular point. And from that point, we will be aware that we have asked for those Leaders to be brought before Scrutiny in Sheffield City Region?”

A. The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, gave the following response:-

“Thank you for your question. Discussions were supposed to take place on Tuesday of this week, but one of the other Leaders was unable to take part in that conversation. I have always made myself available when meetings are due to be called. I will continue to push for this Borough and for a One Yorkshire Devolution deal. But, we have always said that Government can actually do it in tandem to get us there because the people of Doncaster have spoken when we got the highest percentage wanting to see us part of a wider region so that we can punch above our weight. But, we are not actually One Yorkshire as far as I’m concerned. We have never said that it could not work going forward. They have just not got everyone together at the same time. I am not aware that you have asked for them all to come to Overview and Scrutiny. I wait for the request to come through. Thank you.”

B. Questions to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities

There were no questions put to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities.

C. Questions to Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure and Culture

There were no questions put to Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure and Culture.

D. Questions to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services

There were no questions put to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services.

E. Questions to Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

There were no questions put to Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

F. Questions to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools

There were no questions put to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools.

G. Questions to Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Member for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment

There were no questions put to Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Member for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment.

H. Questions to Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Economic Development

There were no questions put to Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Economic Development.

I. Questions to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services

There were no questions put to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services.

J. Questions to Councillor Austen White, Chair of the Audit Committee

There were no questions put to Councillor Austen White, Chair of the Audit Committee.

K. Questions to Councillor Phil Cole, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee

There were no questions put to Councillor Phil Cole, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee.

L. Questions to Councillor Rachael Blake, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board

There were no questions put to Councillor Rachael Blake, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

M. Questions to Councillor Kevin Rodgers, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

There were no questions put to Councillor Kevin Rodgers, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

64 To receive the minutes of the following Joint Authorities

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following Joint Authorities be noted:-

- A. Sheffield City Region Combined Authority held on 29th October and 17th December, 2018.
- B. Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership Board held on 5th November, 2018.
- C. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 15th October and 26th November, 2018.
- D. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority held on 22nd November, 2018.
- E. Team Doncaster Strategic Partnership held on 16th October, 2018.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____