

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

MONDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2021

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held as a MICROSOFT TEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING on MONDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2021, at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Paul Wray
Vice-Chair - Councillor Andrea Robinson
Mayor - Ros Jones
Deputy Mayor - Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Nick Allen, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Mick Cooper, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Sean Gibbons, John Gilliver, Martin Greenhalgh, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Eva Hughes, Richard A Jones, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Nikki McDonald, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Tina Reid, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Frank Tyas, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson and Jonathan Wood.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rachael Blake, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Kenneth Keegan, John Mounsey and Derek Smith.

36 Minute's Silence for the recent deaths of former Councillors Jack Fox and Moira Hood

Prior to the commencement of formal business, Elected Members, Officers and members of the public, observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect and remembrance in relation to the recent deaths of former Councillors Jack Fox and Moira Hood.

37 Declarations of Interest, if any

Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, Mark Houlbrook and Jane Nightingale declared a non-disclosable interest in Agenda Item 11.

38 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21st January, 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday, 21st January, 2021, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

39 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:-

“A week ago, the Prime Minister released the planned roadmap out of coronavirus restrictions. In Doncaster, we have made good progress to reduce the rates of infection and hospitalisation, but we must not become complacent. We still need to follow the guidelines to limit the spread of the virus, protect our NHS, and to save lives.

Our NHS is doing a sterling job at distributing the vaccines and the roadmap out of restrictions gives us some hope for a return to normality in the summer, but I cannot stress enough the potential for these dates to slip by a number of weeks if we see a considerable rise in infection rates and hospitalisation. Government has said that this will be the last lock-down, but the possibility of regional or localised restrictions is not off the table.

I have recently launched my Spring Sprint Plan, to support the roll-out of the vaccine and support our businesses and our residents, including by increasing the self-isolation payments to provide a safety net to those people who by no fault of their own, have to work in order to ensure they can afford to survive and put food on the table.

So, I ask the people of Doncaster to follow the rules, to continue driving down the rate of infection and then we may be able to start to re-open society as we know it.”

Councillor Chris McGuinness made the following announcement:-

“We discussed at some length at the last meeting that we would have a Members Seminar to look at the Environment and Sustainability Strategy, and the issue of becoming net zero carbon. The first meeting was last Friday and was reasonably well attended. There will be a second meeting quite soon, and once a date is agreed, the papers will be circulated to everyone who will all be invited to attend, and Members used the LGA handbook which provided some example questions, of which we used 4 out of 9. The feedback will form part of the papers for the next meeting, so Members who did not attend have not missed anything and will have sight of all the information moving forward. We need to make progress and we will be carrying on with these meetings as soon as we can. Thank you.”

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

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

41 Corporate Plan 2021/22

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of an updated Corporate Plan for 2021/22, which reflected the transition to a new Borough Strategy which would replace the Doncaster Growing Together (DGT) Plan.

The Mayor was pleased to propose a new Plan to set out the Council’s priorities for the next financial year which was being presented alongside the budget proposals to both shape and set the Council’s future strategy.

The Mayor stated that responding to the COVID pandemic had dominated the past year. In the face of an unprecedented health and economic crisis, the Council had delivered for its communities as part of an incredible Team Doncaster effort, to save lives, provide care and stop the virus spreading. The Mayor reported that the Council

had been proactive in ensuring children, young people and families, had the support they needed, for example, through a bespoke free school meals offer which was good practice that had been recognised nationally by the Department for Education. Financial support had also been provided to those whose businesses and livelihoods had been affected, and the employment hub had been used to support those who had found themselves out of work or at risk of redundancy.

It was reported that the Council had also continued to deliver key services and new homes and major projects, and the Mayor was pleased to see that exhibits were being added to the new Danum Gallery, Library and Museum, which was due to open this year and particularly, the 'Atlantic 251' and the 'Green Arrow' locomotives which had been built in Doncaster, and would play a key part in the Rail Heritage Centre.

Members noted that close by, there was a new University Technical College which would develop the digital and engineering skills needed for the rail industry of the future and it was also great to see the completion of the Junction 5 link to Stainforth and Unity, which would help unlock thousands of jobs and homes.

Responding to and recovering from the pandemic would be the Council's number one priority and Members noted that the new Corporate Plan reflected this imperative whilst continuing to provide Council services and protect its most vulnerable residents, whilst working in a safe environment. However, the Council also needed to look ahead as its ambitions for the Borough must respond to a number of seismic challenges. The climate change and biodiversity crisis remained a profound pressure. Flooding was an example of how this impacted on local wellbeing. The pandemic had worsened inequalities in society, for example, for vulnerable people with underlying health conditions or for those on low incomes, and the Council must also support residents of all ages to catch up on lost earnings and learning.

