



Agenda

To all Members of the

CABINET

Notice is given that a Meeting of the Cabinet is to be held as follows:

Venue: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Date: Tuesday, 23rd February, 2021

Time: 10.00 am

The meeting will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams. Members and Officers will be advised on the process to follow to attend the Cabinet meeting. Any members of the public or Press wishing to attend the meeting by teleconference should contact Governance Services on 01302 736716/ 737462/ 736712/ 736723 for further details.

BROADCASTING NOTICE

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Damian Allen
Chief Executive

Issued on: Monday, 15 February 2021

Governance Services Officer for this meeting:

Amber Torrington
Tel. 01302 737462

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

www.doncaster.gov.uk

Items

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To consider the extent, if any, to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.
3. Public Questions and Statements

(A period not exceeding 20 minutes for questions and statements from members of the public and Elected Members to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones. Questions/Statements should relate specifically to an item of business on the agenda and be limited to a maximum of 100 words. As stated within Executive Procedure Rule 3.3 each person will be allowed to submit one question/statement per meeting. A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by e-mail to the Governance Team no later than 5.00 p.m. on Thursday, 18th February, 2021. Each question or statement must give the name and address of the person submitting it. Questions/Statements should be sent to the Governance Team, Floor 2, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU, or by email to Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk).

4. Declarations of Interest, if any.
5. Decision Record Forms from the meeting held on 16th February 2020 for noting (previously circulated).

A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded

Key Decisions

6. 2020-21 Quarter 3 Finance and Performance Improvement Report. 1 - 40

Non-Key Decisions

7. St Leger Homes of Doncaster Ltd (SLHD) Performance and Delivery Update: 2020/21 Quarter 3. 41 - 78
8. Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 3, 2020/21. 79 - 98
9. The Independent Review and Redraft of DMBCs Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees and Woodlands. 99 - 162

Cabinet Members

Cabinet Responsibility For:

**Chair – Ros Jones, Mayor of
Doncaster**

Budget and Policy Framework

**Vice-Chair – Deputy Mayor
Councillor Glyn Jones**

Housing and Equalities

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
Councillor Nuala Fennelly

Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care
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.

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Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 23rd February 2021

To the Mayor and Members of Cabinet

2020-21 Quarter 3 Finance and Performance Improvement Report

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Mayor Ros Jones	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report focuses on quarter 3 of the 2020/21 financial year. It indicates our current financial forecast position against our 2020/21 budget and our performance against key Service Standards.
2. It continues to be a challenging time for the delivery of council services as the COVID-19 pandemic impacted right across the council. The Council and Team Doncaster partners remain on a response footing throughout this quarter. These challenging circumstances are likely to continue through the rest of the financial year. In addition there are a range of other concurrent risks that the Council was managing through quarter 3 including the impact of EU Exit at the end of December 2020 and the possibility of further extreme weather through the winter.
3. From a performance perspective there have been challenges, which include:
 - Although the outturn sickness rate at Q3 remains below the targeted year end performance of 8.50 days, there has been an improvement on the last quarter with a reduction of over half a day (0.54) to 9.20 days per full time equivalent employee; and is 0.76 days lower compared to the same period last year, despite the ongoing pressures in responding to the current covid pandemic.
 - Business Rates collection at the end of the third quarter is estimated to be 93.83%. It remains some way off the comparison of 96.05% for the same time last year but is an improvement from quarter 2. There have however been areas of improvement, which include

There have however been areas of improvement, which include:

- There has been a large increase in Green Waste and Recycling. Performance has improved to 51.6%. reflecting the work undertaken to resume services safely following the initial lockdown at the start of the financial year

- There has been an additional 286 new homes this quarter, Cumulatively 628 new homes have been built to the end of Quarter 3
- Since March access to free school meals has risen to 11,103, an increased of 1,500
- £29,815,209 of council spend in Quarter 3 was with local firms

Financial Position

4. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to provide significant volatility and ongoing financial challenges. We continue to incur new and additional costs to support operational services, reduced income through less trading activity and there has been a delay in delivering savings, which are required to achieve a balanced budget. There are also significant losses on the projected income from Council Tax and Business Rates due to the impact of the restrictions.
5. Given the exceptional nature of circumstances, the Government have recognised these financial challenges and provided additional COVID-19 pressures funding. The emergency COVID-19 funding provided in tranches and the hardship funding currently stand at £31.7m. Other specific resources have been provided and are listed in the Appendix A Finance Profile to this report (to follow).
6. Although the financial position remains extremely fluid and is being carefully monitored on a monthly basis, we anticipate that through proactive budget management we can manage the in-year financial position, utilising COVID-19 government funding to meet the projected COVID-19 pressures in 2020/21. . Therefore we are continuing to forecast a balanced budget position at the year-end (no over or underspend) after the allocation of £16.0m of COVID-19 emergency grants. Full details on the main variances are provided in paragraphs 85 to 93.
7. Looking to the longer term, we anticipate that the cost of delivering many council services will increase at the same point that our available income (council tax and business rates) will come under pressure. The draft budget proposals include a gap of £18.9m and our strategy includes carrying forward an element of the COVID-19 emergency grant funding allocated this year to contribute towards this gap.

Performance

8. During this quarter we have been presented with significant challenges to service delivery as a result of the pandemic lockdown and restrictions applied. We have worked closely with government bodies, partner organisations and local communities to provide essential support to residents that have been affected by the restrictions.
9. Paragraphs 12-69 outline the current position on areas that we have managed to continue to monitor throughout quarter 3 as well as identifying additional key areas of activity.

EXEMPT REPORT

10. This report is not exempt

RECOMMENDATIONS

11. The Mayor and Members of Cabinet are asked to note and comment on the quarter 3 performance and financial information; including;
 - Approve the virements per the Financial Procedure Rules, detailed in the Appendix A – Financial Profile;
 - Note the allocations of block budgets in the Capital Programme, detailed in the Appendix A – Financial Profile, in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules (sections A & B);
 - Approve the payment to the Doncaster Children’s Services Trust (DCST) for the non-COVID element of their overspend (£2.56m) with a reconciliation at year-end to ensure any surplus is returned to the Council.
 - Delegate the allocation of the £5m Environment & Sustainability/Net Zero Carbon Earmarked Reserve to the Director of Economy & Environment and Assistant Director of Finance (Section 151) in consultation with the Mayor, as outlined in paragraph 84.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

LIVING:

Delivering Quality Local Environmental and Highway Services

12. A large proportion of services continue to operate as normal during the pandemic and through the lockdowns, with the services being delivered successfully via remote working. There are activities however that have had to reduce, cease or vary how they are delivered. Traditional winter service operation also means activities such as grass cutting would not be taking place currently even without the pandemic. Examples of activities impacted include: closure of tennis courts and outdoor gym equipment.
13. The operation of depots has changed to ensure covid compliance, impacting on the amount of time operatives can be deployed out to work. Changes include; staggered shift times, signing in and out processes, cleaning down of vehicles and equipment and enhanced personal hygiene regimes. Vehicle occupancy restrictions are also affecting delivery of key activities although the purchase of additional vehicles in quarter 3 has meant all staff are still able to be deployed, just less efficiently than previously.
14. Nationally there is evidence that the levels of waste in public spaces is increasing and this reflects the experience in Doncaster as well as in neighbouring Councils such as Barnsley and Rotherham who have both recently confirmed very similar issues to those in Doncaster. This, alongside the covid compliance restrictions listed above, is further impacting the amount of time taken by operatives to cleanse.
15. During quarter 3 the performance for the removal of fly tip within 7 Days was maintained at 61% (Q1 = 58%, Q2, 61%). This maintenance of performance was achieved despite a continued period of restrictions. Due to the limits placed on vehicle occupancy the service remains unable to deploy staff to undertake Fly Tip activities as per normal service delivery arrangements. Performance has been maintained despite an increase of 36% in the number of fly tip incidents reported in quarter 3, compared to the same period last year and an increase in the volume of Fly Tip. There remains a back-log of open cases (1089 at the end

of December). An action plan for providing a more focused response to and dealing with littering and fly tipping in key hotspot areas is currently being developed and will feed into the council budgetary discussions for 2021-22.

16. Preliminary figures suggest there has been a large increase in Green Waste and Recycling. Performance has improved to 51.6%. This represents a large increase from Q2 (38.4%) and puts performance above target of 50% reflecting the work undertaken to resume services safely following the initial lockdown at the start of the financial year.
17. Annual performance for the maintenance of principal, non-principal and estate roads has remained at or above target at 98%, 98% and 83% respectively. While the condition of principal roads has stabilised at 98% - the upper quartile nationally – the condition of non-principal roads has improved by 1% from quarter 2 with the condition of estate roads jumping 6% from quarter 2; a step change in the level of performance for this part of the network. This is reflective of additional funding received for Capital highways maintenance and repairs.

Delivering our Net Zero Carbon and Biodiversity ambitions

18. The Environment and Sustainability Strategy was approved by Cabinet and Council in January. This Strategy takes forward for implementation recommendations from the Doncaster Climate and Biodiversity Commission's final report which was launched in December 2020. Implementation will be governed by a Climate & Environment Board with the Team Doncaster structure.
19. Considerable progress is already being made to deliver on the intent of the strategy including:

Energy Efficiency of Buildings

- A £12.56m Thermal Improvement programme was approved in March 2020. To provide external wall insulation and loft insulation to the remaining 1,800 uninsulated Council homes in Doncaster. Work commenced in Quarter 3.
- Two successful funding bids have secured £1.179m to enable a housing energy efficiency retrofit to commence in February 2021. A further bid of £2m being submitted in March 2021
- A £2.4m capital funding application for Council buildings energy efficiency retrofit, if successful, will deliver 7,731 tonnes of carbon savings.

Transport

- As part of our transport fleet replacement policy electric vehicles will replace diesel where ever practical. With 26 cars and vans approved for replacement and 11 already integrated into the fleet in Quarter 3. A further 15 are on order and expected in Quarter 4.
- Doncaster has 38 publically available charge points available for charging up to 67 cars. Doncaster wide, there are:
 - 14 x Rapid Chargers (Charge up to 80% battery, from flat, within an hour)
 - 15 x Fast Chargers (Charge up to 80% battery in 4 hours)
 - 9 x Slow Chargers (Charge up to 80% battery in 8 – 12 hours)
 - In the majority of cases, each charge point allows 2 cars to charge up (twin charge point), with the exception of the 9 Slow Chargers which are all single charge points.
- Of the above, the Council owns
 - 3 x Fast Chargers (2 in Markets Car Park and 1 in Chamber Road)
 - 9 x Slow Chargers (Herten Triangle)

- Allowing 15 cars to charge up
- The Council is partnering with ENGIE as the preferred supplier of electric vehicle charge points to deliver over 60 electric charging bays installed/planned for installation for Council use.
- With £2.6m secured by the Sheffield City Region to improve the coverage of 'rapid' and 'fast' EV charging across South Yorkshire, Doncaster is set to benefit from an estimated 30-40 charge points, that would take the total number of charge points to 78 (if top estimate delivered) providing charging for up to 147 cars.
- The Council intends to build upon this rollout to add even more charge points as well as support the rollout of on-street residential charging.

Natural Environment

- A Natural Capital Assessment for Doncaster and South Yorkshire has been commissioned by Sheffield City Region – this will support us in looking more methodically and on the basis of evidence for opportunities for ecosystem and biodiversity enhancement including natural flood prevention and tree planting (Woodland Trust being one of the funders). This will then identify opportunities for investment in our natural assets.
- An independent review of the Council's Tree Management Policy was initiated in Quarter 3. This review will ensure that the management of council trees, particularly street trees, is aligned to our climate and biodiversity ambitions.
- A Common Cause Agreement is being signed at CEO-level between the Council and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, paving the way for collaboration and joint working for example on Doncaster's Green Gateway in the areas surrounding the M18 junction onto the White Rose Way, and support for Doncaster Nature Alliance.
- Doncaster are partners in the South Yorkshire Local Nature Partnership's Woodland Creation programme. A Woodland Creation Coordinator post has been funded and recruited to and the Council have engaged with the Co-ordinator to further develop an overall tree strategy for the borough that links to the Northern Forest initiative.

WORKING:

Supporting Local Businesses

20. Support to businesses throughout the period in terms of preparation for EU exit, and swift payment of grants, supporting people back to work.
21. The outturn collection of Business Rates at the end of the third quarter is estimated to be 93.83%. Although this is an improvement from quarter 2 it remains some way off the comparison of 96.05% for the same time last year. The continued impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, with the country now entering a 3rd lockdown where many businesses are required to close, has seen many businesses struggle. The first formal debt recovery action commenced in the quarter with more than 1,900 reminders being issued, and more than 400 summons. These resulted in nearly 300 liability orders being obtained for non-payment of Business Rates. However, given the continued difficult landscape for businesses efforts continue to work with businesses to find suitable alternative payment plans. With the continuing uncertainty over both national and local

Planning and Delivery of Housing and Investment

22. The percentage of major planning applications processed within targeted timeframes continues to significantly exceed the national target of 70%. A figure of 87.8% was achieved in quarter 3 which is lower than the highly ambitious locally set target of 94%, and reflects a reduction from Quarter 2 performance of 95.65%. Performance this quarter has been affected by negotiation of extension of times. This need to agree an EOT on major applications is not unusual, which are complex by their very nature and commonly require on-going negotiations, s106 agreements and committee approvals in order to seek a positive resolution on the proposals. If extensions of time were not taken in to consideration our performance for major applications would be 91.51%
23. An additional 286 new homes were built in quarter 3, an increase from the 195 built in Q2 and higher than the equivalent time last year (218). Cumulatively 628 new homes have been built to the end of quarter 3.
24. It is anticipated that business collection will remain difficult to the end of the financial year due to national restrictions & lockdowns.

Local Wages

25. Doncaster's weekly gross pay for those resident in Doncaster has been improving year on year and at £563.90 it is now the highest in South Yorkshire, surpassing the Yorkshire and Humber average of £540.40. The picture is the same for weekly gross pay excluding overtime which is now £537 (Y&H £525.40). However the challenge will be to maintain the improvements that have been seen in this and other key indicators as we emerge from the pandemic.

Type of pay	Barnsley	Doncaster	Rotherham	Sheffield	GB	Y&H	Doncaster Rank
Weekly Gross Pay	517.4	563.9	516.1	536.6	587.1	540.4	2
Weekly Gross Pay Excluding Overtime	505.7	537.0	484.0	526.8	574.9	525.4	2
Weekly basic pay	481.1	525.6	464.6	464.6	568.3	516.2	2

*The table is sourced from Nomis

CARING:

Supporting Public Health and our ongoing Response to the Pandemic

26. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges to service delivery this Quarter, along with the usual Winter Pressures. The headline measures continue to be impacted directly due to priority being given to supporting the most vulnerable residents and communities throughout the pandemic.
27. Work in Public Health continues to be focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, with intensive work underway around test, track and trace in quarter 3. There are a number of funding streams being used to fund this work, with Rule 16 decisions in place to cover the way that the money is accepted and how it is being allocated in relation to targeted testing, mass testing, enhanced contact tracing, community testing and containing outbreak management. (Public Health).
28. The Infection Control Fund allocation of £3.1m (of the National £600m funding) has been distributed to residential and domiciliary care providers to support them

to continue during the Covid-19 pandemic. A further £500m was announced in September 2020, of which Doncaster is set to receive £2.9m.

29. Support and drive for delivery of Mass Testing & Mass vaccinations has been a priority this quarter with a whole team approach being adopted to deliver these new services.

Preventing Homelessness and Supporting Rough Sleepers

30. Work around Rough Sleepers, and the 'Next Steps Accommodation' programme, continues and Doncaster received some initial funding of £18k of the £3.2m National allocation; although the work around this continues, there has been no further allocation after the initial allocation in March 2020 to support to get Rough Sleepers off the streets.

Delivering Quality Care Services

31. The number of people living in residential care has reduced from 966 to 917 from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3; this is an indicator that continues to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of people continues to reduce due to two clear factors: the number of people who have tragically died during each wave of the virus and the consequent reduction in demand for new residential care placements. The Council has worked with the NHS to provide support to Doncaster's care homes in preventing COVID-19 outbreaks and reducing their severity when they do occur. Doncaster's care homes have worked incredibly hard to keep their residents safe over the period.
32. The Delayed Transfers of Care (DToc) indicator was suspended by NHS Digital in order to alleviate data pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this remains paused until March 2021. We continue to collect & report of delays locally which is reported into weekly demand and flow meetings. Delays caused by the Council that have slowed down people being able to leave hospital have been minimal.
33. The number of people controlling their own support using a direct payment is currently 912; a decrease of 17 since 929 at quarter 2. There continues to be very few new requests for a direct payment. The Council will review Direct Payment usage after the pandemic, and consider improvements that may increase choice and control for recipients.
34. The average time taken to complete a social care assessment in this quarter was 40.7 days, which is an improvement of 8.2 days compared to Q2. This is closer to the 'normal' level of around 40.
35. Volume of requests for support have decreased slightly to 538 per 100,000 (previously 657 per 100,000). Up to the end of quarter 3 there had been 3925 requests for support so far this year (from April 1 2020).

LEARNING:

Supporting Families in Need

36. The Learning Opportunities and Skills Directorate is not reporting on the service standards for quarter 3 due to the current lockdown, which has resulted in

subsequent changes in the way learning is delivered by schools and the need to provide a response to Covid 19 and the redesign of services to meet local need.

37. The Local Authority continues to have a strong leadership role by bringing the children's partnership together through both the weekly Children's and Families Cell meetings and Cluster Head Teacher meetings. The Authority remains the key link between the partnership between Department for Education, social services and schools.
38. The Children and Families Cell has a number of weekly sub group meetings which are continuing, with particular focus including mental health and wellbeing and Domestic Abuse. Successful targeted signposting campaigns have been run increasing the support available to children and families who are struggling which have seen the number of self-referrals increase.
39. Early years and childcare provision have continued to be readily accessible and flexible through the pandemic. Clear advice and support from the Early Years Inclusion Team has enabled Early Years and childcare providers to rapidly implement the preventative measures and offer increased childcare places when lockdown restrictions were enforced. Where critical workers were seeking additional capacity for childcare or alternative provision, this was brokered and settings were supported to stay open through financial incentives as appropriate.
40. Family Hubs have remained open during each of the lockdowns to enable vital support to be provided to children and families. There have been 28,000 visits and 12,000 offers of support.
41. Early intervention and prevention is now a key priority for the Recovery and Resilience Board. There are currently 1,927 children and young people accessing support via the early help pathway. The top three presenting needs for children, young people and families are emotional wellbeing, parenting and behaviour
42. Supporting parents during COVID has never been more important. Face to face interventions had restarted but stopped again whilst in Tier 4. Online parenting programmes continue to be a crucial with 1350 parents having accessed the online learning with 142 in quarter 3. The online learning receives positive feedback with over 90% of participants reporting that the courses have been helpful and they would recommend them to others.
43. 54.9% of cases which have been open to the Early Help lead practitioners across the partnership have been subsequently closed, demonstrate an improvement in family resilience and a reduced risk which has been evidenced through a percentage decrease in vulnerability levels between allocation and closure with 55.7% of cases showing increased confidence and the ability of parents / carers to support and provide for their family.
44. The Local Solutions Groups continue to provide local support during COVID and to date have supported 355 individuals / families with an immediate response to issues such as finance, food parcels and housing issues

45. There is considerable work taking place across the partnerships to ensure vulnerabilities are identified at the earliest opportunity and families receive the right support during the pandemic. However, there continues to be more children and young people open at level 4 for statutory intervention with a reducing number of level 3 cases. The screening outcome of 'continue with universal services' continues to be high at 59.2% and a deep dive is currently underway to identify why early help contacts receive this outcome
46. The Language Support team has continued to provide support vulnerable children due to language barriers through welfare calls and translation of messages. Children and Young People who are in care have been receiving online and classroom support. The team has supported the Social Services to interpret for vulnerable families on home visits and provided interpretation for families who have a language barrier to access and understand technology.

Supporting Schools through the Pandemic

47. The Local Authority offers many services to schools. As expected the income generated in this financial year to date has been much lower than originally forecasted due to the pandemic, schools being in lockdown or restricted opening.
48. All schools are open and providing places for critical workers and vulnerable children. Some primary schools are struggling with demand whilst others are operating around 50%. During the March lockdown the schools were operating at around 12%. Work is ongoing with the local authority and school leaders to address the pressures by developing a Doncaster place based approach.
49. The Local Authority continue to support schools and partners by collating school openings and closures as a result of positive Covid 19 diagnosis or bad weather. These results are discussed at a daily incident management team meetings where actions are agreed to provide both a responsive and preventative activity to reduce infections.
50. Schools are offering an extensive remote learning offer that has been developed in collaboration with School leaders, their teams and Local Authority colleagues to ensure that young people now have access to 'live' lessons and other learning resources at home.
51. The need for digital devices is being pushed to enable effective home learning. To support the online learning there has been a significant amount of work taking place across the Borough to increase the number of children who have access to a laptop or tablet and therefore able to access online learning at home. Some local businesses and residents have offered to donate equipment to support with children and young people having access at home and this is now being co-ordinated.
52. Mass testing of teachers and pupils has started in secondary schools and there is a plan to roll out to Primary Schools during quarter 4.
53. Since March 2020, overall access to free school meals has increased by 1,500, rising to 11,103 which equates to 23.5% of Doncaster children.

54. A dedicated team is mobilised to restart the partnership welfare contact to vulnerable children via a blended offer of face to face and virtual visits.
55. The Learning Provision has had to redesign what it delivers to focus upon recording and reporting COVID cases within educational settings which are discussed at daily meeting meetings to provide a Borough wide picture on infections within schools.
56. The delivery of family learning and functional skills has moved to being completely delivered online. This has resulted in a lower registration for functional skills courses. Family Learning has developed a range of online resources which have proven very popular with families but it is expected that this will not have the positive social impact of a face to family learning course held in school.
57. The percentage of pupils registered as Elective Home Education has increased by 0.1% from November 2019 to November 2020, despite 224 referrals coming through since September. 32% of the referrals have now returned to school, which is a higher rate than other Yorkshire and Humber Regions. Welfare calls have continued to Elected Home Education students and families during the pandemic.

CONNECTED COUNCIL:

Processing Financial Support

58. Throughout the last quarter services have continuously flexed to adapt to the ever changing pace and demand of the response to Covid19. Resilience of providing relevant grants and financial support to residents and businesses has been key. Supporting and enabling the workforce via maintenance or issue resolution for essential technology infrastructure such as Microsoft Teams has also been paramount in allowing operations to be delivered in a safe and effective way.

Supporting Staff Well-being

59. The third staff in a series of Covid staff wellbeing survey took place this quarter with 1773 staff responding. The key findings were:
- Positive wellbeing has dropped significantly from 72% to 60% and negative wellbeing has increased from 28% to 40% with the main reasons of workload and work pressure, lockdown, covid, health and safety and family concerns and isolation being cited.
 - Work load and workload pressures are having a far greater impact on wellbeing
 - Although many staff are still positive about working from home the length of time and lack of contact with teams is having an impact
 - Overall access to information and support is still positive but there has been an increase in negative feeling about access in those working on site
 - Management support is still positive and workplace staff comfort levels have increased marginally with staff working on site continuing to be more comfortable.
60. Work to support staff and enhance wellbeing provisions particularly to assist isolation continues.
61. The sickness absence rate for the quarter was 9.20 days per full time equivalent employee, against a target of 8.50 days. This is a reduction of 0.54 days from 9.74 days in Q2. It should be noted that sickness absence rates remain lower

than the same period last year and have not yet been significantly impacted by covid positive cases, and that absence management practices remain effective. However there is evidence of increased mental health impacts on employees, and some longer term absences, therefore health and wellbeing resources have been enhanced particularly around mental health support for staff including the roll out of a further staff survey on wellbeing to inform any further support required.

62. The council's corporate Health and Safety team has continued to work with HR and Public Health to develop a COVID-19 secure suite of documents, advice and support to help manage risk and protect employees during the pandemic. This includes generic risk assessments based on national government guidance for managers to utilise and amend to meet the needs of their service activities.

Ensuring the Council Spends Money Locally

63. The Council continues to be committed to sustaining and increasing local spend as this underpins the Council's Doncaster Growing Together ambitions which are to make Doncaster a great place to learn, work, live and care. Local spend by the Council is the direct reinvestment into Doncaster's economy and communities which drives substantial economic and social value benefits such as improved employment opportunities and lowered environmental impacts. In quarter 3 of 77% of council spend in was with local firms, this equates to £29,815,209.

64. Agency worker spend outside of main employment contracts has seen a small increase of 8% this quarter totalling £28k from £342k in Q2 to £370k, although the number of assignments has remained the same as quarter 2 at 37. Both spend and assignments remain significantly lower than in previous quarters. However, it is recognised that there will always be a need to have some temporary resource and this is a sign of a healthy organisation. Whilst we may endeavour to provide temporary deployment opportunities from within the organisation, there is sometimes an issue over skills, capacity and timescales that means we need to seek external additional resource; and this is likely to increase during the next quarter to manage demands in responding to the current covid pandemic.

Responding to Freedom of Information Requests

65. 288 freedom of information requests (FOI) requests were received in quarter 3 and 281 were responded to on time (98%).

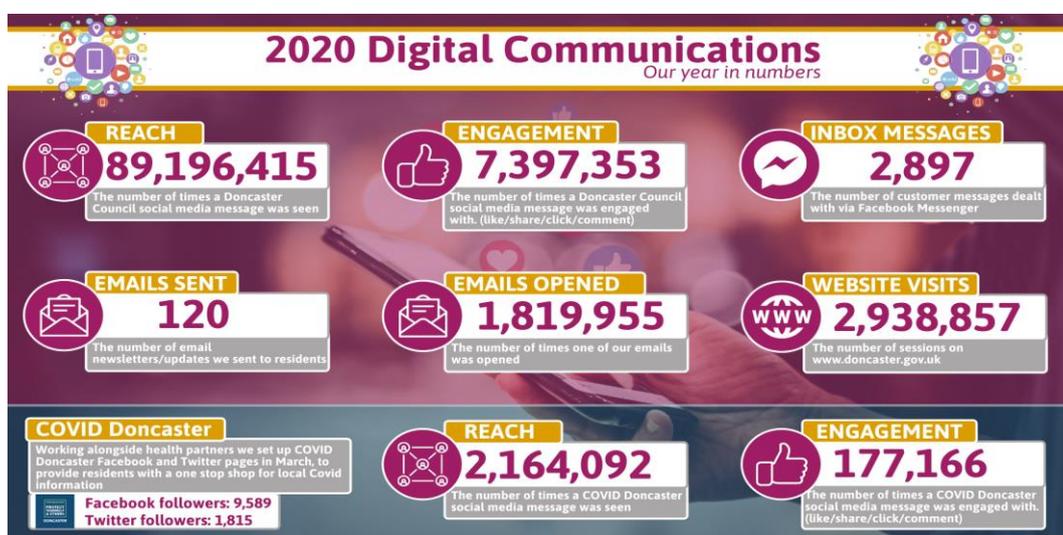
	Received	Responded on time	%
Adults, Health & Wellbeing	26	26	100
Learning & Opportunities	33	31	94
Corporate Resources	111	107	96
Economy & Environment	118	117	99
DMBC	288	281	98

Promoting Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

66. This quarters events were virtually marked and promoted including Black History Month, World Mental Health Day, International Men's Day, Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day and the Days of Action against Domestic Violence as part of this events programme, a key element of our diversity and inclusion agenda.

Effective Communication Channels

67. The use of our digital communication channels have been essential in engaging directly with a large proportion of our residents, and allows us to better respond to the increasing appetite and expectation from our audience to provide information in this way. Below are some of the key figures for 2020.



68. Our MyDoncaster social media channels have showed considerable increased reach with a 55 per cent increase for Facebook on last year and a staggering 730 per cent increase on Twitter. This is largely due to our approach to messaging using creative methods. MyDoncaster website also showed increased visits up by 20 per cent with nearly 3 million sessions and 10.8 million page views. We've also seen an increase in the number of people engaging with us on Facebook, both via the Doncaster Council page and the Covid Doncaster page we set up and maintain in March alongside health partners.

69. We know that the majority of our residents use Facebook as their prime digital channel for information, so it's pleasing to see that our messages and approach on social media are clearly engaging with them. We're also seeing an increasing number of people turn to our Facebook inbox with their own customer service queries. Our email newsletters have been a success following their launch in early April and have created a new audience for our digital communications who may not feel comfortable using social media but still want accessible, local updates.

PROGRAMMES & PROJECTS

70. As we move into quarter 4 of 2020/21, work continues at pace in ensuring that the improvements in the approach to project and programme management continues. Business Partners and Programme Managers continue to work with Directors and their Leadership Teams to ensure all Programme and Projects activity is consistently managed and has the appropriate steps in place to manage both deliverability and risk. Where required, additional resources have been flexed to meet the increased demands of a particular projects, recent examples of this include: DIPS, Covid Testing & Mass Vaccination, Social Care Charging Policy and the Environmental Improvement Programme (including Tree Policy)

71. During quarter 3 95% of projects and programmes were either on track or mostly on track and delivering identified outcomes for residents or staff. Progress this quarter includes:

- Staff rapidly realigned to new emerging emergency priorities Covid 19 including targeted testing and support to mass vaccination planning and Flood Alleviation
- Driving forward priority programmes to support Doncaster's economic recovery including i.e. Accelerated Funds (£1.5m) and Towns Deals (£50m); DSA Freeport submission.
- The localities model continues to be supported through robust project and programme resource, including support for the varying elements including the Domestic Abuse Partnership.
- Development and oversight of appropriate and proportionate governance for key projects and programmes including full register and risk log of all programmes and projects, which includes key deadlines, issues, objectives, benefits, progress, risks, resources allocated and next actions.
- All priority programmes and projects are assigned a dedicated programme manager who have a strong ethos of driving consistency and delivery.

72. In recognition of the ever changing agile approach to Programme Management relevant staff are all undertaking refreshed training programme which aligns to new guidance emerging from Prince 2 in January 2021

Market Asset Management (MAM) Doncaster Ltd. Update

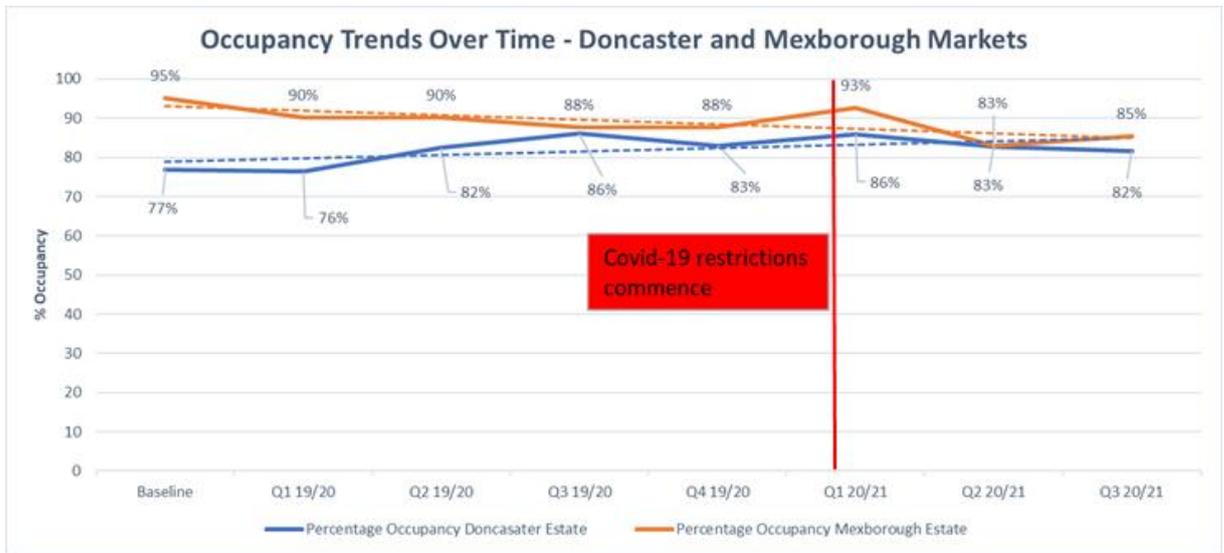
73. This information is being included in the Quarterly Performance update following the Cabinet decision to provide MAM with short term financial assistance. The decision required regular updates to Cabinet regarding the monitoring of the contract.

74. The most recent KPI information is up to end of quarter 3 2020-21. In terms of lettings there have been mixed results at both the Doncaster and Mexborough estates.

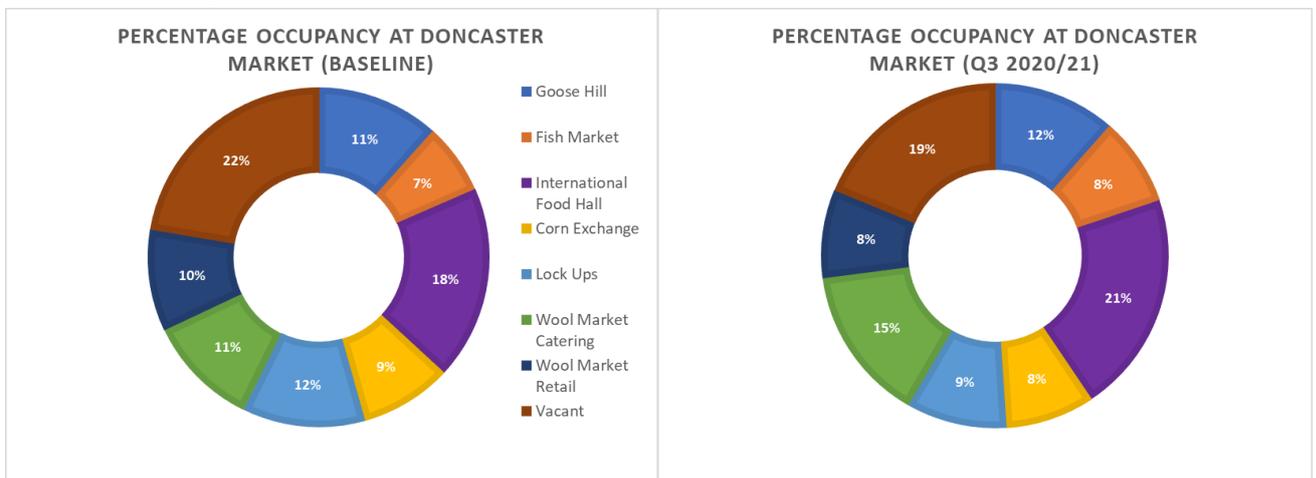
75. Within Doncaster, following an initial dip in occupancy when the initial Lockdown commenced in March 2020, the markets saw a rise in occupancy through the expansion of food retailers and negotiations of new contacts. Mexborough Market has seen a drop in occupancy.

76. The graph below shows the change in occupancy levels and highlights an overall upward trend in occupancy at Doncaster and an overall downward trend at Mexborough. Overall the % of vacant units has decreased from 22% to 19%

77. The third national lockdown is expected to have an impact on both estates across quarter 4 2020/21.



Doncaster Market Occupancy Level Changes per area of the estate (percentage) at Baseline and quarter 3 2020/21



78. In line with the contractual agreement monthly income and expenditure reports and quarterly management accounts for the trading year 2020-21 have been provided and regular performance reporting is taking place.

EU EXIT:

79. During 2020, the Council chaired a multi-agency forum (Brexit Transition Senior Responsible Officer Forum) to ensure a timely review of the risks associated with the end of the Brexit Transition period and the start of the UK's new relationship with the European Union (EU) from 1st January 2021. Building on experience of similar meetings in 2019 to prepare for the UK Exit from the EU in January 2020, a system of RAG rated risks were considered at each meeting. In addition, the Government has provided £220,000 to the Council to support the transition process in Doncaster.

80. Key to preparation for 1st January 2021 has been the resilience of local organisations across the health, local authority, education, social care and business sectors to manage the transition through proactive reviews of Business Continuity Plans and opportunities for mutual aid and collaboration. Another focus has been to ensure that information gets to the relevant organisations and

locally, there is awareness of where to obtain information, for example business support or access to the EU Settlement Scheme. The Council has led on this through social media posts, websites and newsletters.

81. The impact of the UK's new relationship with the EU is yet to fully play out. The SRO forum will continue to meet until Spring 2021 to ensure continuity of oversight and targeting of support to the following themes:

- **Business:** Business has been hit hard by the increase in paperwork, but Doncaster Chamber and Business Doncaster are working with companies that import/export to the EU. The Council is supporting a Brexit Helpdesk at Doncaster Chamber. The UK is now free to determine new trading agreements with non-EU countries – including emerging markets in South America which are already on the radar of Doncaster companies;
- **Regulations and Borders:** Inspections of import and exports have increased, however opportunities for generating increased trade at ports in Doncaster such as the Doncaster Sheffield Airport and Iport are emerging;
- **Health and Social Care:** No specific risks have been identified and protocols are in place to respond.
- **Food and Supply Chains:** Some fresh foods may have intermittent supply until new systems are bedded in, however opportunities exist for local supply chains to grow as a trusted source.
- **EU Settlement Scheme:** Scheme open to applications until 30th June 2021. In Doncaster, 71% of estimated eligible persons already provided with settled status or pre-settled status (Home Office Sept 2020).

FINANCIAL POSITION:

Revenue Budget

82. At quarters 1 and 2, significant overspends due to the COVID-19 pandemic were managed through the allocation of COVID-19 grant funding. Resetting budgets in this way means service managers have robust budgets that they should be able to manage during the rest of the financial year.

83. The Council expects to receive £31.7m in un-ringfenced funding from Government to assist in dealing with the costs associated with COVID-19. The current position shown below is a balanced budget (no under/overspend). Since quarter 2, £1.0m additional pressures have been identified, which means the amount of emergency funding needed in 2020/21 has been increased. The budgets for LOSC and Council Wide budgets have been increased by £0.31m and £0.69m respectively (subject to approval of the virement by Cabinet). Additional funding is needed in LOSC mainly due to additional costs associated with providing free school meals (including at October half-term).

84. Prior to quarter 3 the Council has used underspends to meet COVID-19 related cost pressures before using the COVID-19 grants. This approach was reviewed in quarter 3 and has been changed so that the COVID-19 grants are used first. This has created the opportunity to earmark £7.5m underspends for significant investment to support the following areas, the virement is detailed in Appendix A:

- a. £5m for the Environment & Sustainability Strategy approved by Council on the 21st January 2021 and Net Zero Carbon Masterplan; to be drawn down based on business cases approved per the delegation set out in the specific recommendation, in this report.

- b. £0.2m for flood prevention measures including high volume pumps, modelling software and monitoring points.
- c. £0.1m for investment in the Strategic Asset Management service.
- d. £0.9m for demolition costs to support the Doncaster town centre master plan; and
- e. £1.2m for targeted capital investment, including the accelerated replacement of street light columns, and feasibility works.

85. The position includes £3.4m being delivered against planned savings, although overall savings remain off track with a £5.3m shortfall estimated. A summary and further details by service area is provided below: -

	Quarter 3				
	Gross Budget	Net Budget	Variance		COVID-19 Costs
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m
Adults Health and Wellbeing	165.4	71.6	-1.0	-0.6%	8.8
Learning Opportunities, Skills & Culture	63.2	16.6	0.0	0.0%	2.3
Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST)	57.0	51.8	2.6	4.6%	1.3
Corporate Resources	118.5	27.1	-0.9	-0.8%	3.9
Economy & Environment	103.6	48.9	-0.1	-0.1%	8.6
Services Budgets	507.7	216.0	0.6	0.1%	24.9
Council-Wide budgets	13.6	-106.6	-0.6	-4.4%	0.0
Grand Total	521.3	109.4	0.0	0.0%	24.9

86. Adults, Health & Well-being (AH&WB) is forecast to underspend by -£1.02m at quarter 3 which has changed by £1.16m since quarter 2. The main variances are as follows: The Adult Social Care Ladder is forecast to underspend by £-0.31m. This includes a forecast underspend on residential placements of £-0.494m, driven partly by success in the latter part of the last financial year in keeping a greater number of older people safely at home and partly because of the effect of COVID-19. This will be tracked in the coming quarter as we move through the winter period. Non-residential care services are forecast to overspend by £0.18m. Individual services have seen significant variations caused essentially by the impact of COVID-19 in terms of a reduction in client numbers the short term and increased temporary NHS funding, offset by higher on-going support costs and the loss of savings from projects that have been delayed. Within the care ladder there are estimated COVID-19-related costs of £3.47m (this is only an estimate and will depend on the short to medium term support required and the lasting impact of the pandemic, and will be refined as the impact is better understood). Other Adult Social Care & Communities (excluding care ladder) are forecast to underspend by £-0.71m, mainly due to underspends of £-0.71m arising from delays in recruiting to vacant posts, £-0.14m on Community Equipment thought to be related to COVID-19 and £-0.10m of contract-related savings offset by an additional £0.24m additional resource required to support DIPs implementation and unachieved savings on in-house provision £0.14m.

87. The overall change in the AH&WB forecast since quarter 2 is mainly as a result of a reduction in the Care Ladder forecast underspend from £1.36m underspend

at quarter 2 to an underspend of £0.31m at quarter 3. This is primarily as a result of the ongoing impact of COVID-19, with the revised forecasts reflecting the ongoing nature of the pandemic beyond the initial period forecast in September and the potential impact of a second wave. It also reflects the reduction in NHS funding of hospital discharge/avoidance since September. This comprises a balance of increased attrition in care homes offset by increased void payments to providers, less client contributions and more clients likely to be placed in residential care and homecare as they leave hospital.

88. Learning Opportunities, Skills & Culture is forecast to outturn on budget at quarter 3, a change of £0.34m from quarter 2 mainly due to £0.24m of LOSC's underspend reported at quarter 2 now being committed to the Doncaster Children's Partnership Recovery and Resilience Programme. The significant overspends include £0.22m Traded Income shortfall offset by underspends of -£0.49m from managed staffing vacancies and -£0.19m unspent balance from a one off insurance claim relating to the Music Service for instruments being held in storage.
89. The Doncaster Children's Services Trust is forecast to overspend by £2.56m to the 2020/21 contract value, an increase of £0.02m since quarter 2. In December 2020, as approved at quarter 2, the Council transferred funding of £1.3m to cover the projected additional costs to the Trust due to the impact of COVID-19 broken down as follows: increased costs for Out of Authority (OOA) Placements £0.29m, a six month delay to the opening of two bed homes £0.19m, equipment and scanning costs £0.1m, a potential 5% increase in Children in Care numbers £0.48m and Agency costs of £0.25m due to a spike in referral numbers from July onwards which is expected to continue for the rest of the financial year. A reconciliation will be done at year-end to ensure any surplus is returned to the Council. The non COVID-19 overspend of £2.56m includes: Out of Authority (OOA) Placements £1.6m, 16+ Placements £0.34m, and Staffing, which is mainly agency cover, £0.93m.
90. Corporate Resources is forecast to underspend by £-0.88m at quarter 3. The Directorate has been proactively managing its establishment and activities and this makes an overall contribution to other areas of the Council. The main areas of underspend are within Finance: Financial Development & Business Support £-0.12m early saving delivery and £-0.05m staffing savings due to recruitment delays; Trading Services £-0.16m increased income in Bereavement Services and Legal & Democratic Services: Legal Services £-0.08m mainly due to an accumulation of salary underspends from across for the service arising from vacant posts and £-0.04m increased income in Registrars; Policy, Insight & Change: £-0.18m accumulation of salary underspends.
91. Economy and Environment (E&E) is forecast to underspend by £-0.14m at quarter 3, £-0.12m better than quarter 2. COVID-19 costs within E&E have increased by £0.39m since quarter 2. The main areas of underspend are Strategic Housing £-0.16m mainly as a result of overspends on homelessness accommodation costs being funded by COVID-19 pressure funding and the service now receiving additional funding from Next Steps Accommodation programme; Design and SPM £-0.05m mainly due to salary underspends on vacant posts; and Facilities Management £-0.08m. Strategic Asset Management is projected to overspend by £0.25m mainly due to rent shortfalls. The E&E position has improved since quarter 2 mainly as a result of the additional next steps accommodation funding.

92. Council Wide is forecast to underspend by £-0.52m at quarter 3. Underspend (one-off) £-0.50m in Technical Accounting due to the additional Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) budget provided to fund 2020/21 capital bids which won't actually be needed until 2021/22. Underspend (one-off) £-0.46m in Other Centrally Funded due to pension scheme valuation 2019 resulting in a redistribution of surplus. Underspend (one-off) £-0.25m YPO dividend, had previously assumed a 2019/20 dividend of £0.18m but confirmed by YPO that it would be £0.43m. Overspend (one-off) £0.69m due to the Covid-19 related virements approved by Cabinet in the quarter 2 and 3 monitoring reports. The provision for bad debt is expected to increase and will be included in the outturn report.
93. The above figures do not include any estimated loss income from Council Tax and Business Rates. These form part of the Collection Fund and due to statutory accounting requirements the impact of losses in the Collection Fund in 2020/21 won't affect the Council's General Fund until 2021/22. The impact on the Collection Fund is discussed below.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

94. The outturn projection for quarter 3 is an under spend of £0.8m. The revised budget assumes a contribution of £3.0m from balances; the £0.8m underspend means that the contribution from balances is reduced to £2.2m. The main areas contributing to the £0.8m underspend are; a reduction in the provision for bad debts of £0.5m and a reduction in the St Leger Homes management fee of £0.3m. All income projections, including rent, remain unchanged from quarter 2.
95. HRA balances are estimated to be £7.5m as at 31st March 2021, there is a considerable amount of work which is ongoing to understand the revised investment and compliance needs for all properties following the publication of the draft Building Safety Bill and as we further investigate the work required to reach zero carbon.
96. Current rent arrears at quarter 3 are £2.5m (3.39% of the rent debit); this is an increase of £0.2m from the quarter 2 position. This performance is being monitored very closely, the main reasons for the increase are as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which has increased the number of tenants claiming universal credit or being furloughed and having less disposable income. In addition to this there has also been an eviction ban which applies to all but the most serious rent arrears cases. A provision was included in the Housing Revenue Account budget for bad debt, therefore it is not expected to negatively impact on the monitoring position. As at 31st December, the amount of former tenants' arrears was £1.5m, an increase of £0.2m from quarter 2. The amount written off during the quarter was £24k.

Capital Budget

97. The capital spend projection for quarter 3 2020/21 is £83.5m (£101.3m at quarter 2) with a further £309.2m in future years (£283.3m at quarter 2). Actual expenditure incurred as at the end of quarter 3 is £35.3m (£21.1m at quarter 2). A summary is shown below and more detail can be found in the Evidence Pack.

Current Year		Future Years	
Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 2	Quarter 3
Projected Budget		Projected Budget	
£m	£m	£m	£m

Adults Health and Wellbeing	5.6	6.0	24.5	26.1
Learning Opportunities, Skills & Culture	8.4	7.4	19.1	20.3
Corporate Resources	19.3	7.6	40.5	52.6
Economy & Environment	68.0	62.5	199.2	210.2
Grand Total	101.3	83.5	283.3	309.2

98. Due to both receipts and expenditure slipping in equal measure the shortfall in capital receipts has not changed since quarter 2 and remains at £11.1m. It is assumed that the capital receipts will be delivered in future years leading to a surplus being available to further contribute to the capital programme in 2022/23. The impact of delayed capital receipts is that the Council has to take out additional borrowing.

Collection Fund

99. The current position on the Collection Fund for Council Tax and Business Rates is detailed below: -

a. Council Tax:

	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Opening Balance £m	Planned Use £m	Closing Balance* £m
Collection Fund	-143.64	-139.16	4.49	-0.13	1.10	5.46
Doncaster Council	-118.25	-114.55	3.69	-0.11	0.92	4.51

* Opening balance, planned distribution of surplus and in-year variance = Closing balance

The council tax collection fund deficit is attributable to increased levels of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) £3.25m, lower growth £1.33m and lower collection rates £0.09m due to COVID-19.

Council Tax arrears were £19.65m compared to the target of £17.93m at the end of quarter 3. The target for reduction of Council Tax arrears was £4.77m at the end of quarter 3 and the actual reduction in arrears was £3.07m. The main reason for this has been the COVID-19 pandemic which continues to have a significant impact on people's financial circumstances. The suspension of recovery and enforcement action continued until the start of this quarter, however, sympathetic instalment plans and an increase in non-payment was also caused by the continuing uncertainty around jobs due to the pandemic.

b. Business Rates:

	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Opening Balance £m	Planned Recovery £m	Closing Balance* £m
Collection Fund	-97.67	-56.41	41.26	-2.29	3.12	42.08
Doncaster Council	-47.86	-27.64	20.22	-1.12	1.53	20.62

* Opening balance, planned recovery of the deficit and in-year variance = Closing balance

The business rates collection fund deficit is mainly due to the expansion of the retail relief scheme announced by the Government to support businesses through COVID-19 £38.35m, an increase in provision for bad debt £1.61m and lower growth £0.31m. The Council will be reimbursed for its share of the reliefs granted in 2020/21 through section 31 government grants but these are credited to the general fund not the collection fund.

Business Rates arrears were £5.61m compared to the target of £4.00m at the end of quarter 3. The target for reduction of Business Rates arrears was £1.8m at the end of quarter 2 but the actual reduction was £0.18m. The main reason for the lack of any reduction in arrears has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension of recovery and enforcement action ended at the start of this quarter but sympathetic payment plans and the continued businesses uncertainty over the economic climate has seen a continuation in non-payment. Many businesses have had to close and with the 3rd period of lockdown now in place, the potential of further closures is high. Although business grants continue to be paid and the furlough scheme has been extended until the end of the financial year, trading levels and business confidence remain very low.

In summary, as a result of COVID-19 the impact on the Councils share of the Collection Fund is: -

Collection Fund	2020/21 Impact £m	2021/22 Impact £m
Council Tax deficit	0.00	2.07
Business Rates deficit	0.00	19.67
Section 31 grants	-19.17	0.00
Total	-19.17	21.74

Overall impact of COVID-19 in 2020/21

100. Central government has allocated £31.7m of un-ringfenced emergency grants to the Council. In addition, £3.4m is expected to be received to help the Council deal with sales, fees and charges income losses. Funding is being drawn down from the grants using the quarterly Finance & Performance Improvement reports as well as specific decisions. The financial position is being carefully managed. The balance of grant that is not allocated this financial year will be retained and used in 2021/22, and future years, to meet further COVID-19 costs and income shortfalls, including the impact of the deficit on the Collection Fund.

101. It is possible that further additional funding will be made available by central government. The financial position remains volatile and costs could increase further as the government guidance changes and the financial impact of restrictions become clearer. It is important that managers keep a strong grip on their budgets as events unfold.

Reserves

102. As part of the strategy to streamline and reduce the number of specific earmarked reserves, a review is being undertaken with a view to repurposing balances no longer required for their original purposes. To date, £4.2m has been identified and will be transferred to the Service Transformation Fund. This is detailed in the virements for approval as part of this report.

STRATEGIC RISKS

103. The register contains 12 risks all have been profiled for quarter 3. 11 risks have retained the same profile and the following one risk profile has increased.

- Children & young people may not achieve national standards in educational attainment which may impact on their readiness for a fulfilling adult life

104. The complete strategic risk profiles are attached as Appendix B

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

105. Not applicable

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

106. Not applicable

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES

Outcomes	Implications
<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>Council budget and monitoring impacts on all priorities</p>

RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS

107. Specific risks and assumptions are included in the Appendix. A strategic risk report is also prepared on a quarterly basis.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initial: SRF Date: 04/02/21]

108. Whilst there are no specific legal implications arising out of this report, the individual components, which make up the finance and performance report, may require specific and detailed legal advice as they develop further.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: RLI Date: 22/01/21]

109. Financial implications are contained in the body of the report.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initial: KM Date: 04/02/2021]

110. Key performance indicator outcomes that are specific to the workforce are detailed within the body of the report along with other key areas of performance worth noting. Failure to achieve targets for sickness absence can impact on service delivery to customers and increase costs particularly where cover has to be arranged. The HR & OD team work with managers in service areas to ensure appropriate action is being taken to manage staff absence in an effective and timely way which should have a positive impact on performance.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initial: PW Date: 04/02/21]

111. During quarter 3, Digital and ICT have continued to prioritise, deliver and support all technology needed as part of the Council’s Covid response, allowing operations to be delivered in a safe and effective way. Technology continues to be a key enabler to support performance improvement and ICT must always be involved via the technology governance model where technology-based procurements, developments or enhancements are required. This ensures all information is safe and secure and the use of technology is maximised providing best value.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: RS Date: 04/02/2021]

112. This report provides an overview on the work of the council and as such the whole of the corporate performance contributes to improving and protecting health. Specific health implications are addressed in each section. Much of the information is presented as summary data and as such the author should be conscious that this may hide inequalities within the data presented.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initial: SWr Date: 22/01/21]

113. In line with the corporate approach for compliance against the Equality Act 2011 due regard must be shown across all activity within the Council. As the performance report draws together a diverse range of activities at a strategic level a due regard statement is not required. All the individual components that make-up the finance and performance report will require a due regard statement to be completed and reported as and when appropriate.

CONSULTATION

114. Consultation has taken place with key managers and Directors at the Directorate Finance & Performance Challenge meetings and Capital Monitoring meetings.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

115. Not applicable.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

116. N/A

REPORT AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTIORS

Sennette Wroot, Senior Policy & Insight Manager

Tel: 01302 737006, E-mail: sennette.wroot@doncaster.gov.uk

Matthew Smith, Head of Financial Management

Tel: 01302 737663, E-mail: matthew.smith@doncaster.gov.uk

Debbie Hogg
Director of Corporate Resources



FINANCE PROFILE

APPENDIX A

Adult Health and Well-Being Revenue	Quarter 3 2020/21		
	Gross Budget (£m)	Net Budget (£m)	Variance (£m)
✓ Adults Health & Wellbeing Total	165.395	71.600	-1.018
✓ Adult Social Care	67.478	50.883	-0.395
✓ Communities	66.113	39.667	-0.499
✓ Director Of Adult Services	1.535	-23.858	0.007
✓ Public Health	30.269	4.909	-0.131
✓ Director Of Improvement	0.000	0.000	0.000

Adults Health and Well-Being Capital	Quarter 3 2020/21			
	Budget	Projection Q3	Budget Future Years	Projection Future Years
	£m	£m	£m	£m
✓ Adult, Health & Well-Being Total	6.5	6.0	18.6	26.1
✓ Adult Social Care	4.3	3.2	18.4	25.4
✓ Communities	1.1	1.1	0.0	0.0
✓ Modernisation and Commissioning	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0
✓ Public Health	0.8	1.6	0.0	0.7

Corporate Resources Revenue	Quarter 3 2020/21		
	Gross Budget (£m)	Net Budget (£m)	Variance (£m)
✓ Corporate Resources Total	118.489	27.082	-0.879
✓ Customers, Digital & Ict	72.879	9.674	-0.075
✓ Corporate Resources Director	0.223	-0.121	-0.023
✓ Finance	28.143	3.677	-0.191
✓ Hr, Comms & Exec Office	5.775	4.802	-0.151
✓ Legal & Democratic Services	6.690	4.545	-0.184
✓ Policy, Insight & Change	4.780	4.504	-0.255

Corporate Resources Capital	Quarter 3 2020/21			
	Budget	Q3 Projection	Budget Future Years	Projection Future Years
	£m	£m	£m	£m
✓ Corporate Resources Total	27.5	7.6	39.2	52.6
⚠ Customers, Digital and ICT	3.5	2.3	0.6	3.5
✓ Finance	24.0	5.3	38.6	49.1
✓ HR, Comms & Exec Office	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
✓ Legal & Democratic Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Economy & Environment Revenue		Quarter 3 2020/21		
		Gross Budget (£m)	Net Budget (£m)	Variance (£m)
	Economy & Environment Total	103.645	48.899	-0.143
	Economy & Development	30.147	9.668	0.162
	Director Economy & Environment	0.350	0.350	-0.092
	Environment	70.721	37.387	-0.055
	Strategic Housing	2.428	1.494	-0.158

Economy & Environment Capital		Quarter 3 2020/21			
		Budget	Projection Q3	Budget Future Years	Projection Future Years
		£m	£m	£m	£m
	Economy & Environment Total	82.8	62.5	192.1	210.2
	Economy & Development	37.4	30.6	93.1	88.4
	Strategic Housing	37.7	19.1	98.8	115.0
	Environment	7.7	12.8	0.2	6.8

Learning Opportunities, Skills & Culture Revenue		Quarter 3 2020/21		
		Gross Budget (£m)	Net Budget (£m)	Variance (£m)
	Learning Opp, Skills & Culture Total	120.184	68.407	2.564
	Centrally Managed	7.008	0.203	0.000
	Early Intervention & Localities	13.140	3.548	0.000
	Educ Skills Culture & Heritage	42.790	12.600	0.000
	Childrens Services Trust	57.029	51.838	2.564
	Old Commissioning & Opportunit	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Localities Working	0.218	0.218	0.000

Learning Opportunities, Skills & Culture Capital		Quarter 3 2020/21			
		Budget	Q3 Projection	Budget Future Years	Projection Future Years
		£m	£m	£m	£m
	Learning & Opportunities - CYP Total	18.1	7.4	11.0	20.3
	Centrally Managed	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4
	Commissioning & Business Development	16.2	6.5	10.1	18.2
	Partnerships and Operational Delivery	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.6
	Children's Services Trust	0.9	0.5	0.7	1.1

Council Wide Budgets Revenue		Quarter 3 2020/21		
		Gross Budget (£m)	Net Budget (£m)	Variance (£m)
	Council Wide Budget Total	13.585	-106.625	-0.524
	Change Programme	0.000	-0.150	0.000
	Gnrl Financing/Treasury Mngmen	6.965	6.303	0.000
	Levying Bodies/Parish Precepts	16.252	16.252	0.014
	Other Centrally Funded	0.028	-27.458	-0.046
	Revnue Costs Ex Cpital Progrmm	-21.185	0.000	0.000
	Technical Accounting	6.371	6.371	-0.500
	Business Rate Retention	0.000	-112.919	0.000
	Severance Costs	5.154	4.975	0.007

Treasury Management Update – Quarter 3 2020-21

1. The estimated outturn for Treasury Management is an underspend of £631k. The original budget had a planned underspend of £30k. The increased underspend is due to taking advantage of lower borrowing rates than originally forecast.
2. In October 2019 we estimated that we would be paying interest on our new and replacement borrowing at 2%. However, following action taken, in March, by the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee to reduce Bank Base Rate from 0.75% to 0.1%, to support the economy during the COVID-19 crisis, we have been able to borrow £73m of our £133m requirement at between 0.6% and 1%, generating an in year saving of £317k.
3. In April 2020 we prepaid £41m of our pension liability for the next 3 financial years. We budgeted to obtain the loans from the PWLB at estimated rates of approx. 1.9%, (which were the rates at the time), however, again, following the fall in rates we were able to obtain the loans via the local authority market at rates of 1%, generating an in year saving of £320k after brokerage costs.
4. As an authority we remain under borrowed by £81m which is 14% of our Capital Financing Requirement (borrowing need). Remaining under borrowed relies on utilising working capital and reserve balances to delay taking external debt. This minimises interest paid on external debt but is not a permanent solution and does carry some interest rate risk.
5. Interest rate risk (risk of paying higher rates when borrowing is taken) remains low as borrowing rates remain subdued, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (which has increased global growth uncertainty), trade disputes and the continued uncertainty of establishing beneficial trade agreements after Brexit. We have therefore reduced our forecast borrowing rate from 2% to 1.5% for the remainder of this financial year. During this period of uncertainty, there is a risk that we could see a liquidity squeeze in the local to local lending market, which could force us to utilise the higher rates from the PWLB. However, the liquidity risk is assessed as low. PWLB rates are likely to reduce following consultation around discontinuing the use of interest rates to limit local authority's ability to purchase commercial properties.

Borrowing

Figure 1: The following table summarises the Council's forecast Debt Portfolio as at 31st December 2020: -

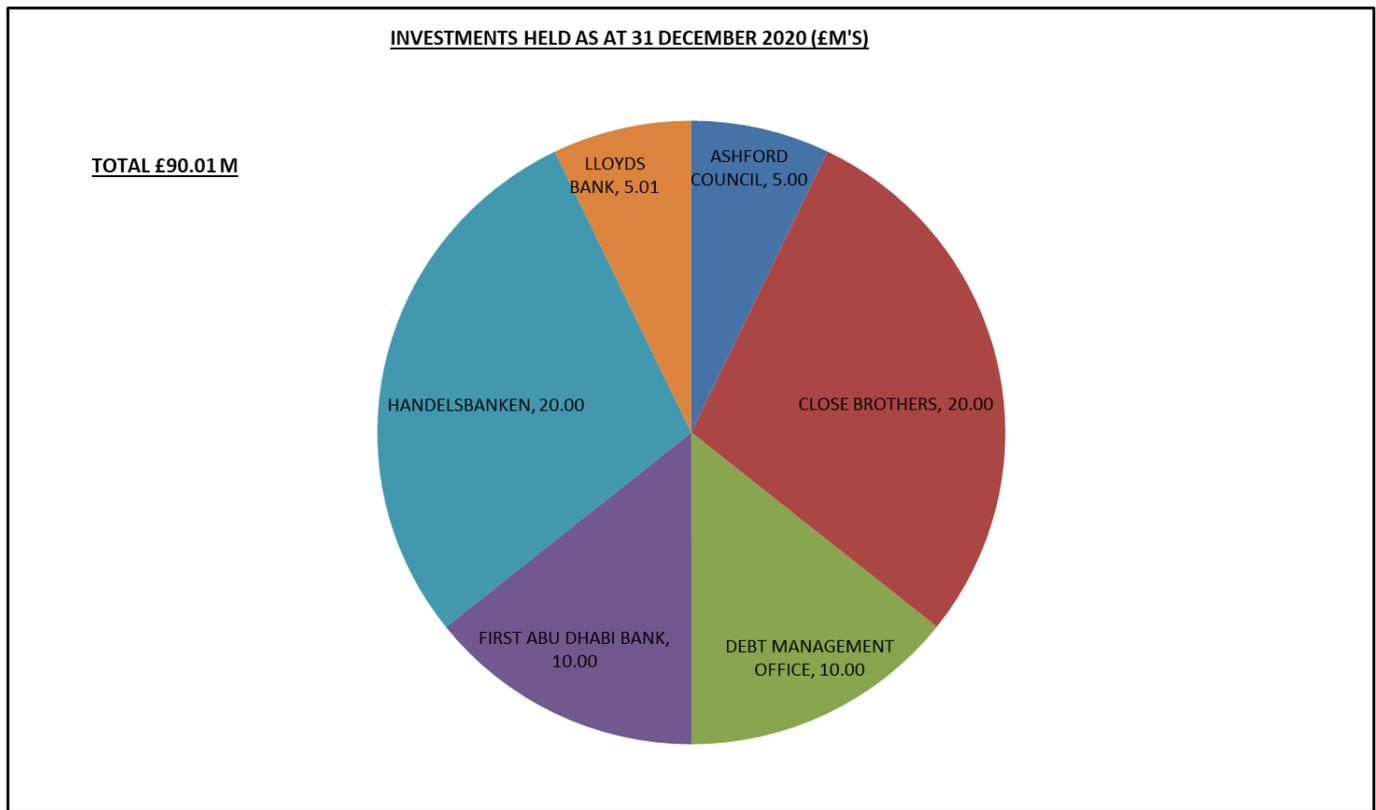
Doncaster Council Debt Portfolio and Maturity Profile as at 31st December 2020				
	Upper Limit %	Lower Limit %	Actual %	Actual £(m)
Under 12 Months	30	0	20.65	108.690
12 to 24 Months	50	0	7.64	40.187
24 Months to 5 Years	50	0	7.08	37.288
5 Years to 10 Years	75	0	2.46	12.973
10 Years to 20 Years	95	10		53.708
20 Years to 30 Years				18.325
30 Years to 40 Years			62.17	154.301
40 Years to 50 Years				100.880
50 Years and above				0.000
TOTAL			100.00	526.352

6. During the 2020/21 financial year, the Council has a borrowing requirement of £127.0m. £38.5m in new external borrowing to support the Capital Programme, £88.5m to replace loans maturing during the year.
7. Short-term interest rates are forecast to remain low during the remainder of the financial year. The Council should be able to arrange all its borrowings below the revised borrowing rate of 1.5% during this financial year.
8. Treasury Management Officers confirm that no Prudential Indicators, as set in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement agreed by Council on 5th March 2020, have been breached during this financial year.

Investment

9. The investment portfolio can be seen in Figure 2. The investments are a mixture of call and notice accounts for liquidity and fixed rate bank investments.
10. The current average investment rate is only 0.28% compared to the last financial year average return of 0.91%, however, this is due to the collapse of investment rates following the Bank of England Base Rate reduction of 0.65%. Despite increasing the liquidity of the portfolio to support the Councils response to COVID-19 and the uncertainty around current and future income streams, we continue to perform well against a benchmark rate of -0.07%.
11. Officers can report that no investment limits have been breached during the financial year 2020/21.

Figure 2: The following chart summarises the Council's investment portfolio as at 31st December 2020.



Risks

12. Risks were reviewed during the quarter and were managed in line with the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement agreed by Council on 5th March, 2020. Key risks relate to our investment portfolio: -
- a. The risk of reduced investment interest rates is considered high. The Bank of England, Financial Markets, Think Tanks, Economists all indicate that the current level of low interest rates will need to remain in place until the economy shows signs of recovery and inflationary pressures return. This is very unlikely to be within the next 2 years.
 - b. Counterparty risks are reviewed weekly and action taken to minimise the risk that any investments placed are not returned on the due date. Creditworthiness data is received on a daily basis from our Treasury Consultants and action will be taken to reduce exposure or remove institutions from the list if negative indicators deem it appropriate.
 - c. The low interest rate environment makes it difficult to place surplus funds without a cost of carry to the council and it is therefore appropriate at this time to remain under borrowed and minimise the cost of holding funds until they are required.

Capital Programme Block Budget Allocations Quarter 3 2020-21

	Funding Source	Allocation of block budget 2020/21 £m	Allocation of block budget Total £m
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Economy & Environment

Retained Buildings Budget: –			
Colonnades Shopping Mall Roof	Capital receipts	0.197	0.197
Moat Hills Day Centre Boiler/Electrical works	Capital receipts	0.034	0.034
Priory Place Damp Proofing	Capital receipts	0.025	0.025
Mansion House Roof/ Guttering	Capital receipts	0.011	0.011
Total Regeneration & Environment		0.267	0.267

Learning & Opportunities: Children & Young People

Send ASD Developments – Mallard sensory garden	Government Grant	0.015	0.015
Total Children & Young People		0.015	0.015

Virements for Elected Mayor / Cabinet / Portfolio Holder Approval

2020/2021 Quarter 3

Financial Procedure Rule B.14 – Proposals for virement between Directorates must be approved by the CFO, up to £250,000 and key decision approval is required for virements greater than £250,000 i.e. by Elected Mayor and/or Cabinet and/or Portfolio Holder. The value of the virement is defined as the gross annual budget.

The following virements are proposed for approval: -

	Reason	Directorate	£
1	Increase in the amount of emergency funding (allocated from COVID-19 Earmarked Reserve) needed in 2020/21 (since quarter 2, the position has worsened by £1m).	LOSC CWB EMR	305,720 674,510 -980,230
2	Adjust the allocation of COVID-19 funding in line with the change in strategy as detailed in paragraph 84 of the report:- Covid-19 Environment & Sustainability/Net Zero Carbon Flood Prevention Measures Strategic Asset Management Demolition Revenue Contribution to Capital/Feasibility	EMR EMR EMR EMR EMR EMR	-7,500,000 5,000,000 220,000 100,000 900,000 1,280,000
3	Transfer of the following Earmarked Reserves (EMR) into the Service Transformation Fund EMR: - Local Enterprise Partnership Inward Investment Loan Improved Better Care Fund Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) underspend Insurance Fund Warmsworth Library Frontage Policy Insight & Change Service Transformation Fund	EMR EMR EMR EMR EMR EMR EMR	-108,510 -1,384,200 -1,748,790 -750,000 -14,460 -156,000 4,161,960

COVID-19 Grant Funding 2020/21

Amounts shown are the notified allocations except the business grants BR1, business rates reliefs BR2 and specific grants funded from Sheffield City Region BR4 & BR9. A full reconciliation of all the business grants is being undertaken and amounts will be updated accordingly.

Ref	Covid related funding stream	Description	Funding £'000
G1	COVID-19 pressures funding	Unringfenced funding to support discharge from hospital, children services, waste, homelessness and other COVID related services. Received in 4 tranches totalling £28.7m	28,700
G2	Sales, fees and charges compensation	Where losses are more than 5% of a council's budgeted income for sales, fees and charges, compensation will be paid at 75%	3,400
G3	Hardship Fund	o Received £3.0m from the £500m hardship fund o Used to provide additional relief for the Local Council Tax Support scheme.	3,000
BR1	Business grants	o Initial allocation £64.4m to fund business support grants - actual spend reported o Government then announced that 5% of the funding could be used for a "discretionary scheme". Grant reconciled - balance repaid	57,900
BR2	Business rates reliefs	o Additional rates reliefs are available for retail premises and nurseries. This reduces income to the Council but is fully funded by government.	38,350
BR3	Revised Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed Tier 3/Sector)	Government will provide up to £3k per business where tier 3 restrictions have enforced closure of premises (eg pubs, betting shops etc). Including backdated cash grants for specific businesses identified in hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors.	516
BR4	South Yorkshire Financial Support Package - Additional Restrictions Grant	Sheffield City Region has been allocated £30m to help the regions economy. Specific support provided for hospitality, hotel, B&B, leisure, non-essential retail etc. not on the Valuation Office list via the same eligibility criteria, payment to taxi drivers, supply chain. Balance still to be agreed and distributed.	2,670
BR5	Local Restrictions Support Scheme (open) - Tiers 2 and 3	For businesses previously in Tier 2 and Tier 3 areas, which were not legally closed, but which were severely impacted by the restrictions on socialising. This includes hospitality, hotel, B&B, and leisure businesses.	721
BR6	Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) - National/Addendum	Businesses required to close in England due to local or national restrictions will be eligible for the following: o Properties rateable value of £15,000 or under, grants to be £1,334 per 4 weeks o Properties rateable value of over £15,000 and below £51,000, grants £2,000 per 4 weeks o Properties rateable value of £51,000 or over grants to be £3,000 per 4 weeks.	4,895
BR7	£1,000 Christmas grant for 'wet-led pubs'	£1,000 Christmas grant for 'wet-led pubs' in tiers 2 and 3 who will miss out on much needed business during the busy Christmas period. Pubs that predominantly serve alcohol rather than provide food.	134
BR8	New Lockdown Grant	Chancellor announces one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the Spring	22,000
BR9	New Lockdown Grant - Discretionary Fund	£594 million discretionary fund also made available to support other impacted businesses (Self-Employed & Home Business Schemes) Sheffield City Region £12.5m allocation	TBC
S1	Infection control fund	o £3.1m to be received from £600m fund o 75% has been given to residential care providers based on bed numbers and 25% to domiciliary care providers o A further £500m was announced in September from which Doncaster will receive £2.9m.	6,059
S2	The Reopening High Streets Safely Fund	o £50m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to councils across England to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas o £277k available for Doncaster	277
S3	Test, track and trace	o £2.23m has been received from a £300m fund to develop and roll out a test, track and trace programme	2,230
S4	Emergency Active Travel funding	o £225m nationally including £7.4m for Sheffield City Region (subject to successful bid being submitted). o Funding to be used on pop-up bike lanes, wider pavements, safer junctions etc.	1,600

Ref	Covid related funding stream	Description	Funding £'000
S5	Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies	o £63m of funding to be provided by DEFRA to help local authorities to continue to support those struggling to afford food and other essentials.	446
S6	Rough sleepers / Next Steps	o £3.2m announced in March to help get rough sleepers off the streets. Doncaster was paid £18k o Further £105m announced in June to keep rough sleepers off the streets (short term element of Next Steps Accommodation programme).	309
S7	Schools Catch Up premium	o £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up o Doncaster schools will receive £0.9m for the Autumn term	900
S8	Local Authority Compliance and Enforcement Grant (COVID marshals)	o £60m announced to be split between Local Authorities and the Police o Surge funding announced £195k for Doncaster.	195
S9	Self-Isolation Payment Scheme	o £500 to be paid to those with a Track & Trace number only and on an in-work benefit or suffering financial hardship.	523
S10	Contain Outbreak Management Fund	o Around £2.4m to be received (based on £8 per head of population) o To be used to fund activities to reduce the spread of COVID-19 – testing hard to reach groups, enforcement, supporting vulnerable people etc o Funding received directly from government/period until end of financial year o Monitoring light touch	2,495
S10b	Contain Outbreak Management Fund (Tier 3 pre 5th Nov & post 2nd Dec)	£4 per head of population for the period in Tier 3 post National restrictions from the 2nd Dec. Same areas for spend as above. Funding equates to circa £0.624m if in Tier 2 or £1.248m in Tier 3 per month for the period December to March	5,527
S11	Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals	o Cover overheads of setting up and managing the local system, contacting CEV individuals within the relevant area, assessing the food and basic support needs of CEV individuals where required, and facilitating the delivery of that support where necessary, as well as reporting on key aggregate outcome measures. o Funding will account for the direct provision of food on an exception only basis. o £14.60 per CEV individual on the Shielded Patient List (SPL) for the 28-day period that restrictions are in force. o Further allocation expected at £14.60 per CEV for the period up to 26th Feb (not included)	228
S12	COVID Winter Grant Scheme	o Provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. This will include some families who normally have access to Free School Meals during term time. o The value of payments for help with non-food expenses will be restricted, criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support families with children, with up to 20% of the total funding to other types of households, including individuals. • at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills (including sewerage), with up to 20% on other items. . It is clear that this support will need to cover children at risk of going hungry. Furthermore, the conditions will allow councils to support other vulnerable groups, may include cash, the provision of food, vouchers, or funding through third party organisations.	1,204
S13	Community champions funding	o The 'Community Champions' scheme, administered by the MHCLG, provides up to £25m funding to support people shown to be most at risk from Coronavirus (Covid19) including those from an ethnic minority background, disabled people and others to follow safer behaviours and reduce the impact of the virus on themselves and those around them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing available outreach and engagement through 1to1/focused contact to raise awareness of local support and promote public health guidance and programmes for residents disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, particularly those with disabilities and/or from BAME communities. • Development and delivery of practical solutions, including but not limited to the recruitment and appointment of community champions networks, to increase uptake and community ownership of COVID-19 guidance, particularly amongst disabled people and/or people from BAME communities. 	317

Ref	Covid related funding stream	Description	Funding £'000
S14	Community testing	Doncaster's application to offer twice weekly rapid lateral flow tests to 50,000 residents over 6 weeks was approved on the 28th December 2020. Funding is available based on the number of tests delivered with 15% upfront payment at the beginning of the testing, a further 30% payment mid term and a final "true up" payment at the end.	2,800
S15	Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Funding	£149m nationally of which Doncaster will get £767,461 80% of this is to be given to care homes	767
S16	Socail Care Workforce Capacity Fund	£129m nationally of which Doncaster will get £754,940 The funding can be used to provide additional care staff, support administrative work (so that care staff can focus on providing care) or help existing staff take additional hours (by funding overtime payments, or childcare).	755
Total			188,918



STRATEGIC RISK PROFILE

Rows are sorted by Risk Score

(SR 19) Failure to successfully prevent a major cyber attack					
	Current Profile	25	Target Profile	6	Trend 
<p>The assessment score remains at the same level due to the heightened possibility at this time - Critical Impact 5 and Very Likely 5. It will always be possible to suffer from a cyber-attack and it would always have a critical impact on the Council, SLHD and DCST. What is important is how we deal with this threat through mitigating actions. Every possible measure is being taken.</p>					

(SR 26) The combined impact of managing concurrent risks e.g.: floods, EU transition arrangements, Covid					
	Current Profile	25	Target Profile	20	Trend 
<p>During Quarter 3 there has been a plethora of emergencies both new and ongoing which have required both a strategic and operational response to ensure our residents and businesses are safeguarded through these challenging times. The structures we have in place within Doncaster Council and the Team Doncaster partnership framework have ensured our collective resources are flexed and agile enough to respond to multiple risks and challenges, be it dealing with an emerging Flood position, to Covid, Mass Vaccination, Balby Tyre Site, Brexit and the ongoing mitigations of the Hatfield Moor Fire, we continue to have a series of robust business continuity plans in place that dictate the direction, support, and partners required to ensure we mitigate all risks.</p> <p>Our longstanding emergency planning team coupled with Exec Board, Directors, Directorate DIts and performance challenge sessions are multiple examples of how we manage and elevate our appetite and performance of risks. For example Quarter 3 has seen the continued leadership of tactical coordination groups (Gold and Silver) in addition the continuation or establishment of a series of support cells and renewal groups that cover a breadth of issues be it children and families to the economy and the workforce etc. During quarter 3, Directors provided the strategic leadership on what services can be delayed to help redirect resources, this position will be constantly reviewed as we morph into Quarter 4 and manage concurrent risks.</p> <p>Mitigating Actions (Council)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Emergency Planning Team has a series of Business Continuity Plans in place ie Transport, Care Homes, Flooding etc that provide the framework to mitigate risk • Series of training sessions with staff and partners on various emergency planning scenarios • Provide regular reports to Directors/ DIts on areas of business continuity that we may need to scale back to reflect the current environment • Strong and robust training plans in place; that ensure all staff have the relevant skills and support to undertake the flexible duties • The ability to establish recovery cells; TCGs and a plethora of supporting structures immediately to deal with the impending emergency • Robust partnership structures at multiple levels, be it Doncaster, South Yorkshire, Yorkshire or National • Ability to request mutual aid should the emergency require it 					

(SR 09) Children & young people may not achieve national standards in educational attainment which may impact on their readiness for a fulfilling adult life.



Current Profile

16

Target Profile

12

Trend



The new lockdown measures introduced from 4 January are causing further disruption to all children and young people's access to education. Under current restrictions, only vulnerable pupils and the children of critical workers can attend school. All other children and young people are expected to access remote education from home. The expectation is that primary aged children should receive a minimum of 3 hours per day of high quality remote learning. This rises to 5 hours per day for secondary age students. This further disruption to learning will continue to have a profound effect on all children and young people in terms of health and wellbeing as well as in the loss of valuable learning experiences. The government has announced that all primary testing has been suspended for 2021. At secondary level, the government is proposing a system of centre assessed grades based on internal and teacher assessments. The exact format and timeline has yet to be agreed.

The impact of the COVID lockdown has impacted on learning which has resulted in behavioural and mental health challenges which will have a long term impact on children's attainment. In addition we have seen an increase in front door referrals for early intervention.

Particular impact can be seen on vulnerable groups including those with protected characteristics, specifically those children new to English.

There has been a significant increase in the number of young people who are home educated although rates of referral had dropped significantly during the latter part of the autumn term as parents become more confident in schools' safety procedures. Attendance during this new lockdown is averaging 16 % overall with primary school attendance at 25% and secondary attendance at 4%. These figures are in line with national attendance data.

Mitigating Actions:

Schools are now prioritising the attendance of vulnerable children and those of critical workers. There has also been significant developments in the provision of remote education as schools make better use of digital devices and online learning platforms. Secondary schools have commenced mass testing of staff and students and this will help ensure in the longer term that more students can return to school. The DFE is now starting to roll out mass testing to primary schools. This will help to reassure staff and parents that schools are taking all possible steps to ensure that schools are safe places.

The Post 16 group is working with schools, colleges, employers and the training sector in order to ensure continuity of education and to support young people with destinations and access to qualifications. Work is underway to ensure a consistent approach to key areas such as behaviour, wellbeing, trauma and by sustaining continuity of welfare and care to prevent disengagement and to develop an inclusive recovery system that will help mitigate the worst effects of lockdown.

The continuing work of the Recovery Group and the Wellbeing and Curriculum group are helping to develop collaboration and cooperation across the school system as all schools and settings work together to keep schools open, provide education for as many children and young people as possible and protect the most vulnerable children.

(SR 23) There needs to be a broad range of service delivery which support people in the community and in other settings depending on their needs, without which makes it more difficult for people to live healthy, independent lives



Current Profile

15

Target Profile

10

Trend



Current Position: No change to risk level at this time.

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect services and service delivery. Work ongoing with various programmes of work, including the Localities ways of working, development of the Your Life Doncaster website and the Market Position Statement will help to support market development. Work to be monitored on how this affects service delivery.

(SR 25) Failure to safeguard children and young people across the partnership may result in children and young people being vulnerable and susceptible to risk

	Current Profile	15	Target Profile	10	Trend	
<p>Welfare calls continue to the most vulnerable groups of children and young people, carried out by the service most appropriate to the family.</p> <p>Working with schools to ensure support is available to contact vulnerable children where needed.</p> <p>A new pathway has been developed to ensure that schools have access to the appropriate level of support if they have concerns over welfare of children, which includes the Local Solutions Group.</p> <p>There is a weekly meeting to discuss any safeguarding concerns within education with rag rating against a set of criteria including safeguarding.</p> <p>We have sourced a pool of suitably qualified and experienced Independent Reviewers to offer high level support for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Rapid Reviews to enable us to react quickly and appropriately.</p> <p>Virtual programme of training is now offered to the DSL Network to ensure that Level 3 training is offered and maintained.</p> <p>A Resource bank for DSL is now operational on Buy Doncaster</p> <p>Children at Risk Dashboard - pulls together data across the partnership to highlight trends and emerging needs and feeds into the Children's Cell.</p>						

(SR 04) A failure to have, and proportionate, an evidence based mix of interventions and services in place that will plausibly support a narrowing of the gap in inequalities and a reduction in levels of deprivation across the Borough

	Current Profile	12	Target Profile	6	Trend	
<p>Economy and Businesses – information being provided at Q4</p> <p>Communities Through the localities model a range of localised data and insight has been collated and will be considered by Team Doncaster partners to determine local priorities and focus for multi-agency action. This should identify any widening gaps and help to ascertain what support may be needed to fill these. Asset mapping will also determine what strengths and services are available in communities to support those that are most vulnerable. Local community explorers and connectors, drawn from the local community will also help to engage with those who don't traditionally have a voice. The immediate and longer term impact of Covid on local communities and businesses will also be monitored through the locality Silver groups whilst Bronze teams continue to respond to Covid outbreaks and are tasked with developing interventions to support the uptake of vaccinations and testing particularly amongst those who need support to do so.</p> <p>Individuals COVID has made plain the underlying inequalities (poverty, poor housing, etc) as deaths are more common in the elderly, those from ethnic minorities and people in key worker roles. People suffering the largest impacts of inequality also require more support to self-isolate than others, are more likely to suffer the impacts of long COVID and may have lower uptake of the CVOID vaccine.</p> <p>Key mitigation – work towards zero covid; utilise community development approaches to support households; promote grants to support isolation; advocate for next phase in vaccination to focus on inequalities – those population most adversely impacted.</p> <p>Education and Skill - information being provided at Q4</p> <p>Housing Lack of capacity to work proactively on improving the condition of private sector housing, both in parts of the owner occupied and in the private rented sector. National data over a very long period of time as shown that the private rented sector has the poorest property conditions and some of the most vulnerable residents, and that PRS tenants experience on average worse health, both physical and mental. The 2019 Housing Need Study found that the English House Condition survey estimates 27,000 homes (20.5% of all stock) in the borough do not meet the decency standard, and as the non-decency rates for the Council's housing</p>						

stock are nil, these are all in the private sector. The HNS also found that 34% of PRS households had incomes of less than £13k p.a., and just over 50% had incomes less than £18.2k p.a. There is also a strata of the owner occupied sector where typically older home owners have insufficient income or physical capacity to keep their homes in good repair and sufficiently heated (£17% of owner occupier households have income less than £13k p.a., and 32% less than £18.2k p.a.). For the size of our Council, we have a small resource working on this, able only to be reactive on enforcement matters rather than work proactively on driving up property condition

Lack of capacity to work proactively with PRS landlords and tenants to encourage and educate landlords and secure improvements in management standards, enabling tenants to feel and be more secure in their homes, supporting those landlords willing to improve their management skills and homes but unsure what to do and how to do it (21,000+ PRS tenancies in the borough as per the 2019 HNS)

Lack of an up to date local evidence base to target interventions on poor property condition and hard to heat homes. There hasn't been a private sector stock condition survey in the borough for more than 10 years, and although we may have anecdotal knowledge about where we think poor conditions are concentrated, and some patchy, ageing energy performance certificates, the Council has no up to date evidence base to substantiate decisions on priority areas and actions. Of the 4 Councils in South Yorkshire, Barnsley and Rotherham have recently completed new private sector stock condition surveys and Sheffield is in the process of commissioning an updated survey.

(SR 06) Failure to implement the Partnership priorities across the Team Doncaster Partnership



Current Profile

12

Target Profile

6

Trend



Risk Likelihood Unchanged. Original priorities identified in the Borough Strategy are affected by our response to Covid 19. We continue to function well as a partnership with a Response and Recovery Model with engagement from Team Doncaster which currently meets on a fortnightly basis. We have clear strategies in place for the short term but also will continue to support the development of our response to the big issues such as climate change and the formulation of a new Borough Strategy in Summer 2021. We continue to make sense of national guidance related to Covid and we review regularly the Team Doncaster Strategy to ensure the partnership priorities are updated across our TCG, Renewal Board and Team Doncaster Gold meetings.

Mitigation

- Clearly articulated response and recovery models for Team Doncaster
- Regularly review the partnership strategy linked to Covid Response
- Threat and Risk assessment for Winter 20-21 in place.
- Continuation of longer term plans.

(SR 16) Without effective influence and engagement with the Sheffield City Region, there is a threat that Doncaster does not achieve economic potential benefit from the devolution deal



Current Profile

12

Target Profile

8

Trend



During Quarter 3, we have seen the continued development and transition of Sheffield City Region Executive, in its renewed focus on providing support for the 4 South Yorkshire Authorities during the covid epidemic; to its positioning and lobbying of Government on issues of economic growth, levelling up agenda; inequality in skills and the finances available; infrastructure requirement (such as roads, rail, housing and broadband connectivity) to a stronger focus on climate change and the environment. Previously we have expressed concern over the equitable distribution of finances across the SCR, these issues are abating with a stronger alignment of City Region priorities and strategies now reflecting the focus and ethos of Doncaster propositions.

On a plethora of fronts we have seen a refresh of the governance of the SCR structures and Thematic Boards – casting opportunities for key Doncaster influential figures to help provide a strategic case for the continued economic investment within Doncaster.

(SR 21) Workforce capacity and resilience issues across the council result in reduced ability to deliver and transform services at the pace required in current plans



Current Profile

12

Target Profile

9

Trend



Current Position: It is anticipated that as a direct result of COVID higher levels of mental health absences are occurring. Increased workload levels caused in work and outside due to COVID continue. Increased demands at this time, or even sustaining current demands, may create a risk of increased sickness levels, scheduled work being delayed, injury etc. Due to the increasing financial demands on the authority during COVID the Council are seeking ways of reducing spend which may have an impact on delivering services and transformation
Capacity of support services could be placed under increased strain due to increasing demand which could impact on the quality of support provided.

Mitigating Actions:

- Individual health and/or mental health impact assessments are conducted where required. Ongoing HR and health and wellbeing support is accessible and in depth deep dive welfare survey has identified potential hot spots and support for staff where required
- Risk management taking place through service profiles, with potential for some services to be recommended to be reduced which is reviewed regularly
- A skills audit of all staff to identify those with the relevant skill, experience and knowledge has been undertaken to enable redeployment to priority areas of need across the Council or Partnership if required.
- Regular supervision, team meetings and communications provide support and build resilience through quick identification of emerging issues

Current Position: Workforce number and sickness figures are relatively stable and all service areas are covered. There is a likely pressure on directorates if required to support activity across other directorates.

Mitigating Actions:

- Workforce strategy in place
- Leadership aware of where skills and recruitment difficulties exist.
- Different recruitment approaches being considered/deployed which is yielding positive results
- Agency and temporary staff are employed to support gaps in the workforce and deliver organisational objectives.
- Graduate trainee scheme in place and the apprenticeship programme is on-going which brings in fresh ideas and energises the workforce
- Wellbeing service in place to support workforce during challenging times with enhanced resources particularly mental health support
- Annual PDR's undertaken which identify training requirements

Current Position: Compromised by workforce absence because of Covid / isolation

Mitigating Actions:

- Continued review of staffing absence and relevant support measures in place
- Continued review of high priority tasks

(SR 01) Failure to safeguard adults may result in adults being vulnerable and susceptible to experiencing harm or abuse



Current Profile

10

Target Profile

5

Trend



Current Position: No change to the Risk level.

This risk continues to be stable, although vigilance needs to continue to ensure stability. Officers continue to be vigilant, with consideration given to the impact of isolation, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mitigating Actions:

- Operational commissioning and adults safeguarding functions continue to work together to ensure better use of capacity and more coordinated response to registered care settings
- Safeguarding is everybody's business - all staff in Adults, Health and Wellbeing are trained and aware of this requirement.
- An increased focus on linking with community and locality teams ensures earlier awareness and intervention in all situations, not only in relation to registered care

(SR 24) Failure to deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy would result in an alternative budget being required with consequential service reductions. ; covering failure to manage expenditure and income within the annual approved budget and balance the budget



Current Profile

10

Target Profile

5

Trend



Current situation

The month 9 position shows a shortfall against the £7m 2020/21 savings targets. Individual shortfalls are largely due to delays as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mitigating actions

The above shortfall can be mitigated by government grant provided to help deal with COVID-19. The grant is currently thought to be sufficient to achieve a balanced budget position in 2020/21. Should this change the Council will look to identify funding to meet the shortfall which will include reviewing unallocated and earmarked reserves, corporately held contingency budgets and in-year savings.

(SR 17) Failure to maintain and improve the management of health and safety may impact on the councils ability to mitigate risk to both colleagues and members of the public and our inability to deliver effective services



Current Profile

8

Target Profile

4

Trend



The Corporate Health and Safety Team continue to monitor the effectiveness of all council health and safety arrangements through both active and reactive monitoring.

The Corporate Health and Safety Team are supporting essential/priority council services with any H&S issues during the current COVID-19 Pandemic, including the development, and review of COVID-19 Secure Risk Assessments in line with Government guidance & updates.

Due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic the H&S Training Team have plans in place to ensure that any lapsed H&S training for suspended non-essential services is refreshed before operatives return to normal operations. Where possible H&S training is being delivered via MS Teams. Essential H&S training, including refresher for essential services is sourced and delivered Covid-securely face to face or via MS Teams; as per service business continuity plans. If not required, then cancelled and rescheduled for a later date.

Fire Safety in High Rise Flats following the Grenfell disaster - Doncaster council's Fire Safety Advisor continues to attend the High Rise Fire Safety Group, advising and supporting St Leger Homes (SLH) where required. Where required virtual meetings are

carried out, or direct telephone updates undertaken. Plans are being developed to ensure that the council and SLH meet all of the legislative requirements under the forthcoming Building Safety Act, and ensuring that both SLH and the council have suitable resources in place to meet these duties/requirements.

Residential Caravan Sites - St Leger Homes (SLH) continue to lead on fire safety action plans with input and advice from the Council's Environmental Health Officers (EHO's), South Yorkshire Fire and the Councils Fire Safety Advisor.



GOVERNANCE INDICATORS – Whole Authority

Whole Authority	Value	Target	DoT	Traffic Light
Sickness – Days per FTE	9.20	8.50	↑	⚠
PDR Completion - % of workforce with a PDR recorded	65%	95%	↓	🛑
Whole Authority Internal Audit High Risk Level Recommendations	1	5	↓	🛑
Whole Authority Internal Audit lower Risk Level Recommendations	12	58	↑	🛑
% of Large Transactions (over £25k) that are under contract	100%	100%	—	✅
% of Freedom of Information Requests responded to within timescale	98%	95%	↑	✅



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 23 February 2021

To the Chair and Members of the Cabinet

**St Leger Homes of Doncaster Ltd (SLHD) Performance & Delivery Update:
2020/21 Quarter Three (Q3)**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities, Deputy Mayor	All	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. As part of the Management Agreement and governance arrangements for SLHD, an Annual Development Plan (ADP) is produced in agreement with Doncaster Council (DC) officers, the Housing Portfolio holder and the Mayor. The ADP identifies the key deliverables, outcomes, milestones and performance measures. Part of the agreed governance framework is a quarterly report of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to Cabinet.
2. This report provides an opportunity to feedback on performance successes and challenges against the 2020/21 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and also the Value For Money (VFM) Statement for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 (2019/20).
3. Seven of the fifteen quarterly KPIs are not meeting target or are within tolerances as at Q3 2020/21. Commentary appears below

EXEMPT REPORT

4. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. That Cabinet:
 - 5.1. note the progress of SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting Doncaster Council (DC) strategic priorities; and
 - 5.2. accept SLHD's VFM statement for the financial year ended 31 March 2020 (2019/20).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

6. As this report includes the current progress on the SLHD performance indicators, the implications of the contents may ultimately affect the delivery of services to the people of Doncaster.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. **Appendix A** contains the SLHD 2020/21 Performance summary for Quarter 3. Commentary on the performance against all indicators is provided below.
- 7.2. Targets and measures were reviewed with DC officers and elected members prior to the start of the financial year. KPIs were agreed with DC for 2020/21, and four of these are measured annually.
- 7.3. Performance in the year to date has been heavily affected by Covid19. Business critical services only were delivered in April and May Normal services resumed on a phased basis from early June and core services have been delivered since, despite further restrictions in Q2 and Q3.

8. 2020/21 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE

- 8.1. The table below summarises the dashboard as at the end of Q3 2020/21. Comparatives have been included from 2019/20 as the KPIs are the same as last financial year, with one more annual KPI added for 20/21. There are seven KPIs not meeting target or tolerances and commentary appears below :

	Q3 20/21	Q2 20/21	Q1 20/21	Q4 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q2 19/20	Q1 19/20
Green (on target)	5	6	6	10	6	7	7
Amber (within tolerance)	3	1	1	4	5	4	1
Red (not meeting target)	7	8	8	4	3	3	5
Annual KPIs	4	4	4	0	4	4	4
Total	19	19	19	18	18	18 ¹	17

1 During Q2 2019/20, KPI 14 was split in two - KPI14a and KPI14b - to separately report performance on training and employment support.

- 8.2. The tolerances which determine the red, amber and green status are consistent with DC and Doncaster Children's Trust measures. Please note performance data is cumulative year to date (YTD) rather than performance in the quarter, as this can be misleading when comparing to target.

- 8.3. As mentioned in 4.3 above, services were severely restricted for most of Quarter 1 because of the Covid19 lockdown. Office based staff were all working from home from end of March and only business critical services were delivered to our customers, ie gas servicing, emergency repairs and emergency rehousing during April and May. Since Q1, all services have resumed but are being delivered in a Covid secure way which is affecting some service delivery.
- 8.4. As anticipated, this had an adverse impact on a number of KPIs, and also budgets, and overall, in terms of the 'direction of travel', performance has deteriorated from the 2019/20 year end position.

8.5. KPI 1: Percentage of Current Rent Arrears against Annual Debit :

Profiled Target 3.20% (Year end target 2.80%)
Q3 YTD Performance 3.39% WORSE THAN TARGET – RED

Current rent arrears increased in mid-April 2020 and have been consistently between the 3.10% to 3.30% level up to the end of November. Arrears levels for the same period in 2019/20 were consistently around the 2.80% levels, which gives an indication of the impact of Covid19 on this KPI.

Arrears usually increase in December and this was again the case here. This time last year, arrears did increase to 3.29%. Given the restrictions placed on operations in 2020/21, we are in a strong position going into the final quarter of the year.

	Q3 20/21	Q2 20/21	Q1 20/21	Q4 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q2 19/20	Q1 19/20
Arrears %	3.39%	3.05%	3.12%	2.79%	3.29%	2.95%	2.77%

There has been an accelerated uptake of Universal Credit due to the pandemic and so it's likely we will reach full capacity of the managed migration of cases from HB to UC earlier than anticipated. We currently have around 6,300 UC cases compared with 4,325 at the same period last year (2,776 in arrears).

In terms of the current legal situation, the national restrictions on evictions and legal action have been extended again and will now remain in place until at least 21 February except for the most serious ASB cases. Focus now will turn to year-end activities to ensure the best possible outturn can be achieved.

Despite the restrictions imposed since March, we have continued our 'business as usual' approach to take every opportunity to recover the arrears position this year with robust arrears pursuance work, balanced with excellent advice to support tenants to be able to pay their rent.

We continue to take advantage of the increased Local Assistance Scheme (LAS) and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) available for any COVID-related arrears cases, as well as advising affected tenants of the Government's new Job Support Scheme as well as the Test and Trace Support Payments. Collaborative work continues between the Income Management and Tenancy Sustainability Teams to focus on effective outcomes.

It is worth noting that at the end of September (Quarter 2), when benchmarked with our peer group, the arrears figure of 3.05% was better than the Median and in Quartile 2. We await the Q3 benchmarking results.

8.6. KPI 2: Void Rent Loss (VRL) – Percentage of rent loss through vacant dwellings:

Target 0.50%
Q3 YTD Performance 1.02% WORSE THAN TARGET – RED

The lockdown following Covid19 is the reason for the decline in performance. From end of March, the advertisement cycle, non-urgent repairs, capital works and void repair works were suspended and the number of voids held showed a weekly increase during April and May, until re-letting commenced.

	Q3 20/21	Q2 20/21	Q1 20/21	Q4 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q2 19/20	Q1 19/20
Rent loss %	1.02%	0.97%	0.97%	0.59%	0.59%	0.64%	0.72%

The rent loss target of 0.50% equates to approximately 100 empty properties at any point in time. Typically, void levels are around 100-110 properties at any point in time, but the actual number of voids has been nearer 200 for the year to date, which gives an indication of the impact of Covid19 on this KPI. For 20/21, this peaked at 223 at end of May, reduced to 194 at end of June, 178 at end of July but has crept back up since and is now at 216 (199 lettable) at end of December.

Terminations during December of 113 show an increase (+15) compared to November. Re-lets during December of 104 is one less than November.

Teams involved are working together to ensure that the monthly number of re-lets will become higher than the number of terminations, to improve performance. Resources in the Empty Homes Team are supporting colleagues in HomeChoice by arranging and completing void viewings, this enables resources in HomeChoice to work on viewing and sign-ups on properties which are fully repaired, at the time of writing, a total of 61 properties are fully repaired and awaiting re-let.

We still have some materials issues around kitchens and fire doors and we are working with our procurement colleagues to look at alternative suppliers.

We are currently concluding a review to determine actions which will enable us to return void levels to more normal numbers and will continue to closely monitor processes to ensure repair work is completed efficiently in voids, which will in turn increase the number of properties available to re-let. The focus now is to re-let the empty properties as soon as possible and start to reverse the KPI trend.

8.7. KPI 3: Average number of calendar days to re-let standard properties :

Target **20.00 days**
Q3 YTD Performance **48.27 days** **WORSE THAN TARGET – RED**

As with KPI2 above, the suspension of lettings and repair work on empty properties in Q1 had a significant adverse impact on the KPI. Performance for Q3 shows a slight improvement to 48.27, with performance for October, November and December all being better than the position at end of Q2.

	Q3 20/21	Q2 20/21	Q1 20/21	Q4 19/20	Q3 19/20	Q2 19/20	Q1 19/20
Re-let days	48.27	49.32	55.05	22.68	22.30	23.83	26.18

In early January 2021, the number of lettable voids held is 210, of which 162 require standard work. Of the 162 standard voids, 103 are over the 20 day target (64%). The Christmas shut down period has contributed to the increase in standard voids held above 20 days. It is anticipated that performance may decline further as these aged standard voids are re-let.

As a result of the temporary suspension with the process in voids relating to the replacement of all consumer units, voids requiring little work can now be fully repaired and available to re-let much sooner which will be a significant factor to improving performance. Stringent monitoring remains in place across all teams involved in the key to key process to ensure work is completed in voids and all teams are working collectively to ensure that voids are re-let at the earliest opportunity.

8.8. KPI 4: Number of households placed in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation

Target YTD **47**
Q3 YTD Performance **586** **WORSE THAN TARGET – RED**

The target for the year is 63 (which was set pre pandemic), so this KPI will be red all year. The placements and nights in B&B during the quarter is skewed by the response to Covid19. The table below shows volumes by quarter with comparatives from previous years, showing the impact that the government announcement has had on the service, budgets and KPIs.

	Households placed in B&B accommodation	Total no. of nights in B&B new placements	Total no. of nights in B&B paid for	No. of children placed in B&B accommodation
Q1 18/19	60	n/k	n/k	21
Q2 18/19	81	1,166	1,166	50
Q3 18/19	58	569	569	43
Q4 18/19	75	502	502	45
2018/19 totals	274	n/k	n/k	159
Q1 19/20	28	67	67	15
Q2 19/20	18	41	42	10
Q3 19/20	4	11	11	5
Q4 19/20	34	103	103	5
19/20 totals	84	222	223	35
Q1 20/21	243	2,674	4,679	0
Q2 20/21	134	1,441	6,019	5
Q3 20/21	209	1,009	5,086	15
20/21 YTD totals	586	5,124	15,784	20

The number of placements remained high in December following the significant increases in October and November compared to Q2. Demand was high during the Christmas and New Year period with 20 placements in total. The total number of nights was similar to those experienced in June (~80) when numbers peaked during the first lockdown.

No children were placed in hotel accommodation during December. Officers continue to focus on move on plans, however with winter pressures and lockdown restrictions in place the reduction is likely to be steady throughout the remainder of the year.

The number placed in Hotels at the end of the quarter was 97, higher than our NSAP (Next Steps Accommodation Programme) Action Plan target of 50, and reflects the impact of further Covid19 restrictions being applied nationally.

We contributed to the Council's successful bid to the MHCLG NSAP which includes a planned reduction of households in hotels, allowing for Winter Pressures, by March 2021, and SLHD/DC will receive £278k funding from the original bid plus £190k NSAP Tier 3 infrastructure funding.

8.9. KPI 5: Number of full duty homelessness acceptances :

Target YTD	120	
Q3 YTD Performance	273	WORSE THAN TARGET – RED

The target for the year is just 160 (pre pandemic) so given the impact of Covid19 and the government's requirement to adopt the 'Everyone In' response to rough sleeping, this KPI is under pressure and will be red for the remainder of the year.

8.11. KPI 7: Complaints – Percentage of complaints upheld against customer interactions :

Target 0.070%
Q3 YTD Performance 0.062% BETTER THAN TARGET – GREEN

We analyse the percentage of complaints upheld against all customer transactions. This provides us with a picture of our customer’s dissatisfaction and enables us to drill down further into the relevant service areas.

Complaints are reported one month in arrears to allow time for the complaint to be investigated and closed in line with our service standards. All complaints are investigated and either ‘upheld’ or not. Complaints are upheld where policies and procedures have not been followed. The table below shows interactions are down compared to previous years but we are better than target in terms of performance.

Period	Interactions	Complaints	Upheld	% Upheld	% Target
9 months to Nov 18	258,933	660	174	0.067%	0.075%
9 months to Nov 19	330,116	613	176	0.053%	0.070%
9 months to Nov 20	266,873	593	166	0.062%	0.070%

8.12. KPI 8: Number of tenancies sustained post support :

Target 90.00%
Q3 YTD Performance 96.72% BETTER THAN TARGET – GREEN

This was a new KPI for 2019/20 to measure the success of the support provided to tenants by our tenancy sustainment service. The target for 2020/21 was increased to 90.00% from 85.00% for 2019/20

Period	Cases closed 6 months previously	No. of tenancies sustained after 6 months	% of tenancies active 6 months after support ended	Target %
Q1 19/20	214	199	92.99%	85.00%
Q2 19/20	211	200	94.79%	85.00%
Q3 19/20	262	247	94.27%	85.00%
Q4 19/20	313	292	93.29%	85.00%
2019/20 YTD	1,000	938	93.80%	85.00%
Q1 20/21	263	251	95.44%	90.00%
Q2 20/21	248	242	97.58%	90.00%
Q3 20/21	159	155	97.48%	90.00%
2020/21 YTD	670	648	96.72%	90.00%

The strong performance in the team has continued throughout this year. The overall cumulative performance continues to be maintained and stands at 96.72% of tenancies still sustaining 6 months after our support has ended, against a target of 90%.

The monthly outturn for December was 95.65% and meaning that of the 69 support cases that were closed six months ago, three have since ended their tenancy (one abandoned and two handed in keys with no notice).

Caseloads amongst the team has increased since COVID and working from home. In addition, proactive work this month has focussed on contacting recent Benefit Cap cases to maximise income and supporting high arrears cases which are likely to be involved in legal recovery action from February.

8.13. KPI 9: Number of repairs complete on first visit :

Target 92.00%
Q3 YTD Performance 90.67% WITHIN TOLERANCES - AMBER

This was a new KPI for 2019/20 to measure the number of responsive repairs completed at the first visit without the need for the operative to return a second time because the repair was inaccurately diagnosed and / or did not fix the problem.

NB: In the period since Q1 2019/20, figures were restated to exclude certain repairs where it would not be possible to complete at first visit, and is more consistent with the Housemark definition, eg. some glazing repairs where measuring up is required for replacement parts.

YTD performance at the end of Q3 was **90.67%**, therefore within agreed tolerances of target.

Period	No. of repairs completed	No. of repairs completed first visit	% repairs completed first visit	Target %
Q1 19/20	10,444	9,421	90.20%	92.00%
Q2 19/20	10,892	9,790	89.88%	92.00%
Q3 19/20	12,660	11,348	89.64%	92.00%
Q4 19/20	11,138	10,169	91.30%	92.00%
2019/20 YTD	45,134	40,728	90.24%	92.00%
Q1 20/21	7,556	7,087	93.80%	92.00%
Q2 20/21	11,591	10,402	89.74%	92.00%
Q3 20/21	12,007	10,758	89.60%	92.00%
Q3 2020/21 YTD	31,154	28,247	90.67%	92.00%

The year to date has been influenced by the lockdown and the table shows the reduction in volumes compared to last year.

Performance during Q1 is distorted as SLHD were mainly undertaking emergency repairs; which are more suited to achieving higher Right First Visit performance. Q2 and Q3 has included addressing any backlog of repairs.

Performance for each of the last five months has been consistently around the 89.60% level, and is being monitored closely.

8.14. KPI 10: Gas servicing, percentage of properties attended against planned:

Target 100.00%
Q3 YTD Performance 100.00% **MEETING TARGET – GREEN**

The KPI has previously been reported as Red - not meeting target – as there were specific queries on a handful of properties. These queries have now been resolved and the target was being met and continues to be met.

Following the lockdown announcement and guidance on social distancing, this service was suspended for approximately ten days whilst landlords obtained HSE and Regulator for Social Housing clarification on whether to continue with gas servicing. Once notice to continue was clarified, we followed Public Health England guidance and recommenced gas servicing in early April.

The 2020/21 programme has now concluded and all properties have been attended and all have a valid gas CP12 certificate.

8.15. KPI 11: Days Lost to Sickness per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) :

Target YTD 5.79
Q3 YTD performance 4.63 **BETTER THAN TARGET – GREEN**

The table below summarises the number of days lost to sickness absence per FTE by quarter.

Quarter	Cumulative days lost to sickness	Cumulative days lost per FTE	Profiled target
Q1 19/20	1,471	2.01	1.92
Q2 19/20	2,965	4.05	3.75
Q3 19/20	4,501	6.18	5.80
Q4 19/20	5,969	8.22	7.90
Q1 20/21	861	1.22	1.93
Q2 20/21	1,872	2.64	3.76
Q3 20/21	3,288	4.63	5.79

October, November and December were all around the 0.66 days absence per FTE which is higher than the level for the previous three months which were averaging 0.48 days.

Cumulatively, the YTD figure of 4.63 days remains below the profiled target of 5.79.

The highest reason for absence continues to be related to stress, depression and anxiety, when combined accounting for 34% of all absences year to date (shaded items in the table below). The highest levels of stress related absence continue to be seen equally across Housing Services and Property Services (Trade) with an even split between personal stress and work and personal stress.

Musculo/Skeletal (MSK) remains the second highest reason for absence accounting for 22% which is slightly lower than last quarter.

Absence due to Coronavirus (Covid19) has continued to rise on a monthly basis throughout Quarter 3, now accounting for 8% of YTD absences. We have had a total of 61 positive cases reported as at the end of December 2020. This does not include absence due to self-isolation.

<u>Sickness Reason</u>	<u>Days Lost to Sickness</u>	<u>%</u>	
Other Musculo/Skeletal	740	22%	
Work Related and Personal Stress	425	13%	
Depression/Anxiety	414	13%	
Infection/Virus	279	9%	
Non Work Related/Personal Stress	258	8%	34%
Covid19	257	8%	
Heart/Blood Pressure/Circulation	176	5%	
Others	739	22%	
Totals	3,288	100%	

Attendance cases continue to be managed through the Managing Attendance policy.

8.16. KPI 12: Percentage of Local Expenditure :

Target	70.00%	
Q3 YTD performance	52.25%	WORSE THAN TARGET - RED

Local spend in the nine months to date was £3.93m out of the overall contracted spend of £7.52m, equating to 52.25%. This is against the target of 70%, which in monetary terms this under performance is £1.34m.

The 2020/21 year to date total spend of £7.52m is £853k more than for the same period last year, whereas local spend is roughly the same at around the £4m level, so the KPI was higher for the same period last year (60.2%). The volume of invoices paid on a monthly basis is returning to usual levels but for the year to date is around 85% of the level in the same period last year, which gives an indication of the impact of Covid19 on this KPI.

Changing the balance of local spend is potentially only possible at the point that contracts are renewed and if local suppliers are appointed as part of this process.

This is not always possible if local suppliers do not exist, do not bid or enter tender submissions, are not part of consortia frameworks, or are unable to demonstrate value for money through legally required, transparent procurement processes. To address this, SLHD continues to actively participate in supplier events to encourage local business engagement in as many new procurement exercises as possible, as they occur.

With a number of new contracts due to be procured throughout the coming year, SLHD will continue to try and engage and encourage as many local businesses as possible to participate in these procurement exercises to give the best possible chance of increasing local spend and meeting the target of 70%.

8.17. KPI 13: Anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases resolved as a percentage of all cases completed :

Target 95.00%
Q3 YTD performance 94.65% WITHIN TOLERANCES - AMBER

The target for 2020/21 was increased to 95% from 90% in 2019/20. The table below summarises the year to date performances throughout 2019/20 and with 2020/21.

Quarter	YTD % ASB cases resolved	Target %	YTD cases completed no.
Q1 19/20	96.49%	90.00%	424
Q2 19/20	95.51%	90.00%	866
Q3 19/20	96.43%	90.00%	1,309
Q4 19/20	95.55%	90.00%	1,703
Q1 20/21	95.51%	95.00%	310
Q2 20/21	97.92%	95.00%	962
Q3 20/21	94.65%	95.00%	1,402

Performance is showing to have dipped in November and December with 84 cases resolved out of 95 completed. However we have introduced new closure protocols following the implementation of the new OpenHousing ICT system. These cases are being reviewed to ensure the protocols and reasons are being applied correctly, and the service is being monitored closely with officers to improve case closures.

In the year, cases have become increasingly challenging with complex issues impacted by Covid19 and other economic issues. Staff are working extremely hard to achieve great performance but more importantly improve lives and communities.

8.18. KPI 14 a : Number of tenants and residents helped in to training and education:

Target **33**
Q3 YTD performance **29** **WITHIN TOLERANCES - AMBER**

At the end of Q3 we have seen a total of 29 residents into training or education against a target of 33, this is a significant improvement on the two previous quarters and an increase of 13 residents in Q3 alone. This is an incredibly positive place to be. It should be noted that given the further lockdown restrictions from January 2021 this work will again slow due to the suspension by college of many new non-essential programs.

Period	YTD Actual No.	YTD Target No.
Q1 20/21 YTD	3	4
Q2 20/21 YTD	16	28
Q3 20/21 YTD	29	33

KPI 14 b : Number of tenants and residents helped in to employment:

Target **20**
Q3 YTD performance **20** **MEETING TARGET – GREEN**

At the end of Q3 a total of 20 residents have been supported into employment meeting our YTD target of 20. This is an increase of 6 during this quarter. It should be noted that given the further lockdown restrictions from January 2021 this work will again slow due to the suspension by college of many new non-essential programs.

Period	YTD Actual No.	YTD Target No.
Q1 20/21 YTD	1	5
Q2 20/21 YTD	14	12
Q3 20/21 YTD	20	20

9. Annual KPIs

9.1. For 2020/21, there are a number of annual KPIs that will be reported at the end of the financial year. Performance figures shown are based on most recent information where there are a number of annual KPIs that can now be reported on.

9.2. KPI 15: Tenant satisfaction levels :

Target **89.00%**
Performance **87.00%** **(2019/20 STAR survey)**

The main satisfaction level will be monitored through the bi-annual STAR Survey. A local, transactional, operational indicator has been developed to monitor satisfaction levels of some key transactional services to enable proactive management and results will be reported throughout the year as appropriate.

9.3. KPI 16: Percentage of homes meeting Decent Homes standard ANNUAL KPI:

Target	100.00%	
Performance	100.00%	(Q4 2019/20)

This was a new KPI for 2019/20 and will be reported annually.

9.4. KPI 17: Tenant satisfaction with property condition ANNUAL KPI :

Target	89.00%	
Performance	89.40%	(2019/20 STAR survey)

This was a new KPI for 2019/20 and is reported annually. As with KPI 15, a local, transactional, operational indicator has been developed to monitor satisfaction levels of some key transactional services to enable proactive management, and results will be reported throughout the year as appropriate

9.5. KPI 18: Energy efficiency ANNUAL KPI :

Target	41.53%
Performance	n/a

This is a new KPI for 2020/21, which requires all properties to achieve EPC Level C by 2030. SLHD are currently reviewing investment needs as part of a new environmental strategy. This indicator will be reported annually.

9.6. KPI 19: Our overall operational and financial performance against comparable organisations ANNUAL KPI (NO TARGET) :

This was a new KPI for 2019/20 and will be reported annually.

10. Annual Value For Money (VFM) statement for 2019/20

10.1. In the Cabinet decision of 3 July 2018 there is a requirement for SLHD to report annually to DMBC on Value For Money (VFM) performance. The main vehicle for this is an annual VFM statement, which includes details of costs and performance of each of SLHD's service areas against budgets and targets, and how these compare with other organisations.

10.2. The VFM statement for 2019/20 was presented to SLHD's Board in November 2020 and is attached at **Appendix B**.

10.3. Operating in a challenging economic climate the statement shows that SLHD operated within limited budget (budgets and staffing levels have stayed the same or reduced), targets were met in most areas, and tenant, customer and staff surveys were positive.

- 10.4. The statement also shows that SLHD is, in general, a low cost, mid to high performing organisation when benchmarked with peers and also all housing providers nationally, and there are areas of good performance and also areas for improvement. The latter are being reviewed in 2020/21.
- 10.5. In addition to the VFM statement, further benchmarking was undertaken following publication of Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS) data for 2019/20. This data contains details of **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)** income and expenditure and also housing stock numbers, enabling high level costs per property (CPP) comparisons to be made.
- 10.6. The table below summarises the three main operational housing management categories and total HRA expenditure, the calculated costs per property and the ranking compared to the other Local Authorities. Doncaster compares favourably on both indicators, being amongst the lowest out of 143 organisations.

Costs	Expenditure £m	Costs per property CPP £	Rank (lower is better)
Repairs + Housing Management + Special	£34.2m	£1,699	3rd / 143
Total HRA expenditure	£73.9m	£3,671	8th / 143

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

11. Not applicable

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

12. Not applicable

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>Work of SLHD impacts on Council key priorities, with implications on the quality of life for Doncaster Council's tenants and other residents and the communities they live in.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

13. Specific risks and assumptions are included in section 12 of this report

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Scott Fawcus, Asst. Director Legal & Democratic Services, 08.02.21

14. There are no legal implications for this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Julie Crook, Director of Corporate Services SLHD, 04.02.21

15. In 2020/21 SLHD will receive management fees of £33.57m from DC. This is made up of £32.21m from the Housing Revenue Account and £1.36m from the General Fund to pay for the general fund services managed by SLHD.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Angela Cotton, HR & OD Business Manager, 11.02.21

16. There are no specific Human Resource Implications for this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

Peter Ward, Technology and Governance Support Manager, 04.02.21

17. There are no specific technology implications for this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Karen Horrocks, Public Health Improvement Coordinator, 10.02.21

18. Our homes have a powerful influence on our health and wellbeing and providing access to good housing for everyone is one of the most effective ways we can improve the wellbeing of our population. A healthy home is stable and secure, in good repair, warm, comfortable, and free from hazards. Poor quality housing is associated with a range of physical and mental health problems and the King's Fund suggest that every £1 spent on improving homes saves the NHS £70 over 10 years. Our social housing is a powerful local tool to promote health and reduce health inequalities. Access to decent, secure and appropriate housing is critically important and social housing has the potential to provide safe, secure and healthy homes for some of our most vulnerable residents, many of whom may also already experience multiple additional inequalities. In addition to this, having a healthy, stable housing situation can provide the foundations for families to thrive and contribute to society.

Evidence is emerging regarding the links between housing and the unequal impacts of COVID-19, for example related to overcrowding housing or to housing type, but there is already strong evidence that housing quality is fundamentally important to health. This year, people have spent more time in their own homes than they normally would expect to and the quality, stability and security of their home and tenancy can be expected to have an even greater impact than in usual times. In light of the significant economic and social impacts that the country is experiencing due to COVID-19 it is even more important that our social housing not only forms part of our financial recovery, but also delivers the foundations for healthy, sustainable communities.

19. Homes should protect and promote good mental health: they should provide security of tenure, and a sense of safety and comfort. Having a secure tenancy can promote health and wellbeing, thus it is good to see a preventative, compassionate and supportive approach continue during COVID-19. In addition to this, SLHD has been a key local partner in meeting the immediate and emergency support and accommodation needs of our most vulnerable residents during COVID-19. Rent arrears are not only a reflection of the policies and actions of an organisation, but also reflect local and national challenges and policies. It is of the utmost importance that SLHD continues to focus on effective support and recovery actions into the future. Income and wealth are strong indicators of mental and physical health and supporting improvements in the financial situations of tenants will promote the health and wellbeing of their families. Of particular importance at this time is work to support people to remain in their home, including tenancy support and financial advice and support. Many families this year will face unprecedented pressures on their finances and employment, and everything possible should be done to ensure that a supportive approach to mitigating the effects of the pandemic is prioritised. Not only will this approach provide stability in the short term, but it will also support longer-term recovery locally.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

20. Equality implications are considered in line with the Equality Act 2011 for the delivery of all SLHD services.

CONSULTATION

21. Consultation has taken place with key managers within SLHD, the Lead Member for Housing and Senior Officers within the Council.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

22. None

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Annual Development Plan
APA	Alternative Payment Arrangement (for Universal Credit benefit)
ASB	Anti- Social Behaviour
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DC	Doncaster Council
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HRA	Homelessness Reduction Act
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
SLHD	St Leger Homes of Doncaster
STAR	Survey of Tenants and Residents
UC	Universal Credit
VRL	Void rent loss
WoW	World of Work
YTD	Year to date

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Nigel Feirn,
Head of Finance and Business Assurance, St. Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited
01302 737485
Nigel.Feirn@stlegerhomes.co.uk

Dave Richmond
Chief Executive Officer, St. Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited
01302 862700
Dave.Richmond@stlegerhomes.co.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

23. None

Appendix A - St. Leger Homes Key Performance Indicator Summary Q3 2020/21

KPI	Indicator	19/20 Outturn	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Target	DoT	R/A/G
1	Percentage of current rent arrears against annual debit	2.79%	3.12%	3.05%	3.39%		3.20% ytd	↓	🔴
2	Void rent loss (lettable voids)	0.59%	0.97%	0.97%	1.02%		0.50%	↓	🔴
3	Average Days to Re-let Standard Properties ytd	22.68	55.05	49.32	48.27		20.00	↑	🔴
4	Number of Households Placed in B&B Accommodation ytd	84	243	379	586		47 ytd	↓	🔴
5	Number of Full Duty Homelessness Acceptances ytd	228	77	168	273		120 ytd	↓	🔴
6	Number of homeless preventions	965	159	315	456		599 ytd	↑	🔴
7	Complaints upheld as a % of customer interactions	0.061%	0.065%	0.055%	0.062%		0.070%	↓	🟢
8	Number of tenancies sustained post support	93.80%	95.44%	97.58%	96.72%		90.00%	↓	🟢
9	Number of repairs first visit complete	90.24%	93.83%	91.32%	90.67%		92.00%	↓	🟡
10	Gas servicing – % of properties attended against target	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%	↔	🟢
11	Days lost through sickness per FTE	8.22	1.22	2.64	4.62		5.79 ytd	↓	🟢
12	Percentage of Local Expenditure	59.06%	46.47%	53.99%	52.25%		70.00%	↓	🔴
13	ASB Cases Resolved as a % of All Cases Closed	95.55%	95.51%	97.92%	94.65%		95.00%	↓	🟡
14a	Number of residents undertaking training or education	53	3	16	29		33 ytd	↔	🟡
14b	Number of residents supported into employment	31	1	14	20		20 ytd	↑	🟢
15	Tenant satisfaction levels	87.00%	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	89.00%		
16	Percentage of homes maintaining decent standard	100.00%	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	100.00%		
17	Tenant satisfaction with property condition	89.40%	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	89.00%		
18	Energy efficiency - % homes achieving EPC Level C	99.96%	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	Annual KPI	41.53%		

Notes :

- Direction of travel (DoT) is against performance in the previous quarter. ↑ = Improving, ↔ = No Change, ↓ = Declining.
- Targets are for the end of the year performance unless indicated otherwise (ytd = cumulative year to date).
- R/A/G status is against the cumulative year to date (ytd) or year-end target. R/A/G 🔴 🟡 🟢

ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER LIMITED

VALUE FOR MONEY (VFM)

STATEMENT

FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED

31 MARCH 2020

Contents

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **VFM environment**
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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The many definitions of VFM all centre around achieving 'more outputs for the same inputs' or 'the same outputs for less inputs'. St Leger Homes of Doncaster (St Leger) defines value for money as: **“Achieving the best balance between service cost and the benefit to the customer and business”**

1.2. VFM is implicit within the vision and strategic objectives of the new five year Corporate Plan for 2019-2024:

Vision : **“Provide homes in neighbourhoods that people are proud to live in”**

Four strategic objectives :

- Ensure all our homes are modern, decent and energy efficient;
- Support our tenants to lead successful and fulfilling lives;
- Be a nationally recognised housing services provider; and
- Deliver the aims of Doncaster Growing Together through innovation and partnership.

1.3. A balanced scorecard of priorities and targets has been developed for each objective and these are reviewed, updated and agreed annually with Doncaster Council (DC) to reflect current plans and risks.

1.4. An Annual Development Plan (ADP) is approved by the Board at the start of each financial year. The ADP, and related Directorate Service Delivery Plans (SDP), are based on our strategic objectives and also Mayoral priorities, and key themes for 2019/20 were :

- Responding to emerging building and fire safety regulations;
- Reviewing the repairs service;
- Reviewing the Asset Management strategy and making best use of DC's assets;
- Customer access - engaging with tenants, residents and communities;
- Housing management – sustaining tenancies;
- Expanding our World of Work programme (WoW);
- Delivering the People strategy;
- Delivering the ICT strategy and digital transformation; and
- Addressing homelessness and reducing the number of empty properties.

1.5. Operationally, the aim for 2019/20 was to embed the new Corporate Plan, developing partnership working, a performance culture, digitisation (in particular the sourcing and development of a new integrated housing management system), and responding to the risks and needs within the sector.

1.6. Financially, St Leger's recent core budgets have been set on a robust, zero growth approach and have largely stayed the same overall, increasing only to reflect specifically agreed inflationary and other relevant increases for salaries, pensions and certain supplies.

1.7. Operating in a challenging economic climate and within limited budgets, **St Leger is providing value for money services**. At this highest level, increased performance targets have generally been met or exceeded, we have operated within budget, whilst budgets and staffing levels have stayed the same or reduced. The sections below expand on this by looking at cost and performance by service area and how these compare with other organisations.

1.8. **The assessment below also shows that St Leger is, in general, a low cost, mid to high performing organisation** when benchmarked with our peers and also all housing providers nationally, and there are areas of good performance and also areas for improvement.

1.9. **In summary**, St Leger operated within budget, our targets were met in most areas, tenant and customer surveys were positive and we continue to compare favourably with our peers and also providers nationally.

2. VFM environment

- 2.1. As an ALMO, St Leger is an income led organisation, receiving management fees to manage, maintain and improve Doncaster Council's (DC) housing and related assets around 20,300 homes including leaseholders, 100 shops, 2,000 garages and sites and some Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land, and a number of other housing services. It is therefore imperative that St Leger achieves VFM in all of its activities.
- 2.2. Our 2017 VFM strategy, which will be updated in 2021, contains six objectives :
- **Culture** : maximise staff involvement in VFM and embed a VFM culture;
 - **Customers** : maximise customers, leaseholders and stakeholders' VFM engagement;
 - **Comparison** : expand the performance management framework and benchmarking;
 - **Communication** : improve the quality, range and use of VFM reporting;
 - **Commercial**: ensure best use of all assets for which St Leger is responsible; and
 - **Collaboration** : strengthen the role of Support Services to the business.
- 2.3. St Leger is not bound by the Regulator for Social Housing Regulatory Framework, but we continue to recognise it as best practice and have again followed their guidance in producing this summary document, which is a requirement within the Regulatory Framework. In summary, the VFM standard within the framework states that an RP must clearly articulate its strategic objectives and have an approach agreed by board to achieving VFM in meeting these objectives. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>
- 2.4. Increases in annual management fee incomes for 2019/20 have been specific in relation to cost of living awards, pay scale increments, pension cost increases, growth or specifically agreed inflationary elements, meaning tight budgets for our budget holders.
- 2.5. We operate robust:
- performance monitoring, maintaining a suite of Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) and over 100 other monthly Performance Indicators (PIs) and Management Indicators (MIs) across all service areas; and
 - budgetary control regimes with active, regular involvement of all budget holders and service managers.
- 2.6. We validate our performance with a number of employee and customer surveys and we actively benchmark our services with other organisations. As in previous years, the main method of benchmarking is through our membership of Housemark (see Section 6 below), but we also carry out more tailored benchmarking with specific organisations, where appropriate. This involves visiting or being visited by other organisations to review systems and processes and share best practice.
- 2.7. In 2019/20, St Leger experienced a number of strategic and operational challenges and drivers, most notably these were:
- Continued challenges of Universal Credit full service roll out in the borough;
 - A 53rd rent week that was not eligible for Universal Credit (~£300k);
 - Responding to the Building Safer Futures consultation;
 - Responding to the social housing Green Paper;
 - Addressing the increasing homelessness issue within the borough;
 - Procuring and developing a new integrated housing management ICT system for implementation in 2020/21 TOP ('The One Project');
 - Responding to extensive flooding in the borough in November 2019; and
 - Responding to Covid19 from March 2020.

PERFORMANCE

3. Company performance - Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

3.1. The Board approve a budget at the start of each financial year and set Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) targets aligned with our strategic objectives. Budgets and KPIs are monitored monthly. The KPIs for 2019/20 are summarised below, with comparatives.

KPI	KPI description	19/20 Outturn	19/20 Target	18/19 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	16/17 Outturn	15/16 Outturn
1	Current rent arrears % against annual rent	2.79%	3.22%	2.61%	2.62%	2.44%	2.56%
2	Void rent loss % of annual rent	0.59%	0.50%	0.49%	0.78%	1.00%	1.37%
3	Average no. of days to re-let a property	22.7	20.0	20.9	36.0	49.0	56.0
5	Full Duty homelessness acceptances	228	130	130			
6	Homeless preventions- new	965	605				
7	Complaints upheld as a % of interactions	0.061%	0.075%	0.070%	0.060%		
8	Tenancies sustained post support- new	93.80%	85.00%				
9	Repairs – First visit complete- new	90.24%	92.00%				
10	Gas servicing - % of properties attended	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
11	Days lost through sickness per FTE	8.22	7.90	8.90	8.04	8.26	8.40
12	Percentage of local expenditure	59%	66%	58%	58%		
13	Anti-Social Behaviour % of resolved cases	95.55%	90.00%	92.99%			
14a	Tenants&residents undertaking training-new	53	56				
14b	Tenants&residents into employment – new	31	18				
15	Tenant satisfaction overall-new	87.0%	89.0%				
16	Homes meeting Decent Standard-new	100.0%	100.0%				
17	Tenant satisfaction with property-new	89.4%	89.0%				
18	Energy efficiency of properties	99.96%	92.00%				

Key :

Target met/exceeded	Within tolerance	Target not met
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4. Customer Service standards

4.1. To complement our corporate KPIs, St Leger has developed Service Standards with our customers, which are updated every year. These are key operational indicators to ensure we provide the highest levels of customer service, and are measured and reported quarterly, with actions generated to improve performance. The table below summarises our performance against target.

Service standards	19/20	18/19	17/18
Compliant	7	8	9
Within target tolerance	4	2	4
Not compliant	2	3	0
Total	13	13	13

4.2. The two standards where we weren't compliant were:

- Answering calls within 30 seconds : 77% against a target of 95%
- Registering housing applications within 10 days : 67% against a target of 100%

5. Benchmarking – how we compare with others

- 5.1. We validate our performance with a number of employee and customer surveys and we actively benchmark our services with other organisations, because a key element of being able to claim whether VFM is being achieved is how we compare with other organisations.
- 5.2. As in previous years, the main method of benchmarking is through our membership of Housemark. One outcome of benchmarking is grading our costs and performance into four bands or quartiles, ie Quartile 1 for top performers or lowest cost, etc. We submit performance information quarterly and more comprehensive performance information on annual basis, together with detailed financial analysis (see below).
- 5.3. We also carry out more tailored benchmarking with specific organisations, where appropriate. This involves visiting or being visited by other organisations to review systems and processes and share best practice. Examples include:
- Universal Credit (UC) – partnering a UC Managed Migration pilot;
 - Universal Credit (UC) – hosting job shadowing sessions for other organisations’ staff;
 - Income Management (IM) - Speaking at regional and national events;
 - Income Management (IM) – visited other organisations to review systems;
 - Income Management (IM) – participate in a regional (northern) benchmarking group;
 - Part of the National Early Adopter programme for High Rise Buildings (HRRB);
 - Participated in a regional health, safety and compliance benchmarking group;
 - TOP – site visits pre and post procurement to organisations for the new IT system;
 - Utilisation of Temporary Accommodation 'crash pads' compared to Bed & Breakfast;and
 - Member of a national Former Tenant Arrears forum;
- 5.4. We review the HCA’s Global Accounts publication but as this provides only high level cost comparators, our main benchmarking is via Housemark or targeted contact.

HOUSEMARK

- 5.5. The benchmarking information from Housemark for 2019/20 compares our performance to a peer group of 25 ALMOs, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary authorities and similar organisations, and also around 90 housing providers nationally. All benchmarking results must consider that differences exist between housing providers – size, geography, demographic, timing, etc. - and should serve as an introduction for further investigation and detailed discussions.
- 5.6. **In summary, for all benchmarking information submitted, it shows that St Leger remains a low cost, mid to high performing organisation.** The report below provides further detail to support this summary.

Housemark - VFM dashboard

- 5.7. At an overview level, VFM dashboard can be produced by plotting a selection of cost and performance indicators in a 2x2 dashboard to show how an organisation compares with its peer group, geographically or nationally, for core service areas. The aim is to have as many indicators as possible in the low cost, high performance green area and as few as possible in the high cost, poor performance red area.
- 5.8. The dashboard is intended to give a VFM snapshot and generate further investigation. The dashboard methodology changed for 2018/19 and now one cost and one performance indicator can be plotted at a time (rather than a 'basket' of indicators for each service as in earlier years).
- 5.9. So for this VFM assessment, the most appropriate and commonly used cost and performance indicators have been selected.
- 5.10. The dashboards for 2019/20 are shown below, together with the restated comparatives for 2018/19, both for our wider peer group and nationally.

<u>Key</u>	<u>Service</u>	<u>Cost indicator</u>	<u>Performance indicator</u>
1	Responsive repairs	CPP* of responsive repairs	STAR satisfaction with repairs service

2	Void repairs and lettings	CPP of void repairs	Void rent loss %
3	Rent arrears & collection	CPP of rent arrears & collection	Current arrears %
4	Tenancy Management	CPP of tenancy management	STAR satisfaction with service overall
5	Customer involvement	CPP of customer involvement	STAR satisfaction with views being listened and acted
6	Customer services	CPP of housing management	Average days to respond to complaints
7	Neighbourhood m'ment	CPP of estate services	STAR satisfaction with neighbourhood as place to live
8	Community investment	CPP of community investment	Residents supported into employment

* CPP - Cost Per Property

Peer group 2019/20 - 25 ALMOs, Metropolitan Boroughs and Unitary authorities



Peer group 2018/19 - 48 ALMOs, Metropolitan Boroughs and Unitary authorities



Key Service Cost indicator Performance indicator

1	Responsive repairs	CPP* of responsive repairs	STAR satisfaction with repairs service
2	Void repairs and lettings	CPP of void repairs	Void rent loss %
3	Rent arrears & collection	CPP of rent arrears & collection	Current arrears %
4	Tenancy Management	CPP of tenancy management	STAR satisfaction with service overall
5	Customer involvement	CPP of customer involvement	STAR satisfaction with views being listened and acted
6	Customer services	CPP of housing management	Average days to respond to complaints
7	Neighbourhood m'ment	CPP of estate services	STAR satisfaction with neighbourhood as place to live
8	Community investment	CPP of community investment	Residents supported into employment

* CPP - Cost Per Property

Nationally 19/20 – approx. 90 housing providers



Nationally 18/19 - approx. 150 housing providers



Hous

5.11. Total expenditure is analysed into Housemark service areas to give headline and detailed costs per service area. The table below summarises our headline **costs per property (CPP)** together with comparatives and benchmarks from Housemark.

Cost Category	15/16 Outturn CPP £	16/17 Outturn CPP £	17/18 Outturn CPP £	18/19 Outturn CPP £	19/20 Outturn CPP £	Benchmark Peer Median CPP £	Peer Group Quartile	National Group Quartile
<u>Repairs</u>								
Major Works	1,951	1,481	1,419	1,815	1,134	1,469	↑Q2	↑Q3
Cyclical Maintenance	127	174	117	129	127	287	Q1	Q1
Responsive Repairs	454	442	531	571	571	515	↓Q3	↑Q2
Void Works	298	227	235	200	193	230	Q2	Q2
<u>Housing</u>								
Rent arrears collection	83	82	87	76	78	100	Q1	Q1
Resident Involvement	19	20	20	14	16	32	Q1	Q1
Tenancy Management	79	77	92	89	90	113	Q2	Q1
Lettings	36	34	35	30	36	64	Q1	Q1
Anti Social Behaviour	59	53	61	56	58	56	Q3	↓Q3
Estate Services	117	116	120	115	128	128	↓Med	Q2
Housing – total	393	382	415	380	406	493	Q2	Q1
Total Cost Per Property	3,223	2,706	2,717	3,095	2,431	2,955		
<i>Housing Management Overhead costs per property *</i>	97	90	98	73	77	124	↓Q2	↑Q1

* Overheads are allocated by Housemark into each service categories

↑ ↓ arrows indicate any quartile movements compared to 2018/19

Key

Q1 = Quartile 1
Q2 = Quartile 2 / Median
Q3 = Quartile 3
Q4 = Quartile 4

Housemark - Cost and Performance indicator quartile summaries

- 5.12. The tables below show the banding of our quartile positions for all cost and all performance indicators submitted, both for our peer group and nationally. Over the past four years, small majorities of our Cost (~60%) and Performance (~65%) indicators are in Quartiles 1 and 2:

COST	19/20		18/19		17/18		16/17	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Quartile 1	9	28	9	28	6	19	8	25
Quartile 2 / Median	10	31	8	25	10	31	12	38
Quartile 3	7	22	9	28	11	34	7	22
Quartile 4	6	19	6	9	5	16	5	15
Totals	32	100	32	100	32	100	32	100
PERFORMANCE	19/20		18/19		17/18		16/17	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Quartile 1	15	47	14	42	10	36	10	38
Quartile 2 / Median	7	22	7	22	5	18	6	23
Quartile 3	6	19	11	33	7	25	5	19
Quartile 4	4	12	1	3	6	21	5	19
Totals	32	100	33	100	28	100	26	100

- 5.13. Actions arising from the benchmarking over the past three years are to review all Quartiles 3 and 4 indicators to understand why these positions were achieved and put actions in place to move us into the higher quartiles. This will continue.

Housemark - Detailed Cost and Performance indicator quartile position

- 5.14. The tables below show the indicators submitted and comparatives for from the previous two financial years. The table also shows the quartile positions for 2019/20 of all the indicators submitted and also the position in 2018/19.
- 5.15. The tables have been separated into two sections – Upper Quartiles (Q1, Q2) and Lower Quartiles (Q3, Q4). These indicators provide further detail behind the VFM dashboards and the summary benchmarking tables above.

Key

Q1 = Quartile 1

Q2 = Quartile 2 / Median

Q3 = Quartile 3

Q4 = Quartile 4

Housemark - Quartile position table – QUARTILES 1 and 2

Service area	Indicator Description	17/18	18/19	19/20	Peer	19/20	18/19
		Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Median	Quartile	Quartile
Major Works	% of dwellings that are non-decent	0%	0%	0%	0%	Q1	Q1
Major Works	Quality of your home (STAR)	89.20%	89.20%	89.4%	83.0%	Q1	Q1
Cyclical Maintenance	Total CPP	£117	£129	£127	£287	Q1	Q1
Cyclical Maintenance	Gas servicing - % valid certificate	100%	100%	100%	100%	Q1	Q1
Cyclical Maintenance	% gas safety checks by annivers date	No data	100%	100%	100%	Q1	Q1
Lettings	Total CPP	£34	£30	£36	£64	Q1	Q1
Lettings	Dwellings vacant unavailable to let %	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.35%	Q1	Q1
Lettings	Direct employees per 1000 props	0.63	0.67	0.85	1.15	Q1	Q1
Lettings	Void rent loss % of rent loss	0.83%	0.49%	0.59%	0.95%	Q1	Q1
Rent arrears & collection	Total CPP	£87	£76	£79	£100	Q1	Q1
Resident Involvement	Total CPP	£20	£14	£16	£32	Q1	Q1
Resident Involvement	Direct employees per 1000 props	0.37	0.29	0.33	0.54	Q1	Q1
Resident Involvement	Views taken into account % (STAR)	83.5%	83.5%	83.1%	64.4%	Q1	Q1
Resident Involvement	RI in consultation groups %	7.2%	5.6%	10.2%	4.1%	Q1	Q2
Responsive repairs	Appointments kept % of apps made	99.6%	98.9%	99.3%	97.3%	Q1	Q1
Responsive repairs	Satisfaction repairs service (STAR)	85.9%	85.9%	90.1%	78.3%	Q1	Q1
Void repairs	Average days to complete repairs	No data	10.1	11.1	16.0	Q1	Q1
Void repairs	Average cost of void repair £	£2,246	£2,259	£2,197	£2,946	Q1	Q1
Corporate	Days lost through sickness per FTE	8.1	9.0	8.3	10.7	Q1	Q2
Corporate	Rent provides VFM (STAR)	92.8%	92.8%	94.2%	85.8%	Q1	Q1
Corporate	Staff turnover in the year %	7.8%	7.2%	7.6%	10.2%	Q1	Q1
Corporate	IT & Comms CPP	£35	£15	£15	£30	Q1	Q1
Corporate	Finance Costs CPP	£8	£6	£7	£13	Q1	Q1
Corporate	Satisfaction overall (STAR)	88.8%	88.8%	87.0%	83.0%	Q1	Q1
Major Works	Total CPP	£1,419	£1,815	£1,134	£1,469	Q2	Q3
Responsive repairs	Average cost of responsive repair £	£121	£128	£121	£137	Q2	Q2
Responsive repairs	Repairs completed at the first visit %	88.8%	88.2%	90.2%	91.1%	Q2	Q3
Void repairs	Total CPP	£235	£200	£193	£230	Q2	Q2
Lettings	Average re-let time in days (standard)	36	21	23	27	Q2	Q1
Resident Involvement	Number of services changed	24	8	15	13	Q2	Q3
Tenancy Management	Total CPP	£92	£89	£90	£113	Q2	Q2
Tenancy Management	Direct employees per 1000 props	1.93	1.99	1.89	1.91	Q2	Q3
Tenancy Management	Evictions	0.29%	0.23%	0.19%	0.2%	Q2	Med
Estate Services	Direct employees per 1000 props	0.42	0.42	0.68	0.80	Q2	Q2
Rent arrears & collection	Current rent arrears %	2.62%	2.62%	2.79%	2.86%	Q2	Med
Anti Social Behaviour	Direct employees per 1000 props	1.02	1.00	1.08	0.99	Q2	Q3
Corporate	Direct revenue costs-finance costs %	2.7%	2.2%	2.3%	2.7%	Q2	Q2
Corporate	Central Overheads CPP	£32	£30	£31	£51	Q2	Q2
Estate Services	Total CPP	£120	£115	£127	£127	Med	Q2
Rent arrears & collection	Percentage of Rent collected %	98.71%	98.91%	99.58%	99.58%	Med	Q3
Lettings	Dwellings vacant & available to let %	0.60%	0.58%	0.61%	0.61%	Med	Q3

Housemark - Quartile position table – QUARTILES 3 and 4

Service area	Indicator Description	17/18 Outturn	18/19 Outturn	19/20 Outturn	Peer Median	19/20 Quartile	18/19 Quartile
Major Works	Average SAP rating	66.6	66.3	68.6	70.4	Q3	Q3
Responsive repairs	Total CPP	£530	£571	£571	£515	Q3	Q3
Rent arrears & collection	Direct employees per 1000 props	1.92	1.78	1.88	1.79	Q3	Q2
Rent arrears & collection	Write offs %	0.40%	0.47%	0.35%	0.32%	Q3	Q3
Rent arrears & collection	Former tenant arrears %	1.49%	1.50%	1.72%	1.52%	Q3	Q2
Tenancy Management	Tenancy turnover	7.49%	7.43%	7.41%	6.71%	Q3	Q3
Estate Services	Satisfaction with n'hood (STAR)	81.3%	81.3%	81.2%	81.8%	Q3	Q3
Anti Social Behaviour	Total CPP	£61	£56	£58	£56	Q3	Q3
Anti Social Behaviour	ASB cases per 1,000 properties	146	75	84	60	Q3	Q3
Corporate	Overheads as % of Revenue costs	22.02%	20.73%	20.5%	17.87%	Q3	Q3
Corporate	Direct revenue costs - IT&comms costs %	5.01%	5.01%	4.69%	4.64%	Q3	Q3
Corporate	Direct revenue costs - central o'heads%	11.00%	10.41%	10.06%	8.85%	Q3	Q3
Corporate	Premises costs CPP	£25	£20	£24	£19	Q3	Q3
Major Works	Direct employees per 1000 props	8.51	7.79	6.56	0.29	Q4	Q4
Cyclical Maintenance	Direct employees per 1000 props	2.36	2.58	1.93	0.32	Q4	Q4
Responsive repairs	Ave. responsive repairs per prop.	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.2	Q4	Q2
Responsive repairs	Direct employees per 1000 props	7.87	8.40	6.11	3.72	Q4	Q4
Responsive repairs	Average days to complete repairs	12.51	16.33	17.29	9.53	Q4	Q4
Void repairs	Direct employees per 1000 props	4.36	4.14	3.10	1.16	Q4	Q4
Resident Involvement	% residents regd. for online access	No data	10.56%	9.31%	20.36%	Q4	Q3
Resident Involvement	Requests made online/1,000 props	No data	106	93	161	Q4	Q3
Corporate	Direct revenue costs - premises costs %	3.34%	3.08%	3.42%	2.11%	Q4	Q4
Corporate	Overheads as % of turnover	11.42%	10.67%	10.59%	8.72%	Q4	Q4
Major Works	% of properties meeting EESSH (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing)	No data	No data	No data			
Anti Social Behaviour	Satisfaction with case handling %	No data	No data	No data			
Anti Social Behaviour	Satisfaction with case outcome %	No data	No data	No data			
Resident Involvement	Number of unique website hits	No data	75,228	No data	201,250		Q2

Satisfaction surveys

- 5.16. The main customer survey is an annual Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) and until 2018/19, this was undertaken annually. However, during that year, the decision was taken to undertake the STAR survey every two years and the latest STAR survey was taken in January 2020. In between STARs, more responsive, bespoke customer surveys are undertaken throughout each year and used to inform our service delivery methods and respond effectively to emerging needs.
- 5.17. The table summarises the six core questions, with comparatives and also how we compare with our peer group and nationally.

STAR core satisfaction survey question	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2019/20	Housemark 19/20 Quartile Peers	Housemark 19/20 Quartile Nationally
Overall satisfaction	90.9%	91.8%	91.0%	88.8%	87.0%	Q2	Q2
Quality of your home	92.1%	93.2%	92.7%	89.2%	89.4%	Q1	Q1
Neighbourhood as a place to live	91.4%	90.8%	89.9%	81.3%	81.2%	Q3	Q3
Rent provides value for money	92.2%	93.4%	93.6%	92.8%	94.2%	Q1	Q1
Repairs and maintenance	88.8%	89.5%	89.4%	85.9%	90.1%	Q1	↑Q1
Listens to views and acts on them	85.9%	86.8%	85.8%	83.5%	83.1%	Q1	Q1

↑ ↓ arrows indicate any quartile movements compared to 2017/18. For 2016/17, all six STAR indicators were top quartile (Q1).

6. Key VFM achievements 2019/20

- 6.1. Core services were unchanged during 2019/20 whilst St Leger addressed the themes in the ADP and SDPs as outlined at 1.4 above.
- 6.2. There were two serious disruptions to core services in the year – flooding in November 2019 and the Covid 19 lockdown in March 2020. St Leger responded positively to both but they impacted on operational performance:
- Floods : During November 2019, the borough experienced extensive flooding in some areas, affecting service delivery and some KPIs, although this was minimal.
 - Covid19 : The rapid escalation in response to the virus occurred in March 2020 and therefore had only limited impact on financial and operational performance for 2019/20. St Leger’s response was significant but will have its main impact in 2020/21.
- 6.3. There were achievements in VFM in a number of areas, both strategically and operationally in the year, and are summarised below.

Investment

- 6.4. As well as the management and maintenance of DC’s housing and related stock, St Leger also effectively managed £17m of DC’s £23m capital programme, and £10m of this was delivered by the St Leger in-house tradesteam.
- 6.5. This work included investment in the housing stock continued in order to sustain and further enhance decency works already carried out. Improvements to over 5,000 homes were delivered and included an external improvement programme, heating conversions and upgrades, component replacements, communal hall works, estate works and structural repairs.
- 6.6. The year saw continued investment in health and safety compliance works in all properties under our management, including the requirements following the Grenfell tragedy. In partnership with key stakeholders, the year also saw continued focus on strengthening and

improving fire safety in our high rise buildings, following Grenfell. This included completing the retrofit of sprinkler systems and delivering a range of other fire safety improvements.

- 6.7. We responded to the flooding event in November 2019 by quickly putting in place arrangements to dry out, survey and commence remediation works on the affected properties to minimise the disruption and upset the incident caused. The majority of works were completed before the year end.
- 6.8. Capital schemes were delivered in targeted areas to reduce repairs, and our scheduled repairs programmes efficiently deliver non urgent works in geographic cycles.
- 6.9. A new, industry standard Schedule of Rates (SORs) was purchased in late 2019/20 for implementation in 2021/22 which will improve our job costing and increase performance and productivity management going forward.

Procurement/cost savings

- 6.10. St Leger has a dedicated Procurement team with performance targets, including contracted spend levels, and maintains a contract log and efficiency register.
- 6.11. The efficiency register captures savings as contracts are renewed and managed, and for 2019/20, effective procurement and contract management generated savings of approximately £1.1m compared to previous years or contracts.
- 6.12. We have robust Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders and a Procurement Strategy, and these documents ensure we operate in a legal, ethical and inclusive manner whilst achieving best value for money. All contract evaluations consider cost and quality assessment criteria to ensure we don't just procure the cheapest supplies and services. We utilise OJEU compliant frameworks operated by procurement consortia and we have representatives on the boards or working groups of a number of consortia, which enables robust benchmarking and sharing of best practice.
- 6.13. Key points to note for 2019/20 :
 - One of the corporate KPIs for the year was a target of 66% of expenditure being local to Doncaster. The outturn was slightly below target at 59%, largely as a result of having to use a contractor outside of Doncaster, but within South Yorkshire, to undertake essential maintenance for high rise buildings;
 - In addition to the usual contract management and renewal activities during 2019/20, a key activity was the procurement and development of a new integrated housing management system that will be implemented in 2020/21. This new system will replace four separate existing systems to give one view of the customer for all aspects of services and generate significant operational efficiencies;
 - 2019/20 also saw the procurement of a new, industry standard Schedule of Rate (SORs) from the National Housing Federation (NHF). These will be implemented in 2021/22 as part of phase 2 of the new integrated housing management system and will ensure our in-house works are charged appropriately, enable effective performance monitoring and allow accurate benchmarking with external suppliers to ensure VFM is achieved with supplies; and
 - A key procurement action developed and implemented in 2019/20 ready for 2020/21, was the introduction of 'Social Value' assessments. For new contracts commencing in 2020/21, 10% of all contract assessments will be based on the social value of the contract. These will consider factors such jobs created, carbon footprint, community groups and local expenditure, and Targets/Outputs/Measures (TOMs) will be built in to every contract.

Employees

- 6.14. There was a range of employee initiatives during 2019/20.
- 6.15. There were a number of structural changes and some realignments in the year, most notably
- the implementation of a Customer Access Team (CAT); and
 - strengthening the Health and Safety Compliance Team.
- 6.16. The Customer Access Team deals with first point of contact enquiries, including by phone, email, video and in person at our office receptions. The CAT brings together all our customer access channels to deliver a single, whole organisation customer access service, providing a better service for tenants
- 6.17. Corporately, the People Strategy was reviewed, updated and approved by Board in January 2020, with an action plan aligned with our strategic objectives and Corporate Plan.
- 6.18. St Leger Homes again achieved the maximum five star rating in the British Safety Council's Occupational Health and Safety Audit scheme for the last eight years, and achieved the international ISO45001 health and safety standard during 2019/20.
- 6.19. Improvements continue to be made to support the health and wellbeing of our employees, including achieving Silver level in the Public Health Bewell@Work Award. A wellbeing survey was undertaken at the annual staff conference to identify main issues and concerns and also look at what additional services and benefits St Leger Homes could provide to support employee wellbeing.
- 6.20. The survey results were built in to 2020/21 service plans and budgets as appropriate. Regular staff surveys will be undertaken in 2020/21 to ensure we reflect the environment we operate in in a timely manner. The Board requested an additional KPI for 2020/21 to measure employee satisfaction with St Leger Homes as an employer, plus other employee PIs, and the results from surveys will be used for this.
- 6.21. The number of RIDDOR reportable injuries to our staff reduced again during the year, meeting target.
- 6.22. We continue to involve and invest in our staff, delivering a comprehensive learning and development programme for all staff during 2019/20 offering over 300 training courses and learning events, providing over ten learning hours per full time equivalent employee.
- 6.23. Sickness levels reduced to 8.3 days per FTE and is top quartile when compared to our peer group and nationally.
- 6.24. Staff turnover remains low at 7.6% and is top quartile against our peer group and nationally.
- 6.25. Finally, St Leger Homes responded quickly to the government instructions on 23 March 2020 relating to Covid19. All offices were immediately closed and St Leger Homes continued to deliver business critical services to our tenants. Within less than a week, over 80% of employees were working effectively from home.

Systems

- 6.26. The main focus in 2019/20 was the procurement and development of a new integrated housing management system for implementation in 2020/21.
- 6.27. The established TOP ('The One Project') Team; a core team of eight subject matter experts (SMEs) and a dedicated Project Manager, led the process and design of the new integrated system which will replace four separate current systems and will bring operating efficiencies in all areas from 2020/21.
- 6.28. The Business Intelligence Tool ('Qlik') continued to be developed in the year and interrogates core systems, providing timely and accurate performance information to employees across the business. A development programme of reporting requirements has been developed and is

periodically monitored to ensure that service managers and team leaders can access the timely and accurate performance information they require.

- 6.29. Investment in IT infrastructure continued in 2019/20 in line with the ICT strategy.

Customers

- 6.30. Customers are central to all things VFM and will be the ultimate beneficiaries from all VFM work. We are committed to providing suitable homes, maintaining independence, tackling social and financial exclusion and empowering people to have a better quality of life.
- 6.31. We achieved reaccreditation for the Government Standard for Customer Service Excellence (CSE) for the tenth year running. The standard is awarded to public service organisations which meet strict criteria demonstrating that they focus on the needs and preferences of their customers, and all elements are considered either 'Compliant' or 'Compliance Plus'.
- 6.32. Our Access to Homes Service continued its' good work in 2019/20 and saw increasing demand in general service approaches for access to the housing register, housing advice and homeless applications, statutory rehousing and use of homeless temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast accommodation. Addressing homelessness is one of the key priorities of Doncaster Growing Together and therefore within our Corporate Plan, and three of the KPIs for 2019/20 (and 2020/21) are related to this (see above).
- 6.33. We continued to strengthen our work with stakeholders in the borough to support vulnerable Doncaster residents, and co-located staff to develop a 'hub' approach' for those vulnerable and for rough sleepers.
- 6.34. Successful bids to Government in 2018/19 for funding initiatives such as; the Rapid Rehousing Pathway, Private Rented and Rough Sleeper Initiative, secured funding for 2019/20 and this has provided much needed resources and capacity to further reduce homelessness in Doncaster.
- 6.35. The severe weather emergency protocol (SWEP) remained in place during 2019/20. In conjunction with our partners, we were able to ensure a bed was available for every rough sleeper who wanted one during the severe weather.
- 6.36. Wherever possible we involve tenants in improving services and have a Tenants and Residents Improvement Panel (TRIP) who undertake a number of tasks and reviews each year. TRIP play a key role in our work on customer engagement, mystery shopping and reality checking. We work closely with 24 Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs), including the new high rise TARA from 2018/19.
- 6.37. We recognise that we maximise our effectiveness through joint working, and have effective partnerships and pro-active roles with a wide range of organisations in the area to deliver solutions to our tenants.
- 6.38. Helping our tenants with the impact of benefit reform, and in particular Universal Credit, is key to sustaining tenancies. The excellent work continued, benefitting from reinvesting resources into front line services. 2019/20 was a particularly challenging year with a 53rd rent week not eligible for Universal Credit, but our proactive work in this area ensured we exceeded our rent arrears target, with current arrears (2.79%) staying at levels very similar to previous years and attracting the attention of other organisations to share our good practice.
- 6.39. St Leger carried out a STAR survey in January 2020 (now on a bi annual basis) and the six core questions are summarised at 6.16 above. Satisfaction levels were broadly similar to the 2018 survey, with some slightly higher and some slightly lower. When compared with other

organisations, both nationally and with our peers, St Leger is top quartile in four of the six questions. Only one is below median (Q3 - neighbourhood as a place to live). Results from the survey have been analysed and actions built into plans for 20/21 onwards.

7. Plans for 2020/21 onwards

- 7.1. St Leger's plans for 2020/21 onwards are a continuation of the work that was undertaken in recent years, plus recent new plans.
- 7.2. Financially, budget setting maintains the zero growth approach and this has identified a number of savings across the company and enabled reinvestment in front line services.
- 7.3. Performance targets are either the same as 2018/19 or are more challenging, demanding and driving efficiency and effectiveness improvements in the organisation.
- 7.4. There are three main priorities for 2020/21 are similar to 2019/20:
- development and implementation of the new integrated housing management system;
 - expanding the role of the Customer Access Team (CAT); and
 - health and safety compliance.
- 7.5. The new OpenHousing (OH) integrated housing management system is central to VFM gains going forward, and went 'live' as part of a phased implementation in November 2020. OH is replacing a number of separate systems to give one view of a customer and therefore much more efficient processes for employees and service benefits for our customers.

8. Summary

- 8.1. The summary for 2019/20 is similar to that of 2018/19 and 2017/18. Our operating costs have been stable, our performance has strong, receiving positive feedback from customers and employees, and our performance targets largely being met or exceeded. This is against a backdrop of budget constraints and continued challenges within the sector, in particular the ongoing impact of Universal Credit plus responding to new developments, such as Health and Safety requirements for high rise buildings, plus unanticipated challenges such as flooding in November 2019 and the emergence of Covid19 in early 2020 which will impact on services in 2020/21.
- 8.2. We continue to be a low cost, mid to high performing organisation compared to other housing providers. Performance wise, our levels are generally equivalent or better than most, but again there are areas where our costs and performance could be improved.
- 8.3. St Leger continues to work hard to embed VFM within the organisation
- VFM is a key theme in our new 5 year Corporate Plan 2019-24;
 - Timely and accurate financial and performance information is monitored and published;
 - A new efficient, integrated housing management system will implemented in 2020;
 - Increased quarterly and annual national benchmarking; and
 - Increased tailored, service specific benchmarking with top performing providers;
- 8.4. St Leger continues to face a number of significant challenges, but with the robust financial and reporting systems in place and plans to develop further, we will continue to monitor and report on VFM, at both a corporate level and in detail for each service area. These arrangements will ensure we remain in a strong position to optimise the cost and performance of our services and deliver VFM to our customers.

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23rd February, 2021

To the Members of the Cabinet

Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 3, 2020/21

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools	All	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. As part of the Management Agreement and governance arrangements for Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST) the Trust provides a quarterly report of operational and financial performance.
2. This report provides an opportunity to feedback on performance successes and issues against the 2020/21 key performance indicators and management information.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

3. Not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. That the Cabinet note the progress of DCST performance outcomes and the contribution that the Trust makes to support the Council's strategic priorities.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. This report includes current progress of DCST's performance, including the response to the Covid-19 local epidemic curve which may impact on the delivery of services to the people of Doncaster, as well as the reputation of public services across the Borough. The Trust has taken steps to mitigate this risk, working closely with DMBC and DMBC's Director of Children's Services.

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION

6. New governance arrangements were introduced in April 2019 and officers in DMBC and DCST have worked together to devise a new service specification with associated metrics. The 39 KPIs are separated out into 12 contractual KPIs and 27 strategic partnership indicators, two of which are annual measures, two are measures externally provided from the Youth Justice Board and have not been made available due to Covid-19 and seven that have been agreed not to be reported upon in quarter 3.
7. Three of the strategic partnership measures have been changed to operational measures during quarter 2. It was agreed with the DMBC that target and tolerance

ranges were not required for these measures. Two of the strategic partnership measures which did not previously have a target have now been agreed.

8. In addition to these operational performance indicators, the latest monthly management accounts will be shared with officers in DMBC and are within this report.
9. This report provides a summary overview of operational and financial performance.
10. The Trust continues to respond to Covid-19, risk rating all children and young people and ensuring all visits to children and young people are at the forefront. Performance demonstrated through the DfE Covid Vulnerable Children Survey is comparable with national, regional and statistical neighbours.
11. Finalised 2019/20 outturns for Children in Need and Children Looked After are strong with the majority of measures showing improved performance. 2019/20 outturns will not be published until later this year therefore current benchmarking is against the latest national data from 2018/19.

12. Summary of Operational Performance and Management Information

13. Breakdown of contractual performance indicators as follows:
 - a. Three indicators performing better than BAU target,
 - b. One indicator performing at target level,
 - c. Five are reporting within target range and
 - d. Three have been suspended due to Covid-19 but will recommence from quarter 4 (agreed in the contract management framework)

Note: All the active measures above are performing ahead of the Covid-19 adjusted target.

14. Breakdown of the strategic partnership indicators as follows:

Service Area	Performance			Unavailable Measures	
	Outside tolerance range	Within tolerance range	On/Better than target	Not available due to Covid19/ Suspended	Annual KPI not Yet Due
Parent & Family Support	1				
Child & Family Assessment		3	2		
Child Protection		1	1	1	
Looked After Children	1	2			1
Placements (Adoption, Fostering and SGO)	3	1	2		
Care Leavers			3		
Youth Offending				2	
Workforce			2		
Governance					
Total					
% of reported					1
Total	5	7	10	3	2
Total	19%	26%	37%	11%	7%

15. Of the 27 strategic partnership indicators, two are annual measures and two are measures externally provided from the Youth Justice Board and are not available due to Covid-19. The Ministry of Justice are focussing on priority analysis and statistics due to limited PNC access and therefore these KPIs have been excluded.
16. The strategic partnership measures reported this quarter breakdown can be seen in the above table. Where set and available each target is based upon national benchmarking data which sets an ambition for performance to be at least comparable to good and outstanding organisations; however, some indicators are locally derived and therefore have no benchmark. In these cases targets are derived using historical trends and ambitious targets have been set. 17 out of the 22 (c.83%) are within or better than target range. 5 strategic partnership measures sit outside target range and are covered in more detail later in this report. The measure for case file audits was suspended during quarter 3 so that action plans could be put in place and this measure will recommence in quarter 4.
17. Contact and referral rates continue to be monitored daily and have increased during the quarter by 135 (c.3%) and 960 (c.27%) on the same period last year. Contacts from educators has seen the biggest increase from quarter 2 to quarter 3 with an additional 196 (c.75% uplift) and although South Yorkshire Police remain the highest contributor the volumes have dropped by 159 (c.4%) in quarter 3. Contacts indicating Neglect have increased by 81 (c.8%) since last quarter and 314 (c.28%) from the same period last year.
18. During quarter 3 there were 1285 referrals, 336 (c.36%) more referrals in comparison to the same period last year however largely comparable with quarter 2. If referrals continue at the same rate as 2020/21 forecasted outturns will demonstrate an 855 (c.22%) increase in comparison to last year.
19. Demand has led to increased activity across all social care services with 942 (c.29%) more assessments initiated in comparison to the same period last year and 253 (c.21%) of the assessments proceeding to a statutory service. The number of children in need is 2,511 at a rate of 377 per 10,000. This has increased by 290 (c.13%) children compared to the same period last year however slightly down 81 (c.3%) on quarter 2 results.

Demand Measure	2019/20			2020/21		
	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3
Contacts to CSC	5590	5262	6150	5349	5624	5678
Referrals	924	946	1052	1117	1331	1285
Children in Need	2289	2221	2264	2317	2580	2511
Children on Protection	299	311	300	322	383	395
Looked After Children	537	519	509	513	519	522

%Change against...	
Previous quarter	Same quarter last year
1%	8%
-3%	36%
-3%	13%
3%	27%
1%	1%

20. We have seen increases numbers of children in need 290 (c.13%) and Children subject to a child protection plan 84 (c.27%) in comparison to the same period last year. The number of children in care have increased slightly from quarter 2 to 522 have analysis covering the performance against each indicator is provided below and summarised in the table at appendix one.
21. Despite increases in demand and activity at the front door and across Social Care the number of children open to the early help partnership remains largely stable from quarter 2. However there are now 90 (c.5%) fewer children compared to the same period last year. The early help pathway volumes remain stable with 983 (51%) of children are open as single-agency and 951 (c.49%) have a multi-agency response. However, PAFSS (the Trust's early help service) have seen an 82 (c.43%) increase in allocations in comparison to the same period last year.
22. Social worker caseloads are monitored closely for average/maximum values and the majority of workers were carrying high caseloads. Therefore the Trust has created an additional Assessment team and employed more agency social workers temporarily to bring this down during quarters 2, 3 and 4. It remains the Trust's preference to recruit permanent staff but the recruitment of agency staff is the quickest way to meet demand and seen as a temporary measure. As a result the assessment average has dropped to c.21.5 (c.-26%) and workers having a caseload of more than twenty-five has reduced to 36%. Child Protection and Children in Care Services are lower at an average of 16.1.
23. **Operational performance against contractual KPIs indicators**
24. Analysis covering the performance against each indicator is provided below and summarised in the table at appendix one.
25. Contract KPIs On or better than target range
- **Percentage of children subject to child protection plan seen within expected timescales.** The number of children subject to a child protection plan has increased month on month since February 2020 and 84 (c.27%) more compared to this time last year. Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the Trust has set an expectation that children are seen whilst adhering health and safety guidance to reduce the risk of infections to them and to families during this time.
 - 370 (c.90%) children have been seen within the last 2 weeks with 367 (c.99%) seen within the last 4 weeks, the national measure.
 - The fortnightly DfE Covid Vulnerable Children Survey demonstrates better performance for children on protection seen within the last four weeks than that of national at 68% in the latest published figures for Wave 11.
 - **Percentage of child protection conferences held within 15 working days of section 47 enquiry.** 141 children were subject to an initial child protection conference in quarter 2. 100% of these conferences were held within timescale. These high rates mean that families that are taken through this process do not experience the anxiety of delay. Additionally, of the 125 review child protection conferences that took place with the majority have been undertaken virtually whilst blended conferences continue. Blended conferences request the child protection chair, children and families to attend in person whilst running virtually with partners. Further technology has been

identified and agreed to allow this new process to be a success whilst we move into further lockdown restraints. The Trust has seen the benefits of undertaking virtual conferences, proving to be easier to convene and are better attended by partners.

- **Proportion of children in care experiencing three or more placements in a 12 month period. This measure is known as the “short term stability measure”.** This has been better than target for over two years Performance at 8% with 39 children experiencing 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months. This measure will include children with very challenging behaviours as well as planned moves early in a child’s care pathway where they may be moved to long term or adoptive placements and where placements moves are in the child's best interests.
- The Trust’s Independent Reviewing Officer Manager monitors placement stability weekly and monthly, pre-placement breakdown meetings are in-place chaired by IROs and all children receive a review of their plan on a six-monthly basis. A tracker is in place for all children who are subject to 2+ placements. All placements moves are reviewed at Children in Care Support and Challenge forum where clear recommendations are made which have included further placement support meetings.
- **Proportion of looked after reviews completed within timescale.** Performance at 95%. 475 of the 499 reviews have been recorded in timescale, with a further 45 mid-way reviews undertaken by the child’s Independent Reviewing Officer. Children and young people made a meaningful contribution in their review 90% of the time and 95% of care plans are in timescale. Young People are encouraged to take innovative and creative approaches to their reviews, such as videos, Power Points and journals. The Trust have trailed video conferencing for distant reviews and for contribution over the last two quarters due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and children have been consulted via a range of multimedia options, which were not previously available. Children and Young People continue to embrace these changes.

26. Contract KPIs within target range albeit exceeding Covid-19 adjusted targets

- **Timeliness of single assessments.** A downward trend across the quarter means overall performance is below target at c.84%. Despite the downturn 890 C&F assessments completed within timescale and the child was seen in 94% of completed C&F assessments. The Trust increased the Assessment Team capacity by adding an additional team and temporary agency staff to alleviate pressure of the additional demand 273 (c.29%) during quarter 3 in comparison to the same period last year.
- **Children in need with an appropriate and current plan in place:** Performance has reduced slightly by 4% at the end of this quarter but still within target range at 90%. This decrease is likely to be due to the volume of referrals and initial assessments undertaken throughout the quarter in comparison to the previous year; which is impacting on the timeliness of the assessment closure or the initiation of a plan.
- **Percentage of care leavers that the Trust remains in touch with.** Performance remains stable and above the National Average of 91% nationally albeit just fallen below target to c.94% however the use of the case tracking and management oversight means we are consistently in touch with 223 of care leavers in their 17th-21st year and work hard to maintain engagement. The Performance in the previous ten consecutive quarters demonstrate continued high in touch rates with care leavers.

- **Care Leavers with pathway plans that have been reviewed in timescale.** Performance has increased this quarter to 88% and remains within target range. There were 169 care leavers with active pathway plan. This continues to remain a challenging target, but the Trust continues to see an increase in the overall timeliness and the participation of plans being completed online and reviewed in timescale, which are translated on the case management system. Care Leavers really like the App, it gives them the means to contribute towards to a dynamic conversation in their pathway plan.
- The Inspiring Futures team recruited additional Personal Advisors to manage caseload and to return performance to tolerance. There are currently 232 care leavers aged between 17 and 21; of the care leavers open to the Inspiring Futures Team 181 (c.78%) have been in touch within the last 6 months.
- Young People are encouraged to take innovative and creative approaches to their reviews, such as videos, power points and journals. The Trust have trailed video conferencing for distant reviews and for contribution over the last two quarters due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and children have been consulted via a range of multimedia options, which were not previously available. Children and Young People continue to embrace these changes
- **Front line staff receiving supervisions in timescale.** Supervision of Front Line Staff in tolerance at 80%, with 778 front line staff supervisions undertaken throughout this quarter. Capturing the data is reliant on Managers inputting data manually which creates recording issues however continued monitoring by the service managers will ensure the supervision trackers are completed each month to reflect performance.

27. Contract KPIs currently outside target range

- There are no Contract KPIs outside target range and all have exceeded the revised Covid-19 targets.

28. **Strategic Partnership Indicators**

29. The Trust's has 27 "strategic partnership" indicators. These are differentiated from the contractual measures as they measure outcomes and activity that are either:

- not entirely within The Trust's direct control and therefore impacted by the partnership's response and practice in the Covid pandemic; or
- closely linked to an existing contractual indicator, so reported in addition.

30. The table at earlier in the document provides a summary breakdown of these indicators reporting that 17 (c.63%) are within or better than target range with a further 5 (c.18%) not reported this quarter for varying reasons.

31. **There are 17 reported Strategic Partnership Indicators on/better than target or within target range:**

- Families demonstrating improved outcomes at point of closure to Parenting and Family Support Team
- Percentage of Children in Need open for >6 months < 1 year
- Percentage of Children in Need open for >1 year < 2 years
- Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more for child protection plans which have ended during the year

- Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family
- Rate of 19 & 20 year olds Staying Put with their foster carers after their 18th birthday
- Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (age 19-21)
- Care Leavers in Employment, Training and Education (age 19-21)
- Full time equivalent posts covered by agency staff
- Staff turnover rate
- Referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months
- Assessments completed within 20 days
- Percentage of Children in Need open for > 2 years
- Children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time
- Long term stability of placement of children in care: %of long term children in care in stable placements
- Percentage of LAC that had a missing incident in the year
- Trust residential settings rated good or better
- Children ceasing care to be looked after under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

32. **There are five Strategic Partnership Indicators outside tolerance:**

- **Length of intervention from family support services.** Performance has improved in quarter 3 by 11 days to 181 which is 1 day out of tolerance (180). However, this continues to be a challenging target for the Trust due to the length of intervention including the number of days cases have been open to the partnership prior to transferring to PAFSS. PAFSS workers continue to visit and work with staff in the community; however, Covid-19 restrictions and those not being able to attend school (because not in priority groups) will cause delay.

PAFSS performance is strong throughout quarter 2, re-referrals are stable at 10%, c.95% of children have been seen in timescale, c.94% of assessments completed in timescale, 87% of TAC meetings, initial and review have been held in timescale and 79% of families recorded improved outcomes measured by family star.

Continued case tracking ensures there is no drift and delay in cases, but cases will remain open whilst intervention is required to ensure they are not escalated to Social Care or re-referred for early help support.

- **Care Proceedings on Track to be completed within 26 weeks.** The proportion of care proceedings cases on track to meet the national expectation of 26 weeks remains a challenge with 110 (c.58%) of the 191 cases on-track. Cases issued down by 13% in the last quarter with an average case length of 37 weeks versus the national average of 40 weeks. It is worth noting that performance is dependent upon court, CAFCASS etc. so not entirely within our control. Due to this it is important that quarterly meetings with CAFCASS service managers continue to take place with legal services, the ACPS Head of Service and principal social worker in order to review performance, to identify any requirements for thematic audits and share practice improvement ideas.
- **Average time in days between the Local Authority receiving a court order to placing a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family.** This measure will fluctuate depending on how many children are adopted. During quarter 3 two children were adopted which drove the measure outside tolerance.

- **Children ceasing to be looked after due to a Child Arrangement Order (CAO).** The target and tolerance range was agreed for this measure in September but due to the low numbers of children leaving care performance will be volatile as moves to independence, adoption or special guardianship orders increase.

No children ceased to be looked after in this quarter through a child arrangement order and 12 (c.33%) of children leaving care moved onto independent living or returned home but not through a Child Arrangement or Special Guardianship Order, 4 (c.14%) left on an SGO. There were 2 children adopted during Q3.

- **Rate of Children adopted from care.** 2 children leaving care this quarter were adopted moving performance down to 6% however this figure will fluctuate. During 20/21 a total of 13 children have been adopted giving an outturn of 14%.

33. **Financial performance - Summary**

34. The Children's Trust forecast 2020/21 as at quarter 3 2020/21 is an operating overspend of £2.6m (including £0.16m funding for quality work that is no longer available due to the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances); no significant change since quarter 2. In December the Trust received £1.3m of funding from the Council to cover the estimated additional costs to the Trust due to the impact Covid-19 previously reported in the overall total overspend. The Trust underspent last year by £1.24m.
35. Some cost-pressures (particularly care ladder) were brought forward, on a reduced budget. Additionally, there continues to be roughly twice as many social work staff on maternity compared to average, creating an agency social worker cost pressure.
36. The Trust has action plans to manage the cost pressures, including care ladder and agency spend. Some cost pressures are due to phasing rather than not being achieved. DMBC are updated in the Trust's MTFS discussions.
37. The estimated pressures due to Covid-19 that have been funded by the Council are: increased costs for Out of Authority (OOA) Placements £0.29m; a six month delay to the opening of two-bed homes £0.19m; a potential 5% increase in Children in Care numbers £0.48m and Agency costs of £0.25m due to a spike in the referral numbers from July onwards which is expected to continue for the rest of the financial year. The Trust will work on estimating, probably via previous trends and statistics, the costs of Covid in quarter 4.
38. In July-December 2020 the Trust saw an increase in referrals of +39%, C&F assessments +59% and S.47s initiated +42% and is still cautious about what may happen for the remainder of this year, and 2021/22, due to both local and national lockdowns, with an impact on next year's costs likely to be adversely affected.
39. In the DfE Vulnerable Children and Young People Survey Summary Waves 8 over 80% of LAs estimate an increase in the cost of fostering and residential placements.
40. The projected overspend of £2.6m not due to Covid-19 is mainly Out of Authority (OOA) Placements £1.6m, 16+ CiC Placements £0.3m, and Staffing (mainly agency) £0.9m. The 2020/21 projected outturn summary is:

Overall Heading	2020/21 Budget			2020/21 Outturn			2020/21 Variance			Variance due to Covid 19	Change from Q2 non Covid 19	Change from Q2 due to Covid 19
	Gross £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's	Gross £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's	Gross £000's	Income £000's	Net £000's	Net £000's	Net £000's	Net £000's
Children Looked After	32,421	-3,948	28,474	35,638	-4,546	31,092	-3,217	599	-2,618	-973	158	140
Other Children and Family Services	1,544	0	1,544	1,601	0	1,601	-58	0	-58	0	-6	0
Family Support Services	3,044	0	3,044	2,805	0	2,805	239	0	239	0	-31	0
Youth Justice	1,817	0	1,817	1,824	0	1,824	-7	0	-7	0	-81	0
Safeguarding Children and Young People's Services	13,324	-39	13,285	14,124	-46	14,078	-800	8	-793	-280	-10	-89
Services for Young People	292	0	292	406	0	406	-114	0	-114	0	-116	0
Contract Value	0	-51,468	-51,468	0	-52,866	-52,866	0	1,399	1,399	1,304	62	1,304
Support Services and Management Costs	4,605	-1,591	3,013	4,824	-1,200	3,624	-219	-391	-611	-58	10	-58
Grand Total	57,045	-57,045	0	61,222	-58,659	2,564	-4,177	1,614	-2,564	-7	-15	1,297

41. Financial Performance – Introduction

42. The 2020-21 contract value at quarter three is £55.2m, and there is a projected operating overspend of £2.6m. In December the Trust received £1.3m of funding from the Council to cover the estimated additional costs to the Trust due to the impact Covid-19 previously reported in the overall total overspend.
43. The forecast is based on the current cohort and mix of placements plus an assumption that there is a 5% increase in Children in Care numbers following a spike in the referral numbers from July onwards which is expected to continue for the rest of the financial year, as well as an increase in agency costs due to workloads. Due to the recent lockdown and school closures there is anticipated workload and cost pressures that will impact on 2021/22 and place pressure on the MTFs and 2021/22 budget.
44. The number of Children in Care of DCST at the end of December is 520, an increase of 6 since the referral spike in July. The number of 520 may increase if the status of some 16+ children are re-categorised as Children in Care by a review being carried out by the Trust and nationally; there may be additional costs too.
45. At the end of quarter three there were 50 OOA placements, which is the same as at quarter two, plus one mother and baby placement. With the closure of Tickhill Square there are 5 fewer in-house residential beds. The Trust is reviewing the OOA and the Future Placements Strategy and the 4 x 2 bed homes should reduce OOA placements by 8 by July 2021, if open. The timing of the planned opening of the two-bed homes has been pushed back to the first quarter of 2021/22 due to the impact of Covid-19 on the timeframe of completing the house purchases.
46. The split of fostering placements remains has improved by 2.2% since quarter two to 40.2% Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and 59.8% In-House Fostering. The MTFs target is a 40% / 60% split by 31 March 2021. The overall fostering placements numbers are 2 less since April 2020; the Trust are looking into this to see if this is linked to Covid and whether a lack of availability in fostering has led to some of the increase in OOA numbers as part of the Covid costs review in quarter 4.
47. There is a Courts' backlog resulting in delays in Child Arrangement Orders and Special Guardianship Orders being agreed. Growth is built into the forecast for the cases due at Court and this will continue to be monitored as payments can be backdated.
48. The Trust has a higher level of agency in 2020/21, mainly social workers, of which 6 are due to the increased referral numbers from July onwards, whereas the budget for agency cover has been reduced in the MTFs, causing an overspend. Plans are to reduce agency numbers have been shared with the Council.

49. As reported at quarter two, there are 2 remand cases costing £32k p.m. into early 2021 but the Youth Offending Service have managed to contain the costs of this by keeping posts vacant for the rest of the financial year and other efficiencies in the service.
50. In addition to the contract sum, the Trust has drawn down its £0.22m underspend from 2018/19 that was in the Council's earmarked reserves to use on Ofsted preparation and to offset the current overspend. Prior to Covid-19 the Trust requested £0.16m of its £1.24m 2019/20 underspend to support its quality work; this is no longer available due to the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances. The £0.16m was previously reported as a Covid pressure but from month six onwards this is included in the operating overspend to be consistent with the Council's reporting.
51. There are potential future budget implications from Ofsted proposals that 16+ homes may be registered for the current SILS provision and future provision proposed as part of the Future Placements Strategy, and these are included in the updated MTFs.
52. **Key Variances over/under £250k**
53. There are four significant (£250k+/-) variances - Looked after Children, Safeguarding, Support Services and Management costs, and Contract Value; details below:
54. **Looked After Children - £1.65m operating overspend (£2.62m total overspend including £0.97m due to Covid-19)**
55. In the DfE Vulnerable Children and Young People Survey Summary Wave 8 over 80% of LAs estimate an increase in the cost of fostering and residential placements.
56. **In-house Residential, including two-bed homes, £0.11m operating overspend (£0.07m total underspend including £0.18m cost savings due to Covid-19)**
57. There is a projected overspend of £0.23m for the existing In House Residential homes, due to current staffing numbers being over-establishment. The staff over establishment were due to transfer to the two-bed homes in the second half of the financial year but since quarter two the timing of the planned opening of the two-bed homes has been pushed back to the first quarter of 2021/22 due to the impact of Covid-19 on the timeframe of completing the house purchases. The revised assumptions have resulted in a £0.30m cost saving for the two-bed homes in 2020/21 less £0.12m additional cost of the staff over establishment, therefore the overall cost savings to this service area due to the delays from Covid-19 is £0.18m. This is offset by loss of savings being delivered in Out of Area Placements of £0.38m, as below:
58. **Out of Area Placements - £1.6m operating overspend (£2.51m total overspend including £0.91m due to Covid-19)**
59. At the end of quarter three there were 50 OOA placements, which is the same as at quarter two, plus one mother and baby placement. In quarter three there were four new placements offset by four leavers (three to 16+ care provision and one turned 18). The forecast has increased by £0.29m since quarter two due to increased costs from placement moves, less leavers by the end of March 2021 expected by the Head of Placements, a child no longer being eligible for Health funding, and the timing of the planned opening of the two-bed homes has been pushed back to the first quarter of 2021/22 due to the impact of Covid-19 on the timeframe of completing the house purchases.

60. There is one child who turns 18 before the end of 2020/21, the mother and baby placement is due to end before April 2021, and a further net reduction of 1 placements has been factored into the forecast per the assumptions of the Head of Placements. The forecast assumes there will be 48 OOA placements by the end of March 2021, two more than assumed at quarter two.
61. The pressures due to Covid-19 are increased costs for Out of Authority (OOA) Placements £0.29m, a six month delay to the opening of two-bed homes £0.38m, and the potential 5% increase in Children in Care numbers £0.24m which equates to two additional OOA placements.
62. The budgeted funding from the DSG High Needs Block was increased to £3.2m for 2020/21, and the projected income is currently £0.49m above this, an increase of £0.09m since quarter two.
63. **Independent Fostering Agencies - £0.01m operating overspend** (£0.18m total overspend including £0.17m due to Covid-19)
64. No significant change since quarter two. The projected spend includes additional costs of £0.17m for a potential 5% increase in Children in Care numbers due to the impact of Covid-19. The forecast also assumes that the continued trend of IFAs converting to In-House Fostering continues and the 40% / 60% split is achieved by March 2021.
65. **In House Fostering - £0.1m operating overspend** (£0.17m total overspend including £0.07m due to Covid-19)
66. No significant change from quarter two. The overspend is due to the average cost of placements being above budget and the impact of Covid-19 as the forecast assumes a 5% increase in Children in Care numbers with additional costs of £0.67m. Like IFAs, the forecast assumes that the required number of IFAs convert to In-House Fostering to achieve the 40 % / 60% split target by March 2021.
67. **16+ CiC Placements - £0.34m operating overspend**
68. The projected spend has increased by £0.08m since quarter two, due to three OOA placements moving to 16+ care provision. There are currently five expensive 16+ packages costing from £2,999 to £6,325 per week and these cases are being reviewed in the same way as the OOA packages.
69. **Allowances Savings target - £0.1m not achieved in 2020/21**
70. As part of the MTFs for 2020/21 there is a savings target of £0.3m from the review of allowances. Savings of £0.08m have been achieved already via audits carried out, and there is forecast savings of £0.12m in the last quarter of the financial year from the new policy going live. The remaining balance of the savings target will be achieved in 2021/22.
71. **Safeguarding Children - £0.51m operating overspend** (£0.79m total overspend including £0.28m due to Covid-19)
72. The reason for the overspend is due to increased staffing costs, mainly due to agency cover for vacancies, abnormally high maternity leave and Front Door Covid cost pressure, against a reduced budget. Agency costs of £0.25m for six workers that are expected to be needed until the end of March 2021 are included in the forecast

following a significant increase in referral numbers from July onwards due to Covid-19, which is expected to continue for the rest of the financial year and into 2021/22.

73. **Support Services and Management Costs - £0.55m operating overspend (£0.61m total overspend including £0.06m due to Covid-19)**

74. Prior to Covid-19 the Trust requested £0.16m of its £1.2m 2019/20 underspend for Ofsted preparation work; this is no longer available due to the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances. The £0.16m was previously reported as a Covid pressure but from month six onwards this is now included in the operating overspend to be consistent with the Council's reporting. The one-off £0.22m from the Council's earmarked reserves is allocated here as-is the DfE income (assumed to reduce in 2020/21); the Trust has also reduced its costs.

75. **Contract Value - £1.4m additional funding (£1.3m to fund Covid pressures)**

76. In December the Trust received £1.3m of funding from the Council to cover the estimated additional costs to the Trust due to the impact of Covid-19. The other additional funding of £0.1m is in year grant increases passed onto the Trust and budget to cover an increase in the DIPS SLA.

77. **Action being taken to achieve 2020/21 efficiencies and reduce the overspend**

- The Trust is actively reviewing costs across a number of headings, such as:
- OOA placements have been / are reviewed with a specific focus on pathway progression and the Future Placements Strategy. This should support the return of children home to the Borough, families and friends. The plan has been shared with the Council.
- The CiC strategic Group that has been successful in reducing the overall Looked After Children numbers down from 593 to 520 (12.3% reduction) in less than three years, and will continue to pursue proven successful strategies.
- The number and cost of agency has reduced significantly since the start of the Trust. The number and use of agency workers is reviewed regularly, balancing caseloads safely across the Trust. The Trust has shared proposals with the Council in relation to a "social worker academy" and the recruitment and retention of social workers.
- Included in the MTFs was an intention to reduce allowances by c. £400k. A new policy went live on 1 October 2020 (effective 1 January 2021 for most current adopters) and the £400k will be achieved, albeit a later implementation.
- Other efficiencies will be pursued - e.g. savings that accrue from homeworking.

78. **External scrutiny and evaluation within Quarter 3 20/21**

79. There were no Ofsted inspections in quarter 3.

80. **Activity in Quarter 3 20/21**

81. The Trust was involved in the following activities in quarter 3:

- October – Fostering Network Sons and Daughters Month in October – linking into the national campaign.
- 12-18 October – National Adoption Week
- 19, 20 and 22 October – Staff virtual summits

- 21 October – Fostering Information Event
- 22 October – Fostering Information Event
- 26 October to 1 November - Care Leavers Week
- 4 November – Stress Awareness Day
- 11 November – Remembrance Day
- 14 November – Adoption Information Event
- 16-20 November – Anti-Bullying Week
- 25 November – Fostering Information Event
- 11 December – Save the Children – Christmas Jumper Day
- 16 December – Adoption Information Event
- December – Fostering Campaign – Festive fostering myths
- December – Staff festive wellbeing/ Virtual Events throughout the month

82. Activity in Quarter 4 20/21

83. The Trust will continue to work with colleagues in DMBC on the delivery of the Integrated People’s Solution (DIPS project), including secondment of DCST staff into the project team and in the form of subject matter experts.

84. The Trust has responded to Covid-19, risk rating all children and young people and will continue to ensure visits to children and young people are at the forefront of our work. This has continued during Lockdown 3.

85. The Trust will continue to take action in response to Covid-19 including: regular meetings with the Council, the Council’s DCS and the Children’s Directorate, develop action plans to support our work, support vulnerable children to attend school, update internal performance measures and work with Team Doncaster partners.

86. During Covid-19 we will continue to use Public Health England and local Public Health to guide our decisions, operate ‘business as usual’ when possible, review the contract with DMBC to reflect current circumstances, promote the wellbeing of our colleagues and use technology where possible e.g. virtual CP conferences.

87. The following events are scheduled or have taken place in quarter 4:

- 11 January at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event
- 13 January at 11am and at 3pm – Fostering Information Event
- February and March – Fostering Campaign
- 1-7 February – Children’s Mental Health Week, linking into the national campaign.
- 9 February – Safer Internet Day linking into the national campaign.
- 10 February at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event
- 10 February at 11am and at 3pm – Fostering Information Event
- 8 March – International Women’s Day
- 10 March at 11am and at 3pm – Fostering Information Event
- 15 March at 4.30pm to 7.30pm – Adoption Information Event
- 16 March – World Social Work Day
- 18 March – National Child Exploitation Awareness Day linking into the national campaign
- 18 March – Star Awards presentation ceremony
- 19 March – Red Nose Day

88. **IMPACT ON COUNCIL'S KEY OBJECTIVES**

Outcomes	Implications
<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority – creating jobs and Housing • Mayoral priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans • Mayoral priority: protecting Doncaster's vital services 	<p>The Council and The Trust as major partners in the Children and Families Partnership Board share the Children's plan outcome that all children should achieve their potential – in removing barriers and developing good quality service delivery children will be able to access the benefits of a thriving economy and will themselves be participants in creating and sustaining the strength of the economy.</p>
<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our Communities • Mayoral priority: Bringing down the cost of living 	<p>Ensuring children and young people are free and feel from harm are key ambitions of both the Council and The Trust.</p>
<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayoral priority: creating jobs and Housing • Mayoral priority: Safeguarding our communities • Mayoral priority: bringing down the cost of living 	<p>Delivering against the service delivery contract between the Council and The Trust has clear implications for safeguarding communities, in reducing risk and exposure of risk to children; improved early help and thus better outcomes for families.</p>
<p>Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance</p>	<p>Ofsted, in its inspection report commented favourably on the relationship and governance arrangements between the Council and The Trust, recognising that formal arrangements for monitoring and challenge exceed the requirements set out in the contract between the two organisations.</p>

89. **RECOMMENDED OPTIONS**

To note the report.

90. **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS [RM 01/02/2021]**

Risks and assumptions specific to the key performance indicator set, operational and financial context are identified in the body of this report.

91. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [RM 01/02/2021]**

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report except for the potential aforementioned amendments to contractual measures to reflect Covid-19.

92. **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [LE 01/02/2021]**

There are no equality implications directly arising from this report.

93. **HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS [LE 01/02/2021]**

There are no specific human resources implications directly arising from this report.

94. **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [RM 01/02/2021]**

There are no information technology implications directly arising from this report.

95. **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [JT 01/02/2021]**

Health and social care services are inextricably linked and are working in robust partnership to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families. The move towards integrated health and social care delivery models supports these partnerships and create shared outcome objectives. Health colleagues are keen to support Doncaster Children's Trust to achieve the quality and performance levels they aspire to as this will impact on the wider health and wellbeing outcomes for Doncaster families.

96. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [RM 01/02/2021]**

Included within the body of the report. The financial impact of Covid-19 for 2020/21 is estimated at this time pending schools' reopening.

97. **CONSULTATION**

Consultation has taken place with key managers and Directors.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Summary of key performance indicators for quarter 3 2020/21

ACRONYMS

CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
C&F	Child and Family
CiC	Children in Care
CiN	Children in Need
CP	Child Protection
DCST	Doncaster Children's Services Trust
DfE	Department for Education
DMBC	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
DSG	Dedicated School's Grant
IFA	Independent Foster Agency
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LA	Local Authority
MTFS	Medium Term Financial Strategy
OOA	Out of Authority
OSMC	Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee
PAFSS	Parenting and Family Support Service
PNC	Police National Computer
Qtr	Quarter
RAG	Red Amber Green
SGO	Special Guardianship Order

CONTACT OFFICERS AND REPORT AUTHORS

Paul Egan
Performance & Transformation Manager
Telephone: 01302 735252
Email: paul.egan@dcstrust.co.uk

Rob Moore
Director of Corporate Services
Telephone: 01302 735200
Email: rob.moore@dcstrust.co.uk

James Thomas
Chief Executive Officer
Doncaster Children's Services Trust

Appendix I
 Contractual and Strategic Key Performance Indicators

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MEASUREMENT DETAILS			TARGETS AND COMPARATORS					PERFORMANCE									
Measure Type	Measure	Reporting Frequency	Polarity	Target Range		Covid19 Tolerance	Benchmarking data available	2019/20				2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	Position	CV Position	Trend
				Target	Tolerance			Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3			
Contractual Key Performance Indicators	Assessments completed within <45 days	Quarterly	Bigger is better	90%	75%	>=75%	Yes	87%	91%	96%	90%	95%	92%	84%	In Tolerance	Better Than Target	Declining
	Children in need with an appropriate and current plan in place	Quarterly	Bigger is better	95%	80%	>=80%	No	94%	96%	95%	95%	96%	94%	90%	In Tolerance	Better Than Target	Declining
	Percentage of cases where the lead social worker has seen the child/young person in accordance with the timescales specified in the child protection plan. For all children who were the subject of a child protection plan during the year	Quarterly	Bigger is better	80%	75%	>=75%	No	85%	95%	83%	98%	95%	93%	90%	Better Than Target	Better Than Target	Declining
	Initial Child Protection Conferences achieved within the statutory 15 day timescale	Quarterly	Bigger is better	95%	80%	>=80%	Yes	100%	96%	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	Better Than Target	Better Than Target	Stable
	Short term stability of placements of children in care: % of children experiencing 3 or more placements in the year	Quarterly	Smaller is better	9%	15%	<=15%	Yes	11%	10%	8%	9%	9%	8%	8%	Better Than Target	Better Than Target	Stable
	Statutory Looked After reviews completed in time scale	Quarterly	Bigger is better	95%	80%	>=80%	No	91%	92%	94%	93%	95%	91%	95%	On Target	Better Than Target	Improving
	Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family.	Quarterly	Bigger is better	Suspended***		Suspend	Yes	71%	60%	42%	56%	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Care leavers the Trust is in touch with	Quarterly	Bigger is better	95%	75%	>=75%	Yes	98%	98%	98%	96%	97%	95%	94%	In Tolerance	Better Than Target	Declining
	Care Leavers with pathway plans which have been reviewed in timescale	Quarterly	Bigger is better	95%	80%	>=80%	No	74%	79%	67%	89%	92%	83%	88%	In Tolerance	Better Than Target	Improving
	Front line staff receiving Supervision in Timescale	Quarterly	Bigger is better	90%	80%	>=70%	No	84%	86%	79%	80%	85%	85%	80%	In Tolerance	Better Than Target	Declining
	Freedom of Information Requests responded to within timescale	Quarterly	Bigger is better	Suspended***		Suspend	No	89%	94%	92%	90%	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Case file audits graded good or better	Quarterly	Bigger is better	Suspended***		Suspend	No	72%	82%	83%	83%	70%	61%	-	-	-	-
icators	Length of intervention for family support services (days)	Quarterly	Smaller is better	140 days	180 days	-	No	193	173	210	196	149	192	181	Outside Tolerance	-	Improving
	Families demonstrating improved outcomes at point of closure to Parenting and Family Support Team	Quarterly	Bigger is better	60%	40%	-	No	69%	82%	87%	83%	88%	91%	79%	Better than target	-	Declining
	Referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months	Quarterly	Smaller is better	22%	28%	-	Yes	27%	27%	26%	28%	26%	26%	26%	In Tolerance	-	Stable
	Assessments completed within 20 days	Quarterly	Smaller is better	25%	15%	-	Yes	19%	18%	12%	11%	26%	19%	19%	In Tolerance	-	Stable
	Percentage of Children in Need open for a) >6 months < 1 year	Quarterly	In range is better Smaller is better	15%	20%	-	Yes	21%	14%	11%	13%	13%	12%	13%	Better than target	-	Declining

Appendix I
Contractual and Strategic Key Performance Indicators

MEASUREMENT DETAILS				TARGETS AND COMPARATORS				PERFORMANCE									
Measure Type	Measure	Reporting Frequency	Polarity	Target Range		Covid19 Tolerance	Benchmarking data available	2019/20				2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	Position	CV Position	Trend
				Target	Tolerance			Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3			
Strategic Partnership Inc	b) >1 year < 2 years	Quarterly	In range is better Smaller is better	15%	20%	-		17%	15%	13%	12%	11%	10%	10%	Better than target	-	Stable
	c) > 2 years	Quarterly	In range is better Smaller is better	25%	30%	-		32%	32%	33%	32%	31%	29%	30%	In Tolerance	-	Declining
	Children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time	Quarterly	Smaller is better	10%	16%	-	Yes	24%	3%	3%	7%	6%	8%	11%	In Tolerance	-	Declining
	Case file audits graded outstanding	Quarterly	Outstanding is better	Suspended***		Suspend	No	13%	20%	17%	6%	15%	8%	-	-	-	-
	Case file audits graded good							60%	61%	66%	77%	54%	52%				
	Case file audits graded requires improvement							26%	16%	15%	15%	24%	36%				
	Case file audits graded inadequate							2%	2%	2%	2%	7%	3%				
Child Protection Plans lasting two years or more for child protection plans which have ended during the year	Quarterly	Smaller is better	3%	5%	-	Yes	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	Better than target	-	Stable	
Young offenders aged 10-17 who reoffend	Quarterly	Smaller is better	42%	50%	-	Yes	41%	30%	30%	36%	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	-	-	-	
Rate of first time entrants to youth justice (per 100,000)	Quarterly	Smaller is better	170	210	-	Yes	190	200	190	223	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	-	-	-	
Care proceedings on track to be completed within 26 weeks	Quarterly	Bigger is better	80%	70%	-	No	65%	66%	65%	61%	56%	52%	58%	Outside Tolerance	-	Improving	
Long term stability of placement of children in care: %of long term children in care in stable placements	Quarterly	Bigger is better	70%	60%	-	Yes	62%	58%	55%	54%	53%	57%	62%	In Tolerance	-	Improving	
Percentage of LAC that had a missing incident in the year	Annual	Smaller is better	11%	13%	-	Yes	13%				Annual Measure	Annual Measure	Annual Measure	In Tolerance	-	Stable	
Trust residential settings rated good or better	Quarterly	Bigger is better	100%	80%	-	Yes	83%	83%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	In Tolerance	-	Stable	
Average time in days between Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family	Quarterly	Smaller is better	121	200	-	Yes	55	90	154	69	55	110	248	Outside Tolerance	-	Declining	
Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family	Quarterly	Smaller is better	426	460	-	Yes	285	378	372	365	241	443	384	Better than target	-	Improving	
Children ceasing care to be looked after under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)	Quarterly	Bigger is better	15%	10%	-	Yes	20%	11%	19%	20%	22%	12%	14%	In Tolerance	-	Improving	
Children ceasing care to be looked after under a Child Arrangement Order (CAO)	Quarterly	Bigger is better	10%	7%	-	No	17%	17%	4%	9%	0%	0%	2%	Outside Tolerance	-	Volatile	
Rate of children adopted from care	Quarterly	Bigger is better	19%	14%	-	Yes	17%	13%	17%	15%	12%	24%	6%	Outside Tolerance	-	Declining	

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Measure Type	Measure	Reporting Frequency	Polarity	Target Range		Covid19 Tolerance	Benchmarking data available	2019/20				2020/21	2020/21	2020/21	Position	CV Position	Trend	
				Target	Tolerance			Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3				
	Rate of 19 & 20 year olds Staying Put with their foster carers after their 18th birthday	Quarterly	Bigger is better	25%	20%	-	Yes	New contract measure for 2019/20	30%	30%	23%	26%	23%	25%	On Target	-	Declining	
	Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (age 19-21)	Quarterly	Bigger is better	85%	80%	-	Yes		96%	94%	95%	95%	93%	92%	95%	Better than target	-	Improving
	Care Leavers in Employment, Training and Education (age 19-21)	Quarterly	Bigger is better	48%	40%	-	Yes		52%	51%	50%	45%	51%	48%	48%	On Target	-	Stable
	Full time equivalent posts covered by agency staff	Quarterly	Smaller is better	8%	12%	-	Yes		6%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%	Better than target	-	Stable
	Staff turnover rate	Quarterly	Smaller is better	16%	18%	-	No		12%	14%	12%	14%	15%	15%	16%	On Target	-	Stable
	Achieve a minimum of Bronze level rating in child friendly rating	Annual	NA**	NA**	NA**	-	No	Awaiting data from DMBC regarding accreditation process set up with DMBC Young Advisors				Annual Measure	Annual Measure	Annual Measure	NA**	-	-	

* To be determined. Currently in discussions with the Council to agree target and tolerance

** Not applicable. Measure is reported for note, but a target or tolerance will not be set

*** Suspended due to Covid-19

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Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 23/02/2021

To the Chair and Members of Cabinet

The Independent Review and Redraft of DMBCs Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees and Woodlands

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Chris McGuinness	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Tree Policy was written before the Declaration of a Climate & Biodiversity Emergency for Doncaster (2019).
2. To ensure alignment with our recently approved Environment and Sustainability Strategy and to ensure effective management of council trees, an independent tree policy review was initiated by the Mayor, with the objectives of ensuring that the policy was fit for purpose in relation to the management of street trees and that it is aligned with the ambitions set out in the Environment and Sustainability Strategy.

EXEMPT REPORT

3. This report is not exempt

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - a. **R1:** Note and discuss the independent review findings and how these have been translated into the revised policy
 - b. **R2:** Approve the revised policy

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. The DMBC Tree Policy was developed and adopted before the Declaration of a Climate & Biodiversity Emergency in 2019. In early 2020, the Environment and Sustainability Strategy was approved. The Strategy sets out how residents, elected representatives, public and private sector organisations and community groups need to respond to the climate change and biodiversity crisis. It identifies an ambitious range of interventions of various scales from simple individual behaviour changes to significant borough wide investment requirements.
6. The independent review will ensure the tree policy reflects Doncaster's ambitious Environmental priorities set out in the Environment and Sustainability Strategy, best practice relating to Tree Management, environmental conservation, and local decision-making processes and will ensure specialists and the public can contribute as part of the process.
7. The final revised policy will ensure that decisions relating to the management of street trees follow clear processes that keep the local residents fully informed throughout.

BACKGROUND

8. The Tree Policy was written before the Declaration of a Climate & Biodiversity Emergency for Doncaster (2019) and before DEFRA's consultation on an England Tree Strategy (2020) that will aim to *increase tree establishment and woodland creation to support nature recovery, clean growth and the commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050*.
9. The Tree Policy is not, therefore, a strategy for delivering Doncaster's entire contribution to the England Tree Strategy and the borough's 2040 net-zero target. It will of course will make a valuable contribution, and being visible to the general public, may well be a reference point for public perceptions around practical progress to net-zero.
10. An independent tree policy review was initiated by the Mayor with the objective of ensuring that the policy was fit for purpose in relation to the management of street trees and engagement with residents and aligned to the borough's ambitious plans set out in the Environment and Sustainability Strategy. The specification is attached at Annex A.
11. Professor Ian Rotherham was approached mid-December 2020 and agreed to undertake the review. Professor Rotherham is an academic at Sheffield Hallam University and more information can be found [here](#).
12. The process has involved a number of direct engagement sessions with professionals, relevant organisations like the Woodland Trust, environmental activists and online consultation through Doncaster Talks. The engagement and consultation ran from 5 January to 31 January 2021.
13. A total of 746 online responses were received and 72% of these were from Doncaster residents. The tree policy will be revised during the first week of February in line with the initial findings of Professor Ian Rotherham, who submitted an initial findings paper during the last week of January. This is attached at Annex B.

14. The tree policy is being redrafted week commencing 1 February based on the initial findings paper and the feedback received through regular weekly digest meetings.

Revised Tree Policy

15. The Tree Policy has been amended to reflect the findings of the independent review and officers will provide more detail relating to changes in the Cabinet meeting, however changes in the plan include:
- i. Tighter alignment with the Environment and Sustainability Strategy and the ambitions to respond to the Climate and Biodiversity emergency
 - ii. An operational decision tree/pathway to be followed for all operational decisions ensuring a strong evidence base for any decision made
 - iii. Clarity about communications and the need to be clear at all stages
 - iv. A reduced timeframe from initial engagement through to action being taken
 - v. Details of a range of best practice engineering solutions to be considered, etc

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

16. The appointment of a specialist independent reviewer was the only option considered. An independent review ensures a broad range of views can be considered alongside national best practice to improve the policy where necessary, but particularly in relation to the management of street trees and engagement with residents.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

17. An independent reviewer brings a wealth of specialist knowledge and is impartial to all interested parties in Doncaster ensuring that any recommendations relating to changing the tree policy are made without any bias to any organisation or individual.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES

18. The revised Tree Policy will impact on the following key outcomes:

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster’s people to live in a borough that</p>	<p>This revised policy will shape the management of street</p>

	<p>is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>trees to ensure they remain healthy as trees play a crucial role in improving Quality of Life</p>
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

19. The council has been very open about undertaking an independent review of the tree policy and has committed to implementing all of the recommendations made. To be as inclusive, the external consultation was

sent to as many interested parties and organisations as possible including all Ward Members and Parish Councils.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [NC 8/2/2021]

20. There are a number of legal implications for the Council to consider in managing its tree stock, including ensuring the trees are in a safe condition and do not pose a risk to the public or property. In particular, the Council's approach to the management of its tree stock should reflect the fact that the felling of growing trees is restricted under section 9 of the Forestry Act 1967. This legislation requires any felling of trees to be authorised by a felling licence issued by the Forestry Commission, or the work falls within one of a number of the statutory exceptions to the need for a licence, which are primarily set out in section 9 and the Forestry (Exceptions from Restriction of Felling) Regulations 1979. An exception applies where felling is being undertaken in compliance with any obligation imposed by or under an Act of Parliament e.g. the duty imposed on the Council to maintain highways that are maintainable at public expense under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.
21. In addition, when considering any tree works, the Council should comply with relevant good practice such as the Forestry Commission's Operations Note 051 on Highway Tree Management.
22. The Council has complied with its duty to act fairly by consulting with the public and other interested parties on the proposed tree policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [JC 10/02/21]

23. If the recommendations which form part of the initial findings are accepted this would lead to increased cost. Prior to accepting the recommendations, these would need to be costed and funding identified.
24. The Capital budget 2021/22 to 2024/25 subject to approval on the 1st of March 2021 includes the following allocations which will support the delivery of the Tree policy;
 - £190k allocation in 20/21 for the purchase of an Additional mobile elevated tree platform to assist in the Tree work and address health and safety concerns.
 - £120k allocation in 20/21 for a Tree Management system. To enable procurement to identify and implement a replacement solution to current system (Treewise) prior to the end of the existing contract.
 - £144k (£36k p.a. for next 4 years) to plant 100 large-canopied trees per year along main arterial highways to improve the environment and help increase canopy cover in the borough.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [AC 03/02/21]

25. There are no direct HR Imps in relation to this report, but if in future staff are

affected or additional specialist resources are required then further consultation will need to take place with HR.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [PW 03/02/21]

26. There are no technology implications in relation to this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [CT 03/02/21]

27. As highlighted in Annex B urban trees are a valuable tool for improving public health. They reduce harmful pollutants and mitigate summer air temperatures, and when residents are in close proximity, urban trees have been shown to benefit both physical and mental health. The review has highlighted several areas where improvements can be made to the management of urban trees, in particular the way that any works to be carried are communicated to residents and interested parties. It is also noted that much of the work currently is carried out on a reactive basis without much time for communicating plans to residents. Therefore, the introduction a communication plan and the development of a public facing document that not only explains the benefits of urban trees, but will also lay out the process for when tree work is required will demonstrate the council's commitment to maintaining our urban trees in a transparent and informative way.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [JB 02/02/21]

28. Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.

CONSULTATION

29. A number of direct engagement sessions were held throughout January with various professional bodies, relevant organisations and activists. Alongside this, public consultation was published via the Doncaster Talks website for the public to respond to. This was circulated via corporate communications through their distribution list, was sent to all Ward Members and to Parish Councils.
30. A total of 746 online responses were received with 72% of these being from Doncaster residents.
31. The public consultation gathered a wide range of views on subjects such as methods of notification and consultation regarding tree removal and replacement, priorities to consider when deciding on tree removal, and the location of replacements trees.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

32. None

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

n/a

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Bethany Haley, Senior Programme and Projects Manager
01302 736 042 bethany.haley@doncaster.gov.uk

Jonathan Bucknall, Service Manager, Business Partner and Programmes
01302 734547 jonathan.bucknall@doncaster.gov.uk

Dan Swaine
Director, Economy and Environment

ANNEX A

Specification for an independent review of Doncaster Council's Tree Policy

Background

Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees and Woodlands aims to provide a *'clear, consistent and structured approach to how Street Scene will maintain trees on Doncaster Council owned land.'*

The scope of the policy extends to all trees and woodland under the direct management of Street Scene (i.e. on parks, open spaces and highways) and to those where Street Scene is acting as a managing agent (e.g. for other Council departments or schools). This has to operate within the capability and resource base of the Tree Service, there are limitations to the budget for tree maintenance.

This policy does not apply to decisions relating to protected trees or trees affected by development, which are administered by the Local Planning Authority, or trees on land not owned by Doncaster Council, except where issues of public safety override.

The Tree Policy was written in 2018 before the Declaration of a Climate & Biodiversity Emergency for Doncaster (2019) and before DEFRA's consultation on an England Tree Strategy (2020) that will aim to *increase tree establishment and woodland creation to support nature recovery, clean growth and the commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050*. It is relevant to note, therefore, that the Doncaster Council Tree Policy is not a strategy for delivering Doncaster's entire contribution to the England Tree Strategy and the borough's 2040 net-zero target. It will of course will make a valuable contribution, and being visible to the general public, may well be a reference point for public perceptions around practical progress to net-zero.

Removal and replacement of trees

Doncaster Council is committed to the principle of ***minimal tree removal***, considered only a last resort, where no alternative solution can be found.

There are situations where trees are unsafe and pose a health and safety risk to people or property, and so need to be removed for risk management.

On other occasions, other reasons such as a road improvement scheme, root damage from utility works, or root damage to pathways and driveways means that a range of measures need to be considered including removal and replacement (the number of replacement trees required to compensate will depend upon the size of the tree(s) being lost). This is the focus of the Tree Policy review.

Purpose

The Review is intended to advise whether the **Tree Policy is fit for purpose** in respect of

1. Consultation and decision-making (and consequent operations) for tree removal and replacement – both individual and avenues of street trees. (ref Policy 6 and section 12 of the Tree Policy)
2. Valuation of trees within the removal and replacement decision-making process in relation to their climate mitigation and carbon sequestration services, and in relation to other ecological, social and economic values these trees might have. (Ref. section 10 of the Tree Policy)
3. Significant disagreement e.g. between residents and professional assessment, or amongst residents.
4. Consistency of 1. and 2. above with
 - Doncaster Council's statutory responsibilities.
 - The intent of the Environment Strategy including climate change mitigation and adaptation.
 - Doncaster Council/Team Doncaster's overall strategy and policy principles
 - relevant findings from the Report by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Investigation into a complaint against Sheffield City Council (ref: 17 004 913)
 - Reasonable resourcing expectations for delivery.
 - Best practice/exemplars and next practice in the management of street trees.

Out of scope

- Review of specific instances or examples of the application of the policy
- Rewrite of the Policy (this will be completed by DMBC officers based on the recommendations)

Outputs

The Review will provide

- A summary of evidence reviewed
- A statement of findings regarding the fitness for purpose of the Tree Policy as detailed above
- Recommendations for changes where that fitness for purpose could be improved. Recommendations should assist in the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of the Policy from the perspectives of
 - Council Tree Service operations, Highways, other relevant Council services
 - Elected Members
 - Members of the public directly affected by Tree Service operations
 - The wider Doncaster public
 - Reasonable resourcing expectations for delivery.
 - Best practices/exemplars and next practice in the management of street trees.
- Attendance (virtual) at Economy & Environment Overview & Scrutiny as may be required to talk to the findings

Independent Reviewer

The Review should be conducted by a party who

- Is not an employee or current contractor of Doncaster Council
- Has evidence of experience and expertise in tree and/or highways management or can draw directly on such expertise.
- Will be perceived as having some credibility and neutrality by diverse stakeholders.
- Will be offered a contract to a maximum value of £5K via ODR
- Will be supported with practical arrangements by Policy, Insight & Change Officers (see below)

Process

Independent Reviewer will review documentation provided and undertake focused interview (online) with invited interested parties, maximum 10:

- DMBC Tree Service/Street Scene Manager
 - DMBC Highways Head of Service/Manager
 - Independent street tree expert - Woodland Trust representative/STAG/Sheffield Independent Tree Panel
 - Two residents with recent experience of street tree removal (not necessarily Middlefield Road – will need to ensure these are not ‘select council friends.’)
 - Local activists – Green Party to nominate two.
 - Elected Member group leaders or their nominees
 - Accessibility/mobility representative (wheel chair user)
1. An open consultation will be held via DMBC website, asking for comments on specific issues on the Tree Policy within the scope of this review.
 2. Examples of good practice in street tree removal and replacement will be sourced by PICS
 3. All the above will inform the independent Reviewer’s final report findings and recommendations
 4. DMBC Policy Insight & Change will author an amended Tree Policy taking account of the independent review findings and recommendations (see Roles below).

Timescales

Background documents provided for background reading before Christmas/New Year.

Evidence gathering interviews, public consultation and writing of statement and recommendations to take place between 4th January and 1st February.

Timescales for the subsequent approval processes in a more detailed Project Plan.

Sign-off

The Independent Reviewer’s Report is to be signed off by the joint PICS and Streetscene project group.

Amended Tree Policy to be approved by Exec Board, Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny, and Cabinet.

DMBC Roles

Legal Services

- Providing legal input and advice to the review to ensure the final version is legally compliant

Policy Insight and Change

- Project management support for the overall process
- Administrative support to the Independent Reviewer, including witness contact details, scheduling of interviews, ongoing collation of evidence to facilitate final report writing
- Identification of good practice examples and collation of the Independent Reviewer
- Writing the final version of the tree policy based on the recommendations made by the review
- Supporting the tree policy through the approval process

Role of Economy & Environment

- Ensuring a service perspective is maintained and fed into the review of the tree policy to ensure the feasibility of delivery
- Ensuring the translation of the tree policy into operational delivery
- Leading on taking the amended Tree Policy through the approval process

Appendix – sections of the Tree Policy for particular consideration

6.0 In order to conserve and sustain the public tree resource and maximise the benefits that it can provide it is essential that individual issues are dealt with consistently and that decisions on tree pruning and removal are balanced against the positive contribution that trees make to the environment and its enjoyment by local communities.

Policy 3 – Tree Planting

10.0 Tree valuation

12.00 Tree replacement requirements

ANNEX B – Initial Findings

Review of the Doncaster MBC Tree Policy 2021

Professor Ian D. Rotherham

1) Rationale & Overview

Doncaster MBC is seeking to establish, review and improve its commitment to sustainable urban treescapes and particularly to street trees and highway trees within its remit.

Overall feedback in relation to the commitment to sustainable future treescapes has been very positive. It is suggested that the emerging policy at this level should both be informed by the national future treescapes vision, and at the same time, feed up, to inform that emerging vision. This is an especially appropriate time to be undertaking such a review.

This review is focused within the wider Tree Policy to specifically consider ‘street trees’ and other trees outside of woodlands and for which the Council has a management function. This consideration is within the context of recent difficulties in terms of a small number of problematic sites where work has been undertaken and triggered concerns from local residents.

The approach has been to review relevant external policy documents and other pertinent information, to meet with and interview expert stakeholders both inside and external to the Council, and to seek the opinions of other local stakeholders and the local community.

It was widely recognised that the current document is serving a hybrid function with both strategic elements and specific actions. In the long-term this is not ideal and potentially leads to a mismatch of perceived aims, objectives, process and actions.

2) Process

The review focussed on trees outside of woodlands and specifically on street trees. The wider Tree Policy includes woodlands and similar situation but these were not considered here. The work involved a wide-ranging review of relevant policy and tree management documents, and a consideration of the current Doncaster Tree Policy in the context of the Council’s emerging Environmental Strategy and associated commitments.

The process of the review had two main elements:

- a) **Discussions with key stakeholders inside and outside of the authority including local organisations and individuals from the community;**
- b) **A wide-ranging on-line survey of stakeholder attitudes.** Whilst this (b) was a self-selecting sample and cannot be considered representative of the wider community of Doncaster, it did achieve a response of over 700 returns.

The findings from the above were then analysed and fed into the review and re-writing process for the Tree Policy document by lead officers.

Consultees: local community stakeholders were consulted along with other individuals including representatives from Doncaster Mobility. Local authority officers responsible for Doncaster Street

Scene, for the tree management, and for highways management were interviewed. The external experts included Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, the Arboricultural Association, a nominee of the Woodlands Trust (with considerable experience as a professional arborists working in the private sector for local authorities and others), and a senior figure from the Tree Council. All are thanked for input but it is noted that their involvement does not amount to endorsement of any findings or recommendations.

3) Feedback

The initial findings suggest key outcomes to be noted and some important issues to be addressed – now or in the near future.

3.1 Positive feedback: The broad review of the opinions of organisations and individuals consulted has been very positive in welcoming the Council's environmental commitments. With regard to street trees, as might be expected, there are mixed views about trees and their management. This report will highlight some of the issues noted. Furthermore, from local citizens already impacted on by recent street tree management, there remain serious doubts about the positive statements on tree management and a concern that considerations of finance, perceived risk and damage and of nuisance will override the desire to retain mature trees. The wider public survey confirmed the great importance that the public of Doncaster place on their urban trees and specifically on street trees, but also demonstrated the wider range of public opinions from very positive about trees to particularly upset by tree nuisance and impacts.

3.2 Communication concerns: In the feedback from professional stakeholders there were concerns about the Council-public interface but at two levels. One was a worry that communication at various levels had not been effective, but this was balanced by comments about a need to consult the public potentially hindering necessary professional tree works. It was noted that the public often don't fully understand professional tree management issues, and at the same time, the professionals may fail to recognise public concerns or people's limited awareness of technical matters. Communication is then the key to bridging these barriers and removing misunderstanding.

This review primarily concerns street trees and those in other managed urban greenspaces, but the Tree Policy is wider and includes woodlands and other trees. This did cause some confusion for some stakeholders and the observation that the whole resource and its management should be considered more holistically as the Doncaster 'urban forest'.

There are also cross-references to wider Council policies on climate *etc* and these may not be immediately accessible to all readers.

3.3 Budgets & funding: It was noted in consultations that long-term cuts in funding from central government have led to significant reductions in dedicated tree officers. The impacts of these budget cuts over thirty years or more should be reflected upwards to national government and into the emerging national future treescape agenda. An additional factor is that it becomes increasingly difficult to retain experienced tree workers in competition with private sector employment opportunities; and when cuts are made in services then it is often experienced officers who retire.

The funding issue is however, at the heart of any meaningful response to the climate emergency and to future treescape issues. The Street Scene team report that 60% of their work is reactive to situations and 40% is proactive. If resources are reduced then the ability to undertake desirable proactive works becomes less. Indeed, there is already a current 2-year backlog of reactive works

and this clearly places strain on any ability to undertake non-essential activities, however desirable. The Tree-wise database currently includes 40,000 trees mostly from the urban catchment with few from Doncaster's extensive rural areas. Professionals indicated that resources and information are vital for an effective tree service and the authority needs at least two fulltime, permanent tree inspectors in order to discharge its functions. An expert external consultee stated very strongly that central government should make the employment of necessary tree officers a statutory requirement.

A further issue in relation to funding and workforce was that as the team gets older there can be problems of health and safety in relation to physical tasks such as tree-climbing. This is simply noted as fact but without any recommendation.

4) Communication: It was generally accepted that communication was at the core of any effective urban tree management policy and from those involved, that this had not always worked well in Doncaster. Additionally, it was noted that communication might occur at two levels: **1) Consultation** on policies, strategies, and long-term visions; **2) Notification and information** on specific tasks of maintenance and management (such as pruning, crown-lifting *etc*) or when necessary removal of street trees is planned or (in emergencies) has been implemented.

4.1 Communication & information: It was noted that good and effective information was essential to a good tree policy and when potentially controversial works must take place, can help better inform the public and reduce dissatisfaction with Council performance. Furthermore, it was noted that 'consultation' is only appropriate when the opinions sought can be genuinely taken into account and can reasonably and realistically influence subsequent actions. If this is not the case, then we are dealing with notification and that should be supported by both information, and by **education**. The latter means improving knowledge both within the Council's key workforce and with outside stakeholders and agencies, including for example, the local media.

A complicating factor is that members of the public and non-specialists with authority too (including elected members) generally lack detailed knowledge of tree management processes, issues, problems and technical language. This means that communication to be effective must be clear, unambiguous, thoughtful, and in plain English. A dedicated email hotline, a web page presence, and even a telephone hotline could ease communication and information issues.

4.2 Soft skills: It has been suggested by consultees both inside the Council and external too, that support for professionals in what might be called the 'soft skills' i.e. communication, may be necessary. Furthermore, staff involved in Council-wide public communications and help-desks might benefit from briefly on the public-facing aspects of the Tree Policy too. Additionally, it was noted that when messages from the public are passed on then the necessary information for effective tree team action may be missing.

According to internal consultees the current communications process with regard to street trees and street tree management has been limited in scope and in impact. Both internal and external stakeholders feel that along with 'soft skills' issues, there is a need for **a) standardised, clear, on-site signage** when street tree work is planned or about to begin; and **b) a dedicated on-line page on the Council's website** to which updates on tree works can be posted and especially if a tree is taken down during emergency work, an explanation as to why that was. Dedicated administrative support would help too as might a dedicated telephone hotline. It seems to be imperative that there is a communications lead role to support workers on the ground and their management teams. However, whilst a more effective communications role will help address key issues, it is still

important that those workers directly in the public gaze are more adequately supported in dealing with informal queries and questions which naturally arise.

A vital part of the implementation of any local authority tree policy is the provision of the necessary resources to deliver. This was raised by an expert consultee as **'right officers, right resources'** and an important matter to be raised with national decision-makers. Essentially there should be a statutory duty to employ appropriately qualified tree management personnel and this should be underpinned by dedicated budgets from central government.

4.3 Consultation & notification: An important observation by many consultees concerns the difference between 'consultation' with public and 'notification'. In relation to street trees the former relates largely to matters of long-term vision, of strategy, and to specific resulting policies to achieve the aims and objectives of these. Consultation implies options and therefore a chance to influence decision-making and outcomes. Given that the stated policy of DMBC is to remove mature trees from highways when there are no other realistic, feasible, or viable options in terms of risk, health and safety (including pavement damage), or the discharge of the authority's statutory duties, then communication to the public on a tree to be removed is notification not consultation. It is important however that such notification is accompanied by clear information which is easily accessible and that states unambiguously the process gone through and the reasons for the decision reached. The other situation for tree removal is in the event of an emergency such as imminent catastrophic failure. Again, the public and other stakeholders should be informed as to what happened and why the tree had to be removed.

4.4 Timing of communication and delays between informing the public of works taking place and the action happening on the ground can be detrimental. This can have a very negative impact on public responses and relates directly to funding matters noted in (3.3).

4.4 Clarity of information: In the case of the streets affected by tree removal in recent years there seem to have been mixed messages as to the reasons for felling and whether trees were diseased or damaging pavement surfaces. Feedback from local residents suggests that communication was not clear, unambiguous, or timely. For major tree removal situations it is important for evidence to be presented to local stakeholders in order to retain local confidence in decision-making and the associated processes.

Notification of proposed major works appears to have been separated from the felling by a matter of years and a final notice given to arrive over the Christmas break when no Council officers were available to take questions or concerns from local people. Furthermore, the removal was to take place in early January. No street notices were posted on the trees and not all home-owners were contacted. Additionally, the local residents felt that they did not receive full or convincing evidence for the decision to remove. A further matter was raised suggesting that signage and highways safety issues were not satisfactory when the work was undertaken.

It is important for major projects that there are effective trails in terms of documentation (including photographic record), audit, and communication.

Local stakeholders have suggested major errors in data presented in the current Tree Policy and hazard or fatality and risk statistics that are significantly out of date. These should be removed or updated.

5) Decision-making: A further pillar for a tree policy is the establishment of a clear **'decision-making tree'** as a mechanism, and ensuring that this process is transparent and comprehensible. This process should move along a scale from no action or limited action, for example to pruning or

pollarding, to crown lifting, and through to potential removal. At each stage appropriate conditions should be met and nationally-accepted good practice should be applied. It is important that the public and elected members understand the steps, the necessity as the intervention becomes more severe, and that they have full confidence in and trust of the judgement and competence of officers undertaking the work. Communication (item (4)) is essential in order to avoid unnecessary disruption to effective services and to minimise adverse public reactions to essential works. This approach was discussed and supported by all consultees.

5.1 Evidence: The evidence-based for tree management and potentially for removal must be clearly established and where necessary, transparent. Nationally accepted best practice criteria should be applied and a subjective valuation system such as CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees) or the Helliwell System for the Amenity Valuation of Trees should be used to generate figures for loss of services and replacement values.

It is important to establish robust and defensible processes in relation to what is 'reasonable', and what is 'desirable', and what is 'possible' in terms of tree management and retention. If mature trees are to be removed because it is considered to be too expensive to undertake necessary remedial works to, for example, damaged pavements, then this decision should be robust and transparent. Furthermore, whilst evaluation systems are both controversial and are quasi-subjective, they do produce a realistic estimate of the financial worth of trees threatened by removal. Additionally, either CAVAT or i-Tree Eco, can be applied to generate nominal figures for ecosystem services generated by said trees, and this can focus on a meaningful comparison with costs of engineering solutions where saving trees is possible.

[See Appendix 3 – Decision-making tree]

5.2 Replacement: Raised in discussion with local citizens is the matter of whether it is possible or desirable to replace avenue trees by gap-filling where older trees have been lost or where diseased trees have to be removed. One argument is to replace avenue trees as a cohort but another option is to replace as needed and this was supported by some local people. Furthermore, this was an issue on which local residents felt they should be consulted on. Another matter was former policies to plant avenues of genetic clones to give enhanced avenue form but of course setting up future potential problems for pests and diseases.

5.3: Forward planning should identify specific 'policy pinch-points' such as where a tree avenue provides important connectivity between other habitats in the urban forest system, or where significant or 'heritage' trees are involved. [The latter include veteran trees from the older rural landscape or trees of particular value or significance for social or historical reasons like wartime memorial plantings and where works need to be especially sensitive]. Such information should be held within the Council's tree database and taken into account in the decision-making process.

6) Strategy or Policy? An observation from external experts is that the Tree Policy as it stands is perhaps not the best vehicle for a public-facing document and statement. It would be more effective to have a 'vision' for Doncaster's future treescape resources with a 'strategy' that included 'aims' and 'objectives', and supported by internal-facing 'policies' and 'actions'. Whilst stakeholders accept this is not possible at the present time, it remains a longer-term aspiration. In the meantime, it is suggested that the current Tree Policy needs to be better adapted to its dual role of both strategic vision and policy for actions.

A further point noted by expert stakeholders is that this Policy needs to be adopted and fully embraced by **ALL** Council departments and directorates and not regarded as the sole prerogative

of the tree professionals such as Street Scene. This is especially so in relation to public communication and public-facing services. There are also budget implications for the service with regard to client departments (see (3.3)).

7) Tree Policy content and presentation: The document as it stands, as a nicely illustrated pdf, is clearly intended to be public-facing as well as an internal guidance. However, this does raise specific issues noted by the consultees. The first matter is that some of the content is unnecessarily technical and would be more appropriate for an internal guidance document (albeit in the public domain) but not in the primary strategic overview. Taking the Policy as standalone without an over-arching strategy, it will be important to reduce technical terms and jargon to a minimum but without adversely affected the clarity of the message.

It has been requested by residents, tree campaigners, and external expert stakeholders that the Tree Policy begins with very positive statements about the positive benefits which trees, particularly street trees, bring to Doncaster both now and in the future.

7.1 Tree benefits:

- Landscape & sense of place / history, heritage & connectivity with the past / local distinctiveness / visual enhancement
- A green & high quality environment / clean air / removal of particulate pollution / noise reduction
- Enhanced urban ecology, biodiversity, habitat continuity & connectivity, enhanced pollinator habitat
- Moderation of extreme weather and '*climate-proofing*' of urban areas / mitigation of flood risk / mitigation of summer high temperatures – up to 4-5 degrees reduction / moderation of precipitation runoff and flood-risk through interception at canopy level and root-pits acting as '*soakaways*' to take surface runoff into groundwater
- Good health – mental and physical
- Enhanced property values and the desire to reside in a locale
- Free recreation
- Reduction in costs or expected costs of air-conditioning *etc*
- Enhanced house values & 'desire to live' in a locale

Some readers of the current Tree Policy feel that the current message is unduly negative and has an emphasis on problems, potential problems, and their resolution. These issues should be covered but later in the document and in a more nuanced way. [See also Appendix 2- Trees and carbon sequestration].

8) Implementation & action for trees: the Street Scene tree team reported that their work was around 60:40 split between reactive/proactive operations. Rather worryingly, with 40,000 urban trees on the operational database, there was a two-year backlog in planned reactive works.

8.1 In all services, resources are important. In achieving the aims of any tree vision for Doncaster the provision of experienced, qualified officers on the ground determines the ability to deliver; a case in point being the two tree inspector posts currently filled by temporary staff. To achieve the

policy objectives then there is a need for broad awareness of street trees and greenspace trees across all Council departments and directorates. This was recognised as being not just a matter for Street Scene but involving a wider ownership of policy and delivery. In terms of long-term sustainability there is a clear role for planning and development to also be involved and engaged.

8.2 When development occurs and a tree has to be removed for reasons other than arboriculture i.e. health and safety / risk / damage, then a CAVAT valuation or a Helliwell assessment should be undertaken to assess replacement costs. This is generally the case and the calculation is used 'conservatively' to estimate an uninflated value.

8.3 It is essential that when major works such as street tree avenue removal takes place, that **a) the flow of information** is clear, good, unambiguous and timely; and **b) restoration, remedial works, and re-planting** are speedy, efficient, and appropriate. Long periods of a street looking damaged and desolate are dispiriting for local people, and damaging to the authority's reputation in the eyes of its citizens. The timing of the implementation of street tree works is very important and as noted, long delays between key steps need to be avoided (see also (4.4)). It is important to plan ahead to deliver good and speedy restoration work when trees are to be replaced and to include repairs to grass verges *etc.*

8.4 In the urban catchment trees and communities can be brought into intimate and close interactions, with both benefits and disbenefits. Larger-scale operations may have significant effects on an area and there may be additional social and environmental impacts in particular situations. Where these are known and are predictable, then it is important that careful planning leads to effective implementation and communications in order to minimise adverse impacts.

8.5 Mismatches between strategic visions and commitments and tree management actions on the ground should be avoided. Unambiguous information is central to good public relations in relation to tree matters. For tree felling decisions where rot, hollowing and disease are given as reasons it has been requested that the Authority utilises best practice and technology. This would include techniques such as Sonic Tomography and where applicable the evidence should be publicly accessible. In the case of this action being followed then a cost is incurred in purchase of technology, training in its application. It is further suggested that advice be sought from the Arboricultural Association or the Tree Council on the best available technology and on likely costs.

9) Some specific points: Communication might be more effective through splitting the document into two parts – **1) a public-facing strategic vision** with commitments to broad issues and clear explanation of processes and timelines with regard to urban trees, **2) A more detailed working document** with specific policies and action plans against targets. This might be a future refinement.

9.1 There needs to be clarification of 'risk probability' 1:10,000 and logic of some other statistics provided. Similarly there was a request for clarification of need to include 'common law rights' – Section 9 – which seems more appropriate for an internal policy briefing rather than a public-facing document.

9.2 There appears to be a strategic mismatch between this document as a '**strategy**' rather than a '**policy**' which are not the same and this was noted by a number of consultees. It has also been noted that there are differences between say, 'policy', and 'guidance' and these need to be made very clear to both officers and the public. However, it was also stressed that it was worth linking the Doncaster initiative to emerging national tree strategies. Perhaps this could be noted at the outset.

9.3 A number of consultees, including local community members, questioned the rationale for the tree replacement numbers. So how are they calculated / justified. Maybe relate this specifically to the Bristol study in order to clarify the rationale. From discussions it is clear that the figures used by other authorities such as Bristol provide a compensatory approach and this is reasonable but not scientifically based.

9.4 Separation of DMBC services into ‘**people**’ functions and ‘**space**’ functions can be unhelpful and create barriers; the example given being the split in countryside activities and tree management. With this situation in mind it is important that treescapes and street trees are viewed holistically as a corporate function, and efforts are made to foster collaboration and information or skills.

9.5 Some miscellaneous points raised and noted: DMBC are to be congratulated on their peat-free policy for replacement tree-planting.

It was suggested that some specific details in the Policy are inappropriate for a document of this sort but terms such as Tree Preservation Orders (and their implications) should be clarified.

It is important to apply best practice alternative approaches to tree management and to relevant engineering.

According to a local councillor, tree management processes are subject to ‘scrutiny’; and this is noted as an important part of the democratic process.

In terms of designation TPOs are the responsibility of the Planning Department but the trees are still the responsibility of the Street Scene team.

9.5 A number of consultees, both experts and community, noted the points, ‘**don’t promise what you cannot deliver**’ (see (3.3)). In other words it is best not to raise expectations of a service delivery unless a) it is possible, feasible, and desirable, and b) is fully and effectively resourced. [See also notes on consultation vs notification (4.3)].

10) Right tree, right place: The rationale behind tree replacement figures needs to be clarified. To seek replacement equivalence *in situ* may be difficult and even inappropriate for example when it is desirable to use smaller tree species and varieties to minimise shading, and damage to infrastructure. Like-for-like replacement of large ‘forest’ trees might then be in greenspace as close as possible to the removal site.

It is also important to seek to mix species and varieties at local and borough levels in order to minimise future risk of pest and diseases and to choose trees that will cope with expected climate change scenarios.

Single clones of species may present as attractive ‘neat’ avenues but are especially vulnerable to failure due to these factors.

11) Mobility and access issues: Safe access along footpaths is important for all users but for those with mobility issues becomes especially significant and there are accepted national standards for this. Footpaths and highways need to be maintained to a suitable level that discharges the Council’s statutory responsibilities and accords with good practice for access and mobility provision. Furthermore, local groups representing people with mobility problems can help in raising awareness of access issues and standards. It is also noted that individuals with mobility issues may be most reliant on local greenspaces and therefore potentially gain particular benefit from accessible street trees on their doorstep. Footpath and highways maintenance need to be

according to accepted national standards. Where potential conflicts occur with tree management then a first step is to utilise a mix of tree interventions and engineering solutions to maintain safe access and to retain street trees wherever possible. In section (8.4), the need to plan ahead for difficult situations or where impacts of for example, either major tree works or issues such as where tree-damage to pavements may be particularly acute is noted. Added to this, there may be some situations that arise where mobility issues are especially significant, perhaps close to retirement homes or supported accommodation. Again these should be considered in forward planning and appropriate advice taken.

12) Working with the public to create a sustainable future for Doncaster's street trees:

Discussion with external stakeholders and feedback from the public consultation has indicated possible future opportunities to engage, educate, and work with local communities on treescapes and street tree issues. A remarkable insight from the on-line survey was that half those who responded would be prepared to be involved in any future voluntary 'tree wardens' initiative. Whilst clearly the survey gained responses from motivated individuals (both positive and negative with regard to street trees) and cannot be considered representative of the wider Doncaster public, this is still a very encouraging finding. Essentially this lends support to ideas of partnership working on non-professional aspects of urban trees and to a wider engagement with local people. In particular across the Doncaster District there is a good number of Parish Councils and these can be a mechanism in some cases to access key resources and also to connect with local people on the ground. Tree warden projects are frequently in conjunction with Parish Councils.

Suggestions of ways to better engage local people include:

- a) A voluntary Tree Warden scheme;**
- b) Improved public information and educational materials;**
- c) Events such as a 'Doncaster Tree Day'** to celebrate urban trees and raise public awareness. This might include tree decoration activities for people but especially children as happens in Europe.

Whilst a tree warden scheme **(a)** might at first sight seem a costly undertaking I believe much of the expenditure might be offset by grant-aid project bids with external partners such as local trusts and the Doncaster network of Parish Councils for example. Grant-funding bodies such as the Big Lottery for example might assist with set-up and initial running costs. Furthermore, there is considerable expertise available from bodies like the Tree Council and the Woodland Trust to support such an initiative. Both **(b)** and **(c)** would also be eligible for grant aid and furthermore, would be eminently suitable for business sponsorship. It is also important to note that in setting up any partnership or volunteer scheme such as community tree wardens, this should not make undue extra demands of professional staff time, and the roles of volunteers and professionals need to be clearly established at the outset. Volunteers on the ground can help be the eyes and ears of the tree service and can help communicate issues at a neighbourhood level. Effective communication, as already established, provides a better service; it helps avoid problem issues, and ultimately, may help save money when costs are incurred through a breakdown in community relations.

13) Assessing and evaluating the benefits of urban street trees: Approaches and mechanisms for assessing things like amenity value of trees have already been noted. It is important to understand that there is no single 'correct' system and all the toolkits are in part subjective. However, these approaches do help the manager provide an estimate of some of the wider benefits of urban trees and in particular, of the costs incurred when trees are removed.

The benefits to be considered include climate mitigation, flood-risk reduction, carbon sequestration, impacts on property values, biodiversity, and both mental and physical health and wellbeing. Some of the toolkits help provide estimates of benefits and some give economic indicators of possible losses and compensations. Furthermore they help give substance to forward planning scenarios and some idea of the benefits to be derived from future interventions and actions such as tree planting.

14) Horizon-scanning: In street tree management, it is important to plan for and anticipate future changes which may be in environmental conditions or national policy context for example.

Some key factors and issues underpin a relevant horizon-scanning approach. These matters include:

- a) **Climate change**
- b) **Associated with (a) increasingly extreme weather events such as flooding**
- c) **New and more diverse pests and diseases**
- d) **Increasing development and urbanisation across the borough**
- e) **National policy initiatives and especially the future treescapes agenda**
- f) **Regional initiatives particularly the Great Northern Forest**
- g) **The Environment Bill and likely 'duty to consult' on local authority tree felling + net gain for biodiversity**
- h) **Likelihood of an increasingly aging population and therefore potentially greater access and mobility issues**

Appendix 1: Engineering alternatives to tree removal (provided by STAG from Sheffield Streets Ahead document)

	Sensitive Engineering Solutions
1	Installation of thinner profile kerbs
2	Excavation of footways for physical root examination prior to an ultimate decision being made on removal
3	Ramping/ Re-profiling of footway levels over roots (within acceptable deviation levels).
4	Flexible paving/ surfacing solution
5	Removal of displaced kerbs leaving a gap in the channel
	Tree based Options
6	Root pruning
7	Root shaving
8	Root barriers and root guidance panels
9	Excavation beneath the roots damaging the footway
10	Tree growth retardant
11	Creation of larger tree pits around existing trees
12	Heavy tree crown reduction / pollarding to stunt tree growth
13	Retain dead, dying, dangerous and diseased highway trees for their habitat value

	Other non-engineering solutions
14	Line markings on the carriageway to delineate where it is not safe to drive or park
15	Building out kerb line into carriageway
16	Footpath deviation around the tree
17	Installation of a geo-grid under the footway to reduce reflective cracking
18	Reconstruction of the path using loose fill material rather than a sealed surface
19	Filling in of pavement cracks
20	Reduce the road width and widen the footways as well as converting them to grass verges
21	Close a road to traffic
22	Change to contract specification to leave the footways as they are without carrying out any repairs and removing trip hazards
23	Abandonment of the existing footway In favour of construction of a new footway elsewhere
24	Permanent closure of footways to pedestrians. Dig up and replace as grass verges.
25	Seeking the views of residents about removal where that is considered by the Council to be the only option and getting the residents to sign a legal agreement regarding accepting liabilities.

Appendix 2- Trees and carbon sequestration]

The issue of carbon uptake from the atmosphere (carbon capture or sequestration) by trees is a topic increasingly discussed and debated because of climate change scenarios and concerns. Furthermore, there is the matter of how carbon is stored and how long for. This has relevance to long-term visions and management practice for street trees, but in reality it is not an over-riding driver or concern. So there are two main aspects to this **a) carbon storage**, and **b) on-going carbon capture**. I have highlighted the main issues below:

- i. A young sapling takes in more carbon per unit of its biomass than a mature tree but in practice it has stored very little. Furthermore, due to its size and volume of active photosynthetic biomass, a mature 'forest' tree captures far more carbon in a season than does a replacement sapling, or indeed a smaller 'ornamental' tree. The carbon is laid down in the timber of the tree, in its branches and in its leaves.
- ii. Removal of a big forest tree and replacement with a 'fit-for-purpose' ornamental tree does not compensate for the lost annual sequestration.
- iii. The fate of the timber and brush from a felled street tree affect the re-release of stored carbon back to the atmosphere.
- iv. Re-planting of 'compensatory' trees in a nearby greenspace is a valuable contribution and a good thing to do. However, the re-planting is not directly connected to the lost tree and could happen regardless of the fate of the street tree.
- v. In the wider context of the borough, the main mechanism for large-scale carbon capture will be through landscape-scale interventions such as new woodland creation and reversion of intensive land-use to say wetland and wet woodland. The street trees make a

modest contribution but their more important roles are things like alleviation of localised pollution and mitigation of localised climatic extremes.

- vi. Finally, the mechanisms and models for calculating any carbon capture impacts are presently not sufficiently refined to be applied with confidence to the street tree situation.

Appendix 3 – Decision-making tree

As noted earlier (5), this process should move along a scale from no action or limited action, for example to pruning or pollarding, to crown lifting, and through to potential removal. At each stage appropriate conditions should be met and nationally-accepted good practice should be applied. It is important that the public and elected members understand the steps, the necessity as the intervention becomes more severe, and that they have full confidence in and trust of the judgement and competence of officers undertaking the work.

Outline Decision-making Tree – for illustrative purposes only		
Inspection	Routine or specific	
	Professional inspection and judgement and assessment against criteria and policies	
Step 1 No action	-	No action required
Step 2 Limited action	e.g. Routine pruning	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site
	Professional inspection and judgement	
Step 3 Remedial intervention necessary	e.g. Severe pruning	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and possible consultation
	e.g. Pollarding	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and possible consultation
	Professional inspection and judgement	
Step 4 Remedial intervention necessary	e.g. Crown lifting	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and possible consultation
Step 5 Consideration of engineering solutions to structural problems	See Appendix 1	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and possible consultation
	Tomography or other specialist inspection	
Step 6 Solutions not feasible or viable	Potential removal & replacement	Notification through signs on trees [if time-line allows] and explanatory notice on web-site.

		If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and consultation essential except in the case of emergencies
Step 7 Emergency works	e.g. Severe pruning	Notification through explanatory notice on web-site.
	e.g. Removal	Notification through explanatory notice on web-site.
	e.g. Intervention on fallen tree or branches of	Notification through explanatory notice on web-site.
*Note for certain works a Forestry Commission felling license may be required; and subject to the current Environment Bill at Parliament, a public consultation may be necessary for major local authority felling programmes.		

Appendix 4 – Specific recommendations and broad scale of cost implications

Communications

- 1) **Communications lead** – cost implications
- 2) **Dedicated website presence** – minor costs to set-up
- 3) **Telephone hotline** – cost implications
- 4) **Dedicated administrative support to support above** -low cost
- 5) **Soft skills training** – training budget costs and staff time to set-up
- 6) **Council-wide awareness-raising of trees and Tree Policy** – training budget and staff time

Decision-making & Decision-making Tree

- 1) **Setting up and awareness-raising of the Decision-making Tree** – low cost / staff time
- 2) **Implementation of process** - low cost / staff time [much of this is formalising what is already done]
- 3) **Additional process costs** – a) **Impact assessments** with CAVAT, i-Tree Eco, or Helliwell – potentially quite high for specific projects; b) **Tomography** equipment, training, and application - potentially quite high **capital expenditure** for specific projects and application would be staff cost.

Implementation & action for trees

- 1) **Supporting necessary staff to deliver the work in a timely manner and to the necessary agreed standard** – this is more an emphasis to at least commit to supporting current essential staff including those presently on short-term contracts in the Street Scene team.
- 2) **Community partnership initiatives** [tree wardens, events etc] – these potentially incur costs to initiate and support but also through officer time required in order to interact with volunteers in a meaningful way. – Potential costs but much offset against grant aid and partnership working.
- 3) **Monitoring of projects and implementation** – low cost

Redraft of Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees and Woodlands

February 2021

Covering note

This draft responds to the of the Tree Policy Review Report produced by Professor Ian Rotherham, Sheffield Hallam University having consulted a range of professional, expert, and local stakeholders.

The brief of the Tree Policy Review was to

1. Consultation and decision-making (and consequent operations) for street and urban tree removal and replacement – both individual and avenues of street trees.
2. Valuation of trees within the removal and replacement decision-making process in relation to their climate mitigation and carbon sequestration services, and in relation to other ecological, social and economic values these trees might have.

This draft addresses these issues as highlighted in the Review, and is therefore NOT a wholesale rewrite of the previous Tree Policy.

The review identified key issues in three main areas:

- i. Process & decision-making;
- ii. Communication & engagement;
- iii. Implementation & process

This has led to redrafting or additional material particularly in sections 3 – 8, 14, 16, and Policy 6

This policy now contains section 8 on Trees and Climate Change

The original Tree Policy was originally written to sit within a Tree Strategy included in Doncaster Green Infrastructure Strategy 2014 – 2028 as Theme 2: Trees and Woodland. This has meant that the strategic perspective complementing the Tree Policy has been less visible. While much of the Green Infrastructure Strategy still applies, it's status is now in question following the approval of the (Team Doncaster) Environment & Sustainability Strategy 2020 – 2030

Tim Newton - Policy Insight & Change Service, DMBC



Doncaster
Council

**Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan
for Doncaster Council's Trees and
Woodlands**

Revision draft - February 2021

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1. FORWARD

Trees enhance the quality of life in urban environments, and form an integral part of their shape, colour and diversity. They are essential to our health and well-being, not only in reducing some of the adverse impacts of the urban environment but also in enhancing our enjoyment of the street scene.

Trees also provide economic benefits to Doncaster – directly through wood products, such as timber or biomass, and indirectly through eco-system services; their leaves and branches filter out pollution, reduce the risk of flooding, cool urban air temperatures and shade us from the sun's harmful ultra-violet rays. Trees contribute to climate change mitigation by absorbing and locking up carbon dioxide, thus helping the world avoid catastrophic climate change; and increased tree cover will help adapt the borough for the effects of unavoidable climate change.

However, a recently completed study to measure Doncaster's area of tree canopy cover has showed that it is below both the South Yorkshire and national averages, and also revealed that some areas of the borough have much lower tree cover than others. Not only is it important that our existing trees are conserved and managed to ensure they bring benefit to future generations, but we also need to identify and action ways to increase their numbers across the borough, particularly in areas of low canopy cover and poor air quality.

The adoption of the Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Council's Trees and Woodlands in July 2019 signalled a new commitment by Doncaster Council to look after one of the most valuable natural resources in its care. In September 2019, Doncaster declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency, in recognition that Climate Change and sustainability are amongst the biggest issues of the 21st century and the effects of human-made and dangerous climate change are already being felt and seen. In light of this, Doncaster Council has undertaken a review of the policy and embedded a new principle – ***the principle of minimal tree removal*** – to further strengthen our commitment to protecting and increasing our valuable tree resource to maximise its benefits for climate change mitigation.

We cannot take this resource for granted: we must manage and constantly replenish Doncaster's municipal tree stock for our children and future generations. We must also raise awareness of the importance of the urban forest on both public and privately owned land and encourage all resident's to manage all of Doncaster's trees carefully for many years to come and to plant more.

2. INTRODUCTION

Trees are long-lived community assets, which are essential to our health and well-being, not only in enhancing our enjoyment of the street scene, but by reducing some of the adverse impacts of urban environments.

However, they can also cause of a range of issues, from being a nuisance or inconvenience to potentially causing serious injury or property damage.

3. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

The Government's A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018) recognises the value of trees and woodland as 'natural capital assets' - elements of nature that either directly or indirectly bring value to people and the country at large, for example by providing clean air and water, wildlife, energy, wood, soil for food production, recreation and protection from hazards.

The 25 Year Plan made a number of commitments aiming to maximise the benefits of woodland and trees, supporting woodland creation, greening our towns and cities, and planting more trees in and around our towns and cities.

As part of the delivery of the Climate Change Action 2008 and the UK's net-zero target for 2050, the government's commitment is to increase tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares of tree planting per year by 2025. This reflects Committee on Climate Change (CCC) advice that the UK should increase planting rates to between 30,000 and 50,000 hectares per year and maintain these to 2050 to reach net zero emissions.

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs published an England Tree Strategy consultation in June 2020 and expect to publish the final Strategy in spring 2021. This will provide a national framework for delivery of the Governments commitments.

4. DONCASTER'S STRATEGY FOR TREES AND WOODLAND

A strategy for Doncaster's trees and woodland was originally set out as Theme 2 (pages 22 – 30) in ***Doncaster Green Infrastructure Strategy 2014 – 2028; Making Doncaster a Greener, Healthier, more Attractive Borough***. This set out (pages 23 – 24, section 3.29) the following broad objectives:-

- To ensure that trees and woodlands contribute to a high quality urban environment for present and future generations through the use of sustainable management practices and appropriate protection measures;
- To safeguard the borough's existing tree and woodland resource and promote a better understanding of the management, care and value of trees;
- To improve understanding about the distribution, function, condition and value of the borough's trees and woodlands in order to enable better informed decision making about priorities for management and ensure that management practices are appropriate and sustainable;
- To establish more trees and expand and develop woodland across the borough and adopt a best practice approach to the selection of species and site to promote a healthy, diverse tree population in locations that can sustain future growth;
- To protect wildlife and enhance the ecological value of the borough's trees, woodlands and non-woodland habitats and improve their resilience to climate change;
- To ensure that the benefits provided by public investment in trees and woodlands offer comparative 'value for money' and contribute to environmental sustainability; and,
- To involve local people in planning and managing trees and woodlands, to help achieve more cohesive communities and to show how individuals can contribute to environmental sustainability.

Following the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and the work of the Doncaster Climate Commission, the strategic partnership Team Doncaster has agreed an **Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2020 – 2030**. This Strategy includes commitments to the natural environment including to

- Protect and enhance WOODLAND and GREEN SPACES, plant more TREES.
- Protect and enhance BIODIVERSITY to support resilient ecosystems.

The desired outcome is to *Improved green space provision and increased tree coverage*.

Doncaster Council's Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan sits very firmly within these national and local strategies.

5. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

The scope of the policy extends to all trees and woodland under the direct management of Doncaster Council's Street Scene Trees and Woodlands Service (i.e. council owned trees in streets, parks and open spaces, council houses, cemeteries and leisure centres) and to those where Street Scene is acting as a managing agent (e.g. for other Council departments or schools).

This policy **does not** apply to decisions relating to protected trees or trees affected by development, which are administered by the Local Planning Authority, or trees on land not owned by Doncaster Council, except where issues of public safety override.

Further information on Doncaster Council's tree services can be found at <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/environmental/tree-services>

Specific objectives of this Policy are:-

- To implement the principles of **Theme 2: Trees and Woodlands of the Doncaster Green Infrastructure Strategy 2014-2028** and the **Team Doncaster Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2020 – 2030** commitments to the natural environment;[REF 1]
- To provide a risk management framework for Doncaster Council's trees and woodland;
- To provide a policy framework to guide decisions on tree management by Street Scene Officers;
- To act as a source of information about the management of public trees within the borough;
- To maximise the benefits that public trees and woodlands can contribute to climate change mitigation;
- To ensure net increases in the volume of trees in the Council's Care, and hence a net increase in the carbon stored. (*Green Infrastructure Strategy 3.34 The Council will continue to plant trees to enhance urban and natural areas within the Borough and will seek to plant more trees each year than it fells.*)
- To remove trees only where no reasonable alternative solution can be found.
- To support the main vision of the Council [REF 2] to find new ways of working to develop public services in a way that ensures all of Doncaster's people and communities benefit with an improved quality of life in Doncaster.

6. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

While this Policy concerns trees that are owned by Doncaster Council, it is recognised that residents are stakeholders in the quality of natural and urban environments. Primary stakeholders should be communicated with and engaged in a manner that is proportionate to the nature, impact, scale and urgency of the work to be undertaken.

Primary stakeholders may include

- Residents in the immediate vicinity where there are Council-owned trees or tree maintenance work is planned
- Elected Members representing those residents
- Other Council services

There may be a range of other local stakeholders including

- Residents who regularly walk, cycle or drive through an area (particularly where trees impact on roads and pavements, and particularly those local residents with mobility issues)
- Businesses
- Schools
- Amenity groups or neighbourhood volunteers.

Communications planning

Doncaster Council will be proactive in identifying where tree maintenance work may have significant impact on local stakeholders or elicit strong public reactions. Where this may be the case, a communications plan will be agreed with a senior manager that is relevant to the nature, scope and urgency of the work. This plan will co-ordinate across services involved, and ensure that there is a fully-informed single channel of communication or spokesperson.

- When engaging with stakeholders Doncaster Council will be open and accountable in our decision making process. Doncaster Council commits that:
- We will proactively engage with stakeholders, using a range of methods to provide information that is clear, easy to understand and accessible to all Doncaster residents;
- Engagement will be undertaken in reasonable timeframes and with a shared understanding of the decision-making processes (It is recognised that delays between informing the public of works taking place and the action happening on the ground can be detrimental);
- The method of engagement will be proportionate to the work being proposed; and
- We will undertake evaluation processes to continually improve our approach to engagement.

Notification and information sharing

Much of the work pruning, removal and replacement of trees, particularly urban and street trees, is decided upon through expert assessment by qualified officers, particularly where there is risk or danger to members of the public.

In such circumstances, local resident stakeholders will be engaged through notification and sharing of information. The nature of which will depend on the nature, impact, scale and urgency of the work, but may include

- Information on a dedicated page on the Council's website
- Letters delivered to residents
- Standardised, clear, on-site signage
- Meetings with residents or stakeholders

Depending on the nature and urgency of the work, a reasonable timescale will be established to allow local stakeholder to request and receive further information.

Notification and information needs to be perceived as transparent and timely, enabling local resident stakeholders feeling properly informed of the action being taken, the reasons for the action, the timescales, and any inconvenience that may be experienced as a result of the work.

Consultation

There may be circumstances where local views may be sought to assist planning or decision-making on a course of action or timescale. Local resident stakeholders will be engaged through consultation, again the nature of which will depend on the nature, scale and urgency of the work. In addition to the methods used for notification, consultation of residents may also include

- Identifying a single point of contact for residents in the Council
- Questionnaire – via letter or online
- Direct contact, for example, face-to-face or online meetings, or telephone calls, particularly with residents most immediately affected.
- Involvement of Council communications team and briefing of Customer Services.

Consultation needs to be perceived as transparent and timely, enabling local resident stakeholders to feel that their views have properly been taken account of. Feedback on planning and decisions taken need to demonstrate how the views of local resident stakeholders local residents were considered and taken into account, bearing in mind that there may be diverging opinions and that work needs to be fully informed by qualified expert assessment. Given this, it is likely that a more detailed communications plan is required, with the nomination of a lead officer to co-ordinate and act as spokesperson where necessary.

Trees, wherever they stand, make a valuable contribution to the quality of life for Doncaster's residents. The urban forest is one of the most visible parts of the green infrastructure network and provides a multitude of benefits for society. The research establishing that trees are a cost-effective way of bringing a wide range of benefits to the environment, individuals and society as a whole³ also shows clearly that benefits are strongly related to size, with the largest trees providing the greatest benefits. It is important, therefore, that trees, particularly large canopied species, are not unnecessarily lost from the landscape, or have their capacity to provide benefits reduced by unnecessary pruning.

8. TREES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

One of the many causes of climate change is deforestation, particularly of tropical and sub-tropical forests, often cleared to produce agricultural goods for the global market. With the loss of forest also goes the benefits of local and regional climate regulation, and the impact on rainfall, temperature, air and water quality.

Loss of tree cover reduces the benefits

A warming climate means number of things

- warmer wetter winters
- hotter dryer summers
- more frequent heavy weather including heavier rainfall, flooding and storms.
- changes to seasonal patterns – spring flowers bloom earlier
- climate temperature zones move Northwards (in the Northern hemisphere)

The health of trees may be put at risk in a number of ways including

- lack of adaptation to warmer conditions
- lack of water in hot summers
- damage from heavy winds
- water-logging and soil erosion from flooding
- Loss of pollinators and other insects and animals that have a beneficial relationship with trees
- Pests and diseases thriving in warmer conditions

As well as protecting and maintain populations of trees from the impact of climate change, trees may also be part of the solution. The three most important elements of our response to the warming of the planet's atmosphere and the impact this is having are

Mitigation – reducing the level of greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere by human activity.

Adaptation – becoming resilient to the impact of changes in the climate that are already happening.

Biodiversity – restoring the natural world and the ecological processes that support all life on earth.

Reducing CO₂ in the atmosphere

Trees, like all plants, take out ('sequester') carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to use to build the structure of their cells. As trees grow, their wood and leaves are essentially 'stores' of carbon.

Doncaster's tree canopy cover has been estimated to store 1,945 Kt of CO₂, absorbing 77 Kt of CO₂ annually.

Team Doncaster's Environment & Sustainability Strategy has an ambition for the Borough to become carbon neutral by 2040, and the maintenance and enhancement of our natural carbon stores, including trees and woodland, will be a significant element.

Accounting for the carbon stored in Doncaster Council's tree stock and the annual rate of sequestration for carbon from the atmosphere is extremely challenging, given that every tree grows in a unique set of local circumstances. Carbon accounting and modelling technologies are currently rudimentary and will be develop much further over the coming years. However, to begin carbon accounting for the tree stock, an annual report be provided commenting on what available data indicates for the net increase in volume of the tree stock and the implications for carbon sequestration and storage.

Resilience and adaptation

Trees and woodland can play a significant role in natural methods to reduce flood risk, particular when planted at scale in higher river catchment areas.

Large areas of woodland can also help bring atmospheric water (rain, mist, dew) to dryer areas.

The cooling effect of urban trees and other vegetation will have a significant impact during warming summers and heatwaves to come, protecting wellbeing and potentially saving healthcare costs.

Trees may also act as wind breaks, protecting building and infrastructure from storm damage.

In addition to the benefits while trees are growing, harvested wood may be used as a biofuel where carbon capture technology is also used.

Biodiversity

Trees, particularly mixed native trees and woodland, can provide the conditions to support a wide range of other plant, insect and animal life.

It needs recognising that individual trees are part of a local natural landscape: birds and insects will travel and forage across local environments between trees, hedges, shrubs and bushes irrespective of the ownership of the land on which these grow. Biodiversity is enhanced by having connecting habitats, hence street trees should for example, be appreciated for their biodiversity value in relation to nearby trees in gardens, parks and woodland.

All of the above benefits depend on 'the right tree in the right place' and good regimes of inspection and maintenance. Some non-native trees have little positive impact, and may even do damage to local ecosystems for example by being invasive or bringing new pests and diseases with them.

9. TREE CANOPY COVER

Tree canopy cover is “the layer of leaves, branches and tree stems that cover the ground when viewed from above”. Its measurement can be used as a proxy for the benefits provided by the urban forest - the greater the area of canopy cover the greater the environmental benefits provided by trees.

Doncaster’s tree canopy cover (including both municipal and private trees) has been estimated at 12.62%[REF A] However, this is the lowest canopy cover in South Yorkshire (average of 16.4%) and below the average for England (16% - based on 283 towns and cities)[REF 4] and ranges across the borough from 7.2% to 23.5%. The Urban Forestry and Woodland Advisory Committee Network recommend that a minimum standard for tree canopy cover is set for a local area, with evidence showing that 20% is a good aspiration for a borough like Doncaster[REF 5].

10. TREE RELATED PROBLEMS

The Council receive many enquiries each year raising concerns about trees on its land. Whilst we recognise that the removal or pruning of trees is sometimes necessary, requests are frequently based on unfounded fears or a misguided belief that trees need to be regularly pruned. Trees that are free from defect have the ability to withstand the stresses created by stormy and other adverse weather conditions. Occasionally, a few trees fail, whether in part (a branch) or in full (uproot) but, through a programme of regular inspection, those trees that pose an unacceptable risk of harm to persons or property can be identified and given appropriate remedial work to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Within Doncaster there are a number of recurring sources of complaint or concern, including:

- tree size;
- overhanging and low branches;
- shading and loss of light;
- loss of a view;
- interference with TV and satellite reception;
- falling leaves, twigs, blossom, fruit and nuts and sticky deposits from honeydew;
- physical damage to structures such as buildings, walls, footpaths, driveways or drains; and
- root encroachment and moisture depletion subsidence damage

In order to conserve and sustain the public tree resource and maximise the benefits that it can provide it is essential that individual issues are dealt with consistently and that decisions on tree pruning and removal are balanced against the positive contribution that trees make to the environment and its enjoyment by local communities.

11. POLICIES

POLICY 1 – Managing Trees

All trees on Doncaster Council land will be managed proactively through routine inspections at a frequency proportionate to the risk that they pose to identify potential hazards and to specify and prioritise any tree maintenance work required to keep any risk of harm or damage as low as reasonably practicable.

The principle aim of this policy is to put in operation a reasonable, defensible and proactive tree management system that conserves and enhances the tree population on land for which Doncaster Council is responsible and makes efficient use of available resources.

Nothing in life is entirely safe. People assess risks and make decisions about them constantly in everyday life. The risk of being struck and killed by a tree or branch falling is actually extremely low – in the order of 1 in 10 million for those trees in or adjacent to areas of high public use (Health and Safety Executive, 2007)[REF 6], or less if high wind incidents are excluded. So far as non-fatal injuries in the UK are concerned, the number of accident and emergency cases (A&E) attributable to being struck by trees (about 55 a year) is exceedingly small compared with the roughly 2.9 million leisure-related A&E cases per year (National Tree Safety group, 2011)[REF 7].

However, it is not generally perceived in this way by the public, particularly following any tree failure incident, and, all too often, pressure is applied for unnecessary pruning or removal of healthy trees in order to be seen to be ‘doing something’.

Doncaster Council is responsible for many thousands of trees growing in its woodlands, parks and open spaces, cemeteries, housing estates, industrial estates and alongside the highway and has a legal ‘duty of care’ to consider the risks posed by its trees to users of its land and neighbours and ensure that the risk of harm to persons and property is as low as ‘reasonably practicable’. The legal framework does not require the elimination of risk altogether - to do so would create an unacceptable loss of the many benefits that trees provide.

The Health and Safety Executive (2007)[REF 9] considers that “for trees in a frequently visited zone, a system for periodic, proactive checks is appropriate”. In order to limit the risk of significant harm from tree failure, all trees under the management of Street Scene are being recorded and mapped and will be cyclically inspected, at a frequency determined by the type and number of targets within falling distance (). We will aim to publicise schedules of planned proactive inspections on our website with target dates for completion.

General tree enquiries or requests for service may be made through the Council’s contact centre. However, an inspection may not be completed if a routine proactive inspection has been completed, or is due, on a tree within 18 months of the date of an enquiry, unless works necessary to maintain safety are identified. Further guidance on tree inspections can be found at Appendix A.

POLICY 2 - Maintaining Trees

All tree work operations specified and carried out on trees on Doncaster Council land will be undertaken in accordance with arboricultural best practice, and the felling or unnecessary pruning of trees on Council land will be resisted, unless there is a sound reason and no reasonable alternative solution can be found.

In order to achieve the aspiration of increasing urban tree canopy cover (), and thereby maximise the benefits that the urban forest provides, it is essential that we conserve the existing municipal tree resource, particularly the largest trees. For this reason, we are introducing the 'principle of minimal tree removal'. The removal of any tree on Council land will be considered **only** a last resort, where no reasonable alternative solution can be found to reduce risk or remove danger.

Trees are dynamic, continually self-optimizing organisms that do not normally require regular pruning. However, tree maintenance work is sometimes desirable, or necessary, to improve tree structure, prevent damage or maintain safety. All tree pruning has an impact upon the health and structure of a tree and will be specified **only** where it is deemed necessary, and will be prioritised for completion according to urgency, with safety issues given the greatest weighting.

Many trees grow or have been planted in groups, and work specified on one tree may have an adverse impact on others or result in a loss of unity of an arboricultural feature (e.g. an avenue). In some cases, the removal of trees may favour the development of other trees. The impact on surrounding trees or arboricultural features will be considered whenever work is being specified and may result in work on individual trees being declined or deferred for consideration of the management options for the whole feature [REF B].

Additionally, because of the limited resources available we must carefully manage the need for tree work and will always give priority to issues, such as :-

- unsafe trees;
- trees touching / damaging buildings; or
- trees obstructing footpaths, roads, street-lamps or road-signs.

This means that there will be requests for pruning or other work on trees that are not considered a priority and may be declined.

Whilst it is not possible to anticipate every situation, the tables at Appendix B will be used to guide decisions on whether tree removal or pruning will be carried out and to ensure that requests for works to trees on Council land are dealt with efficiently, consistently and fairly.

All tree work will be completed in line with current British Standards (BS3998: Tree Work – Recommendations)[REF 10]. We will not do any work that exceeds these recommendations, except where there is no alternative to comply with legal requirements. Further guidance on tree pruning operations can be found at Appendix C.

POLICY 3 – Planting Trees

Every opportunity will be taken to plant new trees to expand our urban forest and woodland estate on appropriate sites throughout the borough, and planting practice will seek to ensure that all transplanted trees achieve independence in the landscape and reach their full genetic potential.

The planting of trees is essential to produce a diverse urban forest that will be resilient to climate change and pest and disease outbreaks, and to help achieve the aspiration of increasing urban tree canopy cover () to increase the range and magnitude of environmental benefits that Doncaster’s urban forest provides.

Doncaster Council will continue to plant trees on its land as part of its winter works programme, more specifically between November and February.

We will seek year by year to increase the net volume of Doncaster Council’s tree stock.

To achieve this we will, wherever possible:

- plant replacement trees at minimum heavy standard size on a one-for-one basis for every tree we remove in the course of routine arboricultural operations;
- plant replacement trees at a rate proportionate to the trunk diameter of a felled tree () where the removal is undertaken for other reasons;
- require the funding to plant replacement trees at the appropriate replacement rate where acting as managing agent;
- look for opportunities to secure additional funding to plant new trees and groups of trees at appropriate nursery stock size in suitable locations;
- target resources in areas where it adds particular natural capital value, for example areas with low tree canopy coverage or poor air quality; and
- look for opportunities to expand our woodland estate at appropriate locations using both natural regeneration and transplants.

When selecting new trees, we will follow the principle that the ‘right tree’ is planted in the ‘right place’ and in a way that allows each tree to thrive in the landscape and reach its full genetic potential (size). Careful species choice will seek to create a robust tree resource by encouraging diversity through use of a wide range of native, naturalised and exotic tree species and cultivars, except in rural areas, ancient semi-natural woods, green belt or nature conservation sites where priority will be given to local provenance, native species.

Woodland planting has been shown as a cost effective way of managing land[REF 11] and woodland creation can attract grant funding. Any new woodland planting proposals will be considered carefully for their long term implications, particularly with regard to cost, to avoid developing a burden on already limited resources and so consideration must be made of long term funding for such sites, for example through timber production.

BIOSECURITY

The threat to our natural environment has never been greater. Increased global trade, and the movement of goods between countries, means an increased risk of spreading pests and diseases. Trees in Britain are now vulnerable to a range of new pests and diseases, and outbreaks seriously threaten sustainable urban forest management. Biosecurity is a set of precautions that aim to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms.

- To help maintain a robust and healthy municipal tree resource, it is essential that all trees to be planted on Doncaster Council land:
- are of the appropriate high quality in compliance with British Standard 393126 or other internationally recognised alternative;
- are in a healthy condition and free from pests, diseases and physiological disorders;
- are growing on well-developed, undamaged roots; and
- must be approved prior to planting where supplied by a 3rd party organisation (e.g. a 'friends of' group).

To avoid the introduction of potentially harmful pests and diseases we will seek to procure British grown nursery stock. Any imported tree stock must have spent at least one full growing season on a UK nursery and have been subjected to a full pest and disease programme. Evidence of this control programme, together with a comprehensive audit trail of when the imported trees were received and how long they have been on the nursery, should be available. This audit trail should extend beyond the nursery after despatch, allowing for a full recall in the event that any pest and or disease problems may subsequently manifest themselves in the landscape.

POLICY 4 - The Woodland Estate

Any management we undertake in our woodland estate will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with the multipurpose objectives of biodiversity, recreation, access, education, geodiversity and landscape value, and helping to offset the impacts of climate change.

Our woods vary hugely. Some sites are much more valuable and sensitive (ecologically, culturally and/or visually) than others and the amount and type of management undertaken needs to reflect this. However, we also recognise that our woods must deliver an income from sustainable harvesting of wood products, such as timber and biomass, to support management and improvement works across the whole estate.

Doncaster Council's woodland estate provides free public access and we will seek to ensure that sites are safe and welcoming for visitors through carrying out regular safety inspections of infrastructure (e.g. car parks, boundary