



Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 19th November, 2019 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 21st November, 2019

The end of the call in period is 5.00 p.m. on Monday 2nd December, 2019 and therefore, the decisions can be implemented on Tuesday, 3rd December, 2019

Present:

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

Vice-Chair - Councillor Glyn Jones (Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities.)

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 Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care
Councillor Nuala Fennelly	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Councillor Chris McGuinness	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment
Councillor Bill Mordue	Portfolio Holder for Business, Skills and Economic Development
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Corporate Services.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

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

Decision records dated 5th November, 2019, be noted

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Disposal of land adjacent to Broadwater Drive, Dunscroft for the development of new affordable housing via the Housing Association Programme

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet supported the long lease disposal of land to Ongo Homes for 125 years at a peppercorn rent for the development of new affordable housing.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones which sought approval for the disposal of Housing Revenue Account land at Broadwater Drive, Dunscroft to Ongo Homes Housing Association to facilitate the development of 41 units of new affordable housing for families and older people.

It was reported that evidence from the recent Housing Needs Study indicated an affordable housing need for the Dunscroft/Dunsville/Hatfield and Stainforth area and this project will help to meet that need.

Cabinet welcomed the report and agreed the caveat that following recent floods in the borough, flood mitigations needed to be put in place on this site in line with advice and directions from appropriate agencies.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 2 – Sell the land for a capital receipt

If the Council were to sell the land with a view of using the capital receipt to fund additional new homes, the value would only facilitate approximately 3-4 units (typically c.£100k per unit), compared with c.41 new units proposed on the site by Ongo Homes. However as detailed within the body of the report it is highly unlikely to achieve the land value.

Option 3 – Alternative use/Retain the site

If the site is not transferred to Ongo Homes, it will remain within the HRA and options for its future use/or an alternative disposal route will be determined as part of the future new build programme exercise taking into account the site constraints noted in paragraph 11.

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 Economy and Environment.

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. 2019-20 Quarter 2 Finance and Improvement Performance Report and Delivering for Doncaster Booklet

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) noted the allocations of block budgets in the Capital Programme, detailed in the Appendix A, Finance Profile in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules;
- (2) noted the earmarked reserves creation approval, detailed in paragraph 45;
- (3) noted the virements for approval per the Financial Procedure Rules, detailed in the Appendix A, Finance Profile; and
- (4) noted the changes to the Strategic Risks that are detailed in paragraph 52 and in the Appendix B, Strategic Risk Profile.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received a report, which showed that the organisation was in a good position, with a positive financial outturn projection, and continued good performance.

At quarter 2, the Council was forecasting a year-end underspend of £2.0m. However, the Council were also aware that the recovery process following the recent devastating flooding would have an impact on the 3rd quarter, and the year end out-turn position, as the Council do all they can to support residents and businesses.

It was noted that there are financial pressures in Learning and Opportunities, Adult Social Care and Corporate Resources. Doncaster Children's Services Trust were currently reporting an underspend of £1.1m against the contract sum. Community spend is expected to increase as the Council responds to the flooding incident. Although monies available under the Bellwin scheme the experience of 2007 showed the monies available did not meet the full cost to the Council. However, the Council will continue to press Government for the funding required to protect residents and the Borough.

289 new homes were delivered in quarter 2, bringing the total so far to 699 against an annual need of 920 homes per year. This is on target to surpass last years highest ever number of new homes. However, focus needs to put on 'Affordable Homes' to meet the needs of all residents.

It was reported that as the Council continued to assist residents to remain living in their own homes much longer, this had seen a reduction in the number of people living in residential care.

73% of local authority spend was with local based suppliers, which was approximately £38.2m from a £52.3m total spend. Agency worker spend had continued to reduce, with a reduction of £84k this quarter, and also a drop in the number of longer term agency assignments (over 6 months).

Cabinet were advised that improvements in the Streetscene service brought on target fly-tipping collections up to 91%.

There remains some challenges in sickness absence levels and there had also been a rise in referrals to Occupational Health Service.

In relation to the processing of major Planning Applications, Councillor Joe Blackham stated that it had been previously requested by Executive Board that the report should differentiate between the numbers processed before or after 13 weeks. This would be reflected in the quarter 3 report.

Members welcomed the services provided by the Council to veterans and their families.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

None

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources.

DECISION 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. St Leger Homes of Doncaster Ltd (SLHD) Performance & Delivery Update: 2019/20 Quarter One (Q2).

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet note the progress of SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting Doncaster Council strategic priorities.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones stating that generally performance was improving with a reduction of red Key Performance Indicator's (KPIs) from 5 to 3 in the last quarter, with those red indicators moving into amber. The 7 green 'on target' KPIs remain the same as in quarter 1.

He highlighted some of the key indicators as follows:-

KPI 1 - % of current rent arrears against annual debt remained within both the profiled and adjusted target which takes account of the non-payment of Universal Credit (UC) for the 53rd rent week. It was stated that St Leger Homes had now over 4,000 tenants claiming UC and the impact on arrears of those claiming UC was £470k.