It was also reported that the Corporate Plan marked the transition to a new Borough Strategy. At its centre was the need to balance the wellbeing of people and the planet as you could not have one without the other. The Strategy would build on the successes of the Doncaster Growing Together Plan and the partnership working that had been so crucial to the effective response to the pandemic. The Corporate Plan set out six emerging wellbeing goals for the Borough, which focussed on creating a greener and cleaner Borough, together with:-

- supporting economic prosperity and connecting residents to jobs;
- developing a safer and resilient place;
- developing a more compassionate approach to improving health and wellbeing;
and
- improving skills and supporting creativity.

This was all underpinned by the need to create a fair and inclusive Borough and the Corporate Plan summarised the actions the Council would take over the next year to contribute to these goals.

The Mayor pointed out that these actions would respond to the ongoing Doncaster Talks consultation, which could be delivered due to the effective management of the

Council's finances, and which would support individuals and businesses through the pandemic, deliver essential services and invest in the future; jobs, skills, housing and tackling the climate emergency.

The Mayor was optimistic for the future as the Council had the opportunity to:-

- develop a more regenerative Borough, for example a circular economy that kept finite resources in a loop of use and reuse for as long as possible;
- create new green jobs and businesses;
- invest in our local communities to enhance local assets, strengths and civic engagement; and
- develop the 'foundational economy' that delivered the essential goods and services, including health and social care which was essential to the COVID response, and for a thriving, inclusive economy and place.

In concluding her presentation of the report, the Mayor expressed her gratitude to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for considering the Plan and providing their feedback and support, and asked that the Council support the updated Corporate Plan which was a major turning point in the Borough's drive to improve the wellbeing of current and future generations.

Councillor Richard A Jones, whilst welcoming the Plan, felt it was short on detail and sought clarity on various aspects of the Plan, in particular, he wanted to know what were the Joint Public Sector Arrangements on Assets, what was the Local Solutions Group and what was a Talent and Innovation Eco System. He also questioned why there was no reference in the Plan to the Locality Model.

In response, Mayor Ros Jones explained that the Corporate Plan was a delivery plan to achieve the 10 year Borough Strategy and that the issues raised by Councillor Jones related to the detail of how the Plan would be delivered. Subsequently, the Mayor requested Councillor Jones to put his detailed in-depth questions in writing and he would be provided with a written response on the issues he had raised.

RESOLVED that the 2021/22 Corporate Plan, be approved.

42 Capital Strategy and Capital Budget 2021/22 to 2024/25

Prior to Council's consideration of the report, the Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, reminded Members of the legal requirement to include in the minutes, details of how each Elected Member had voted on decisions relating to the budget and level of Council Tax. Therefore, items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 would all be subject to a recorded vote and voting preferences would be documented in the minutes of this meeting.

Subsequently, the Council considered a report which was presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which outlined the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme Budget proposals for the next four years, 2021/22 to 2024/25.

The Mayor stated the Council was continuing to invest in the future of the Borough despite the tough economic climate with over £340m capital spend planned over the

next four years. Through this investment, residents across the Borough would benefit from continued investment in the Borough's schools, leisure centres, roads, markets and affordable housing.

It was reported that following the Council's declaration of a Climate & Biodiversity Emergency in 2019, and the subsequent actions undertaken through the establishment of a Doncaster Climate Commission, production of a new Environment & Sustainability Strategy and Net Zero Carbon Masterplan, the Council proposed to commence a programme of activities to decarbonise its buildings, operations and energy supply, beginning with a £2.6m investment in 2021/22. The budget also provided funding for considerable tree planting as well as the naturalisation of some grassed areas with wildflowers, and continuing investment in electric vehicles as part of the Council fleet.

Members were informed that £174.1m would be invested in the Council's social housing stock over the next four years, covering maintenance, adaptations and the ambitious new build programme. This also included energy efficiency improvements to respond to climate change, respond to Fly Tipping and reduce the Council's carbon footprint, and help to keep the Council's tenants warm whilst also saving them money.

It was reported that the budget included £3.2m to improve Parks across the Borough and £2.0m for a phased investment in leisure facilities continuing to provide access to swimming, indoor sports and gymnasium facilities.

In concluding her presentation of the report, the Mayor was hopeful that the Prime Minister would stand by his words and level up the North; Doncaster was ready and waiting for investment, and had schemes ready.

Following the presentation of the Capital Strategy and Capital Budget proposals, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 46

The Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Andrea Robinson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Nick Allen, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Nigel Cannings, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, John Gilliver, Martin Greenhalgh, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Eva Hughes, Richard A Jones, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Nikki McDonald, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Tina Reid, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Frank Tyas, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson and Jonathan Wood.

Against - 0

Abstain - 2

Councillors Bev Chapman and Sean Gibbons.

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Capital Strategy, as detailed within paragraphs 39 to 79 of the report, be approved;
- (2) the Capital Programme Budget for 2021/22 to 2024/25, as detailed within paragraphs 13 to 38 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) Directors, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, take responsibility for agreeing any significant changes to the Schools Condition Programme and the Local Transport Plan funding, and that they be agreed in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

43 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 to 2024/25

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2021/22 to 2024/25, which provided details of the Strategy for the management of the Council's finances, and provided a framework for the operation of the Treasury Management Strategy function within the Council.

It was reported that Treasury Management seeks to optimise the Council's cash flow and secure the most effective arrangements to support the long-term funding requirement. The Key Prudential Indicators relating to borrowing limits were detailed in the report.

Following the presentation of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 47

The Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Andrea Robinson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Nick Allen, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, John Gilliver, Martin Greenhalgh, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Eva Hughes, Richard A Jones, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Nikki McDonald, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Tina Reid, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Frank Tyas, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson and Jonathan Wood.

Against - 0

Abstain - 2

Councillors Bev Chapman and Sean Gibbons.

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 to 2024/25 and the Prudential Indicators included, be approved; and
- (2) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, as detailed within paragraphs 39 to 40 and in Appendix B of the report, be approved.

44 Revenue Budget 2021/22 to 2023/24

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the Revenue Budget proposals for 2021/22 to 2023/24.

The Mayor stated that despite significant financial challenges, a balanced budget was being proposed for the next 3 years, which continued to support residents, communities and the local economy, maintaining a strong focus on supporting vulnerable people and improving the environment. Since 2010, the Council's spending power had been reduced by £107m (29%); this represented a £350 cut per Doncaster resident. The COVID-19 pandemic had placed unprecedented stress on Council services and these ultimately impacted on the budget through increased costs and reduced income streams. The additional funding provided by Government had helped ease the financial pressures however, the future financial position remained extremely uncertain.

The Mayor reported that the budget included £11.7m over the next 3 years for service budget pressures. This provided additional funding for Children and Adult Services to meet the increasing demands on these services, support for the Council's partners, Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust and increasing the funding for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which continued to provide a much needed safety net for those on low incomes who were more likely to have been badly impacted by the current pandemic at no fault of their own. It also provided additional funding to target Fly Tipping, it supported the continuation of the Advance Employment Support Programme and further targeted investment to tackle climate change through the creation of a sustainability unit.

The Mayor pointed out that overall the Council was facing a budget gap of £18.9m over the next 3 years, with the biggest impact of £15.2m in 2021/22. The budget was balanced over the 3 years once COVID-19 funds were used, ensuring that sufficient general uncommitted reserves were maintained for unforeseen events in the future such as flooding.

It was reported that the budget included an increase in Council Tax of 2.9% in 2021/22, which would generate £3.3m to help meet the pressures identified. This included a 1.4% Council Tax increase and a further 1.5% increase through the Government's Social Care 'Precept', which supported elderly and vulnerable residents, which was below the maximum allowable increase of 5%, which the Government encouraged the Council to implement. This equated to an additional 52p per week for Band A and 78p per week for Band D, and meant that Doncaster would continue to have one of the lowest Council Taxes in Councils of its size in the country

(11th lowest in 2020/21) and the lowest in South Yorkshire. The budget also included a freeze on the vast majority of the Council's fees and charges.

Members were informed that the overall gross Revenue Budget for the Council in 2021/22 was £503.5m, but noted that although the Council had set a balanced budget over 3 years, the financial position remained uncertain over the medium-term, as the Council was facing significant volatility in its costs and levels of income, in addition to uncertainty in relation to funding from Government. The focus on finance was never-ending and the Council needed to keep working hard to maintain a strong sustainable financial base to provide resources for priorities, and to ensure as smooth as possible transition from the Covid pandemic.

The Mayor hoped that Councillors from across the political spectrum vote with her on this budget which was well balanced and supported the aims and ambitions of this Council to support the people of Doncaster, as the Council respond and recover from Coronavirus.

In conclusion, the Mayor pointed out that voting against the proposals or abstaining without putting forward any suggested alternatives or an alternative budget, would be opposing for the simple sake of opposing.

Following the presentation of the Revenue Budget proposals, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 48

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Andrea Robinson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Nick Allen, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, John Gilliver, Martin Greenhalgh, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Eva Hughes, Richard A Jones, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Nikki McDonald, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Tina Reid, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Frank Tyas, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson and Jonathan Wood.

Against - 0

Abstain - 1

Councillor Sean Gibbons.

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Revenue Budget for 2021/22 to 2023/24, as detailed within the report, be approved including:-

- (1) the Medium-term Financial Strategy (MTFS) including all proposals in this report as detailed within in Appendix A;
- (2) a Gross Revenue Expenditure Budget of £503.5m and a net Revenue Expenditure Budget of £199.6m, as detailed in Appendix A;
- (3) Council Tax increasing by 2.9% to £1,446.10 for a Band D property (£964.07 for a Band A) for 2021/22. This includes:-
 - (i) 1.4% Council tax increase, equating to an increase of £19.67 for Band D per annum, 38p per week (£13.12 for Band A per annum, 25p per week); and
 - (ii) 1.5% Government Adult Social Care precept, equating to an increase of £21.08 for Band D per annum, 40p per week (£14.05 for Band A per annum, 27p per week).
- (4) the Revenue Budget proposals for 2021/22, as detailed within Appendix B (pressures £10.2m) and Appendices C and D (savings £10.0m);
- (5) the allocation of the additional £2.975m Social Care funding be delegated to the Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Skills, as detailed within paragraph 38 of the report;
- (6) the 2021/22 Grants to 3rd Sector Organisations, as detailed within paragraph 47 of the report and Appendix F;
- (7) the fees and charges proposed for 2021/22, as detailed within Appendix G;
- (8) the Chief Financial Officer's positive assurance statements be noted, as detailed within paragraphs 57 to 62 of the report.

45 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2021/22

The Council considered a report, presented by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities, which detailed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget proposals for the 2021/21 financial year, and the medium term financial forecast for the following three years, which had a budget to break even.

The Deputy Mayor stated that the Council was proud of its low rents in Doncaster which made good quality homes affordable for over 20,000 households across the Borough, but rents had to be increased this year and in future years, to enable the Council to continue to deliver excellent day to day services for tenants, to continue to collect more rent as the changes to Universal Credit continued to be rolled out, and to invest in properties to maintain them at the Doncaster Decency Standard.

Members were informed that Government consultation would commence during 2021 on a revised decency standard, Decent Homes 2, and all stakeholders including tenants, would be asked to contribute to this consultation.

The Deputy Mayor pointed out that the Council wanted to invest over and above all of this, as following the publication of the draft Building Safety Bill, there was an increased focus on health, safety and compliance, and the Council needed to invest to ensure that its properties continued to be safe for its tenants. The Council was not waiting for this Bill to become an Act to address some issues, for example, the Capital Budget had almost £5m included therein to improve the fire safety in properties. In addition to this, the Council also wanted to ensure that all its properties were as energy efficient as possible, to reduce fuel bills for tenants and also the carbon footprint of its homes. Subsequently, a report had been commissioned which would outline the work required on all the Council owned properties to achieve the zero carbon standard.

It was reported that the HRA would continue to fund in excess of £30m of investment per year into the Council housing stock over the next four years. In addition, the Council had approved funding to deliver the Council House New Build Programme; the details of which were outlined at Cabinet on 12th January, 2021. When this programme was approved by Council last year, it was anticipated that the Council would deliver the programme over 10 years, but the Council had condensed that to 5 years to bring the much needed new homes into the Borough sooner.

Following the presentation of the HRA, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 49

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Andrea Robinson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Nick Allen, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Sean Gibbons, John Gilliver, Martin Greenhalgh, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Eva Hughes, Richard A Jones, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Nikki McDonald, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Tina Reid, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Frank Tyas, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson and Jonathan Wood.

Against - 0

Abstain - 0

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget proposals, as detailed within the report, be approved including:-

- (1) rents be increased from 5th April 2021, by 1.5%, as detailed within paragraphs 7 to 10 of the report, in line with Government policy; this will increase average weekly rent by £1.08, resulting in an average rent of

approximately £72.89 per week. Rents will be charged every week of the year;

(2) the budget proposals for the HRA for 2021/22, as detailed within Appendix A of the report; these proposals set a balanced budget for the HRA and maintain a reserve of £4m; and

(3) fees and charges, as detailed in paragraph 14 of the report.

46 Council Tax Setting and Statutory Resolutions 2021/22

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which set out how the Council Tax was calculated and sought approval regarding Doncaster Council's Council Tax requirement for 2021/22.

The Mayor stated that the report set the Council Tax across the Borough based on the Revenue Budget report which had been considered and agreed at the meeting today. It was proposed that Doncaster Council's element of the Band D Council Tax charge be increased by 2.9% for 2021/22 to £1,446.10. The proposals included an increase in the core Council Tax of 1.4%, as set out in the 2020/21 Revenue Budget report, and an increase in the Adult Social Care precept of 1.5%.

It was reported that just under 88% of domestic properties in Doncaster, fell into Bands A, B and C, with 58% falling in Band A. The proposals equated to a charge of £964.07 for a Band A property, which was an increase of 52p per week.

Members were also informed that the report included increases in Council Taxes of the Joint Authorities (South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire) which represented an overall increase of 3.41% for Doncaster residents.

Following the presentation of the report, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 37

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Andrea Robinson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, John Gilliver, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Eva Hughes, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Nikki McDonald, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Frank Tyas, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against - 0

Abstain - 12

Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Sean Gibbons, Martin Greenhalgh, Richard A Jones, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Tina Reid and Jonathan Wood.

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that Council approved a Band D Council Tax for 2021/22 of £1,446.10 for Doncaster Council services and passed the appropriate Statutory Resolutions, as detailed within Appendix B of the report, which incorporated the Council Taxes of the Joint Authorities and which, taken together with Doncaster's 2.90% increase, represented a 3.41% increase from the 2020/21 Council Tax for Doncaster residents.

47 Annual Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

The Council considered a report on the Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22, which was presented by Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services, which set out the Council's policy for the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff, and detailed the ratios between the highest, lowest and average paid employees in the organisation.

Councillor Nightingale stated that the Policy Statement was a public document and was published on the Council's website each year, and demonstrated clear public 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:-

- (i) There had been minimal changes to the ratios this year. National pay award negotiations had not yet been concluded for 2021/22;
- (ii) The current ratio between the highest paid salary and lowest employee salary remained at 9.46 to 1 this year;
- (iii) The ratio between the highest employee salary and average employee salary had remained the same at 6.20 to 1, although the average salary had increased by £745 per annum;
- (iv) All pay ratios remained well within the threshold considered by the Hutton Review that should be no greater than 20 to 1; and
- (v) The Council remained committed to reduce the pay difference and increase low pay.

It was reported that it was anticipated that this Policy may need to be amended during the period it covered which was from 1st April, 2021 to 31st March, 2022 should a national pay award be agreed. Any amendments would be included in the following year's statement presented to Full Council.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22, be approved.

48 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 Lani-Mae Ball asked the following question:-

“We can all agree here today that the last ten years have been very difficult in relation to the continued cuts to Local Government. In relation to these cuts, have they been evenly spread across the country and how does Doncaster fare in the severity of cuts since austerity began in 2010?”

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

“I think we all know that the cuts have been there for a number of years and the figures that I am going to quote are facts and not political. If you look at the Centre for Cities report, 2019, Doncaster has had its spending cut by £107m since 2010-11. This equates to 29% less funding to provide services for our residents, and equates to £350 per person, whereas the national average is a spending power reduction of just 22%, which equates to £271 per person, so as you can imagine, it is a massive cut for us all. Cuts for Local Government have led to a small amount of the shortfall being picked up by the local taxpayer, which is wrong as National Government should properly fund Local Government, and I want to see the levelling up being done properly with funding mechanisms without having to go through continual bidding rounds so we can plan properly for the residents in this Borough.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Lani-Mae Ball asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. “You mentioned having to apply for bids and the fact that it is a circle and it obviously takes time so can you can inform me how much has actually been brought in by the work you have done while you have been Mayor, in receiving capital sums?”

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

“It is in the order of £260m and we will also keep pushing Government to fund us for a new hospital which will add up to another £100m. Our

residents deserve it and we will keep pushing. It is in the order of £260m so far.”

Q. Councillor Jane Cox asked the following question:-

“The Mayor stated in the Free Press this week that the Council was in deficit of £18.9 m. It was then reported that the Council had received less than £3m from Central Government despite enormous pressures on the Council. Is the Mayor mistaken or is the Mayor misleading the residents of Doncaster, as the Council has received more than £65m to support Council services over the last 12 months and over £125m to support business. If the Mayor was so unhappy with the Local Government Financial settlement, why did her Labour MPs allow this to go through unopposed in Parliament?”

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

“No, the Mayor was not misleading the public. Figures were quoted when some tweets had been put out that we had received £11.4m and that was on the Government’s assumption that we would be levelling a 5% rise in Council Tax. We were never going to do this, as we appreciate how hard it is for our residents and try to mitigate this. That is why we are the 11th lowest Council, so no misleading at all, but it has been perhaps interpreted wrongly by someone who has picked up figures without fully understanding them and I am here for the people of Doncaster. We need to get as much funding as we can get and I am tired of hearing about the levelling up, we are devoid of hospitals that need 21st Century care when we know we have health inequalities here. We were encouraged to bid for a new hospital and we will keep that fight for the residents and I will ask our MPs to support us in that and we will petition until Government listen to us. This is one way they can start levelling up. We need the right type of hospital and the training and support, and all the other things that come from it. Where we would propose to put it would actually be a huge economic boost. The person looking at those figures, I do not think was certain of what they were looking at.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Jane Cox asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. “The quote from the Free Press states that people would be interested to know that Doncaster Council has received less than £3m extra despite the enormous pressures on the Council due to the coronavirus, so make of that what you will. I am interested to know though as I have been sat in this Chamber now for more than 6 years and it is the first time I have heard mention of a new hospital in the last 2 Council meetings?”

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

“I will explain again. It was put out there that £11.4m was received as an additional sum, and it was working on fictitious figures. These are figures based on Government assumptions that we are going to levy a

5% rise in Council Tax and that is how it is interpreted as additional funding. If you take that away from the £11m, it leaves £3m plus, and that is how the figure has come about; nothing misleading, just people not understanding the figures. If you have not heard of the bid for a hospital, you have not been listening for all this time because you would be able to see where we have been looking at land in order to deliver one. I believe it was over a year ago when I spoke to MPs asking them to back a spot we had chosen. It is about us doing what is right for our residents, for the people in Doncaster, and Labour will continue to do what is right and fight for the people as that is the right thing to do.”

Q. Councillor Nick Allen asked the following question:-

“Could you tell me what steps have been taken to increase and improve access to the postal votes?”

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

“Steps are always taken and we comply with what we are required to do. I will hand over to the Chief Executive who is the Returning Officer. I am not in charge in terms of Elections.”

A. The Chief Executive and Returning Officer, Damian Allen, gave the following response:-

“Thank you. We are complying with the guidance that has been issued by the Electoral Commission and as the Registered Officer in terms of Electoral Registration, we have informed all electors of the various methods for voting. This was done at the point of registration. In terms of the announcement from the Prime Minister regarding the Elections commencing with certain restrictions and new regulations, these have been updated including new regulations in terms of Proxy Voting. They will be communicated to electors within the communication plan and also when we write out in respect of the polling cards, and also in terms of those who are extremely clinically vulnerable who may find they are disadvantaged. That will be part of the communications plan that will be imminently shared.”

Q. Councillor Martin Greenhalgh asked the following question:-

“Would it be possible to see evidence of lobbying Government over the past three years for this hospital?”

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

“We will make sure that any minutes that are available are circulated, as the evidence is there and we will ensure it is passed on to you. Officers have worked with people from the Hospital and with Team Doncaster, so I will make sure it is passed out.”

Q. Councillor Steve Cox asked the following question:-

“I have had numerous conversations with a Member of the Labour Group. In these conversations, I was told that you had told them not to contact the Conservative MP. Is this correct?”

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

“Each Member is a Member in their own right and I am aware that many of our Members have contacted the MP for Don Valley, so I am not sure where that has come from. I do not know what point you are trying to bring up, but I know many of our Members have contacted the MP and the MP has actually asked us to ask them to stop going to them because he found it quite aggressive.”

Q. Councillor Andy Pickering asked the following question:-

“In view of the subject regarding a new hospital, could I ask if the Mayor would be seeking protection for Mexborough Montague Hospital. The last thing we want to see is a new hospital built, and our hospital, which serves many people at this side of the Borough, suffer?”

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

“It is not another hospital, this is a replacement hospital for the whole of Doncaster. The place that we chose is on the Waterfront which was agreed by all MPs. It is not about getting rid of the hospital in Mexborough. This is about bringing a state of the art hospital to the Town to move forward so that we are ready for any further pandemics that may come, and hopefully bring more cancer treatments back to Doncaster.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Andy Pickering asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. “I would just like to say that a new facility is welcome, but I would ask for protection for the Montague Hospital on this side of town. It would be a dire outcome to end up with a new facility, but to lose one on this side of the Borough which is much needed?”

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

“Andy, we were bidding for the replacement of the DRI, and that alone. Nothing else has been mooted to me and we worked alongside the hospital and the CCG. It is about the age of the hospital and its inappropriateness. Officers have worked hard to deliver the bid and have been encouraged by Civil Servants. We would seek to support Montague hospital though if comes about; it is about the whole of the Borough.”

Q. Councillor Sean Gibbons asked the following question:-

“When will the former Windmill Avenue site in Mexborough actually receive some housing on there, having been demolished some ten,

twelve years ago, and having her promised housing on there in her election leaflet both in 2015 and 2017?”

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

“We have got a new housing programme, but I do not have the details of it in front of me. I do not know whether the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, has got those answers.”

A. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, gave the following response in relation to the comments made by Mayor Jones:-

“I would need to refer to that document as well Chair. I have not got those details directly in front of me.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Sean Gibbons asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. “I look forward to receiving that information as would Councillors Chapman and Pickering because we have been tirelessly trying to get that land developed for many years. It is Housing Revenue Account. It is deriving no income and it is costing a hell of a lot of money to recoup clearing up Fly Tipping. It is just a blight of where housing should be replaced which has been promised previously?”

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

“Can I just answer that what we are using is the Housing Needs Assessment which identifies all the differing areas across the Borough that requires further housing, but I have not got it in front of me. We will get that programme out to you and you can see it in there.”

Q. Councillor Mick Cooper asked the following question:-

“Mayor Jones, starting in October, I asked one of your Cabinet Members for information relating to the activities of a digital media company and I was told that it would not be investigated unless I provided evidence. Why do I have to provide evidence for one Cabinet Member to discuss with another Cabinet Member, what is happening throughout Doncaster and causing an enormous amount of damage. Nearly five months have elapsed and I have no information. I do not know why I have to provide evidence and I am a little dismayed at that. So, I would like some guidance on that for when I ask future questions. What have I got to provide when I say something professionally that damage is occurring. I would have thought that would be enough to investigate it.

In addition to that, in late January, I asked a senior Highways Officer for information as to where these particular companies were working and I know that we have had the snow and the floods, but it is nearly five weeks. If this was being controlled adequately, then there would have been a programme of works where these companies were working and I could have swung by and had a look to see what is happening. I

already have a vast library of photographic evidence of the damage that has been caused by these companies and this is ongoing all the time. It is not being monitored adequately. I appreciate that there is a resource implication here and I was quite willing to go out and talk to some of these people. I have talked to them on occasion and they have actually gone down the pavement instead of chopping the grass roots. So, they are happy to listen, but whether it is a lack of communication with the Officer, I do not know; I would like to know why. The question is why do I have to provide evidence when I say that there is a problem?"

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

"Without you asking the particular Cabinet Member directly, you are asking me to answer something when I have not got all the facts in front of me. I would suggest Councillor Cooper that you email the particular Cabinet Member and copy me in, and if you need a relevant Officer to also respond to you, then they will."

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

Q. Councillor Jane Cox asked the following question:-

"My question was to Councillor Blake and it is a two part question. One part was for Councillor Blake, who is not here, and one was for Councillor Jones. So, I will give you the first part that is Councillor Blake's to give Councillor Jones context to my question. I was asking Councillor Blake if she would review the Strategy for autistic people, people with learning difficulties, as this Strategy was written 2 years ago and it is only just going to Cabinet this week. Lessons have been learnt over the past 12 months which have got to be recognised and form part of the Strategy. What I want to ask Councillor Jones is, will he commit to an easy read version being published because obviously, that would be the Equalities agenda?"

A. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, gave the following response:-

"Yes, we need to have as clear information out there as possible with regard to any Strategy, and in line with good practice and policy, I assume we would be able to provide that. I will instruct Officers to do that if possible Jane and you are right in saying that there is an easy read version available. This is something that we do need to have a look at with any document that we produce, so I have nothing against that at all if we can provide that quite easily and without too much difficulty, and indeed cost. But cost should not come in to it as we are all aware when you are giving information to people."

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Jane Cox asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. "I was going to say with all due respect to the cost, the people that the Strategy is aimed at need to be able to read it."

A. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, gave the following response:-

“Absolutely.”

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

In the absence of Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, the Chair of Council informed Members that any questions for Councillor Blake should be submitted in writing to the Executive Office after the meeting, and a response would be provided accordingly.

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

In the absence of Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, the Chair of Council informed Members that any questions for Councillor Fennelly should be submitted in writing to the Executive Office after the meeting, and a response would be provided accordingly.

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

Q. Councillor Duncan Anderson asked the following question:-

“I was glad to see in the budget that we are allocating more money to fight the Fly Tipping that has exploded over the last year in lockdown. Could you briefly expand on what that is going to mean on the ground in terms of the difference that we are going to see, and what action can be taken or has been taken to address the systemic problems and not just treat the symptoms? Particularly, what can be done at a national level?”

A. Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Members for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment, gave the following response:-

“I am glad you added that bit at the end about a national level. Thanks for that. There are a few bits that I have had an awful lot of

correspondence on lately and one is off road bikes and quads, and I will be coming back to that in the coming weeks. In terms of what has just gone on, I have just been going through my inbox and it is about Fly Tipping and Councillor Joe Blackham and myself had a meeting that Councillor Jane Cox was involved in with Nick Fletcher, MP. One of the things that we raised was that a couple of years ago, at meeting on 12th November, we discussed Fly Tipping and our views have been very clear as a Council. We have touched on this before that the fines are not heavy enough; the punishment is not heavy enough. Nick Fletcher was going to go away in early November and speak with the Environment Agency about raising the awareness for needing a licence to carry waste. He was going to ask about more severe heavier financial penalties for people who are caught Fly Tipping. He was going to check the response from the Government from a major consultation launched over two years ago, about waste and recycling in general, and the regulations that hamper people.

It is quite timely as last week, I tried to record a Panorama show called 'Rubbish Tip Britain' about Fly Tipping. Apparently, because there was a certain blonde haired gentlemen making an announcement, it was scrapped or taken off air. It should be on tonight and I will be recording that.

What will happen on the back of that may be questions about what they are going to do. They have not approached this Council for any input, but the time has come to find out from the Government, where are they with their White Paper on Waste and Recycling. Where are we going with it after two and a half years'. Depending what it says on the programme tonight if it touches on financial penalties, I will be going back to not just to Nick Fletcher, but to all the MPs saying what can we do about this because we cannot set our own fines locally; they are set by Central Government. It is pretty clear that people are fed up with it.

The interesting thing is that I was going to throw some figures out, but we have still got a problem with things we raised with Nick Fletcher when we prosecuted eight people this year in court for Fly Tipping. We have still got twenty one and a backlog because of Covid and due to certain restrictions, it has not been given the emphasis that it should have been. We need to get these people into court and get them punished properly. I would go even further; littering from cars. The registered owner of the car should be given three points on their licence. So there you go, there is the answer. I am all for, as I am sure you are, more severe penalties. Let's get the people that we catch in court. There are two vehicles which have been crushed; we should be crushing more. Like everyone else, I am getting fed up with it now, and I look forward to hearing from Nick Fletcher, Rosie Winterton and Ed Milliband, about where we are?"

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Duncan Anderson asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. "I just want to drag Chris back to my first part of the question which was regarding the additional funding in the budget we have just agreed. How is that to play out on the ground?"

A. Councillor Chris McGuinness gave the following response:-

"There are going to be more people about on the ground. There are going to be more cameras out there both openly and covertly. It is £466k in the budget. There is the Safer Streets funding that will provide additional cameras and there is currently a review of how cameras will be deployed across the Borough. Cameras are not the answer to everything. It is alright asking people to deal with an issue which has been growing for some time, but resources are needed to deal with it. This budget is at least the start of where we need to go. We have put more effort into it, but at the same time, when we catch them, we need to punish them."

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

In the absence of Councillor Rachael Blake, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Chair of Council informed Members that any questions for Councillor Blake should be submitted in writing to the Executive Office after the meeting, and a response would be provided accordingly.

M. Questions to Councillor Jane Kidd, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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

49 Annual Report on Executive Decisions taken under Special Urgency Provisions

The Council considered a report which informed Members of Key Decisions which had been taken by the Executive between the period 6th March, 2020 and 18th February, 2021, which were not included on the Forward Plan, under Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules. It was stated within the Council's Constitution that all decisions taken under Special Urgency provisions, be reported to Council on an annual basis, to ensure that the public be kept informed of all aspects of the democratic process.

The report outlined that the Council's use of Rule 16's had traditionally been very low and that during the past 5 years, only 6 Rule 16 decisions had been taken. However, during the past 12 months, there had been 32 Rule 16 decisions, which were all directly related to the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and that any delay in decision making or implementation would have delayed the provision of grants or services to the people of Doncaster.

RESOLVED that the actions taken in accordance with Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, be noted.

50 To receive the minutes of the following Joint Authorities

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

- A. Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board held on 25th January, 2021.
- B. Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership Board held on 14th January, 2021.
- C. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 11th January, 2021.
- D. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority Local Pension Board held on 15th October, 2020.
- E. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority held on 10th December, 2020 and 21st January, 2021.
- F. South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on 14th December, 2020.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, stated that for some of the Councillors in the virtual meeting today, including himself, who had chosen not to stand at the Local Elections in May, this would be their last meeting of Full Council. The Chair of Council thanked all Councillors for their hard work, dedication and service to their local community and to the people of Doncaster, and wished them all the best as they moved onto the next chapter in their life.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____