During 2018, 2,602 tenants were provided with intensive support from St Leger Homes' Tenancy Sustainment Team which had so far secured £854k of financial gains for those receiving support, with nearly 93% of tenants still sustaining their tenancies 6 months after support had been withdrawn.

In relation to KP1 2 and KPI 3, void rent loss and average number of days to re-let void properties, in this quarter, there had been an improvement in both indicators, although both continue to show red and were outside what were very stretching targets. The improvement had been brought about through the development of a detailed action plan and bringing the void teams together under one manager.

Cabinet were advised that with regard to KPI 4 (Number of households placed in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) Accommodation), KPI 5 (Number of Full Duty Homelessness Acceptances) and KPI 6 (Number of homeless preventions), it was highlighted that St Leger Homes had continued to see a significant reduction in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and in September B&B was only used for 1 night which was the lowest in month number since they began reporting this figure. It was noted that this improvement was due to a combination of increased use of general needs stock as temporary accommodation, increased preventions and increased use of private sector tenancies; the latter two actions had been supported by the additional temporary resources provided by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government grants. There had been an increase in the number of full duty homelessness acceptances despite the increase in preventions, reflecting the increase in the workload of the teams.

In addition, Councillor Jones stated that given the recent floods, B&B accommodation figures will increase in quarter 3, as will homelessness acceptance preventions.

With regard to KPI 9 and KPI 10, the number of repairs completed on first visit was a new KPI this year and further analysis was ongoing to look at how St Leger Homes improves its performance against this indicator. It was pleasing to note that 100% of gas visits were completed. However, there had been an increase in no access at first visit cases and St Leger Homes were reviewing their tenant notification process alongside planned changes to increase the time they had to gain access before they gas certificate expires. Members noted that all properties where access was not gained were quickly managed through an access process and then a legal process if required.

Councillor Jones wished to make comment on a personal note, stating that it was great to see the performance of World of Work included in the KPI's and that St Leger Homes continued to provide added value by helping people into training and employment.

Cabinet welcomed the report and the Mayor stated that it was pleasing to see where St Leger Homes/Council were meeting its targets. She highlighted that the reduction in void rent loss were above any of last years' percentages which she hoped would reduce in the next quarter. However, she appreciated the difficulties incurred with the flooding in the borough but stressed that the situation required continual monitoring.

In relation to re-letting void properties, the Mayor requested that further work be done to improve this performance. In response, it was reported that St Leger had worked extremely hard to catch up on re-letting of properties and September/October had seen their best performance figures. The impact of the floods were likely to affect the re-letting of properties and the situation was being reviewed on a daily basis. Members were assured that when a property becomes available, the service will re-let that property as quickly as it can.

The Mayor requested that in light of the floods and the impact it has had, it would be beneficial to specifically record that impact in the next quarterly report.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

None

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

DECISION 4.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

9. Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust - Quarter 2: 2019/20

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the progress of DCST performance outcomes and the contribution that the Trust makes to supporting the Council's strategic priorities.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report presented by Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Schools stating that this was the second quarterly report following the new Arm's Length Management Organisation arrangements.

Since the last quarterly review of the new arrangements, a positive report had been given by the Department for Education (DfE) advisor. Advice given by the advisor was that the Trust and Doncaster Council agreed to differentiate performance indicators reported from the Trust into:-

- 12 Contractual Key Performance Indicators; and
- 28 Strategic Partnership Indicators

It was reported that the combined indicator set will provide a measure of the contract and how both organisations are to work together to secure positive outcomes for children in need. Out of the 12 contractual indicators, 11 were currently performing at or better than the target range.

Cabinet were advised that the one measure outside target related to completion rates of pathway plans for care leavers. This was due in part to the piloting and launch of a new pathway plan app. It was noted that care leavers like the app as it helps them contribute to a dynamic conversation that develops a meaningful and outcomes focussed pathway plan.

With regard to the 28 strategic partnership indicators, it was reported that this quarter, 24 were within or better than target range. The indicators that sit outside the tolerance range were focused upon by the trust and then reported back to Doncaster Council officers through regular performance and care ladder meetings.

It was noted that where there are national or regional comparisons available for the indicators the good news was that Doncaster's performance was favourable.

Looked after Children numbers continue to reduce, albeit at a slower rate than in 2018/19. However, this was anticipated by the Trust. The Trust was also increasing its Foster Carers as opposed to using Independent Foster Agency carers, which were more expensive.

Councillor Fennelly advised members that the current forecast was an overall £1.1m underspend for 2019/20, an improvement of £0.4m since quarter 1. Costs of agency social workers had increased due to hourly rate increase to match market process, along with Ofsted preparations to become outstanding. She stated that the Trust and the Council were working closely to develop and implement a Future Placements Strategy to reduce placement costs in and out of area.

In conclusion, she reported that cash flow continues to be monitored and its' not expected to be an issue for this financial year.

Cabinet welcome the report.

The Mayor asked a question with regard to forecasted underspend for asylum seekers and whether the Home Office covered the costs. It was reported that it would depend on the numbers and type of Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers Children the Council had. Further clarification would be sought outside of the meeting and a response would be provided to the Mayor.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

None

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Alan Adams, Interim Chief Executive, Doncaster Children's Services Trust.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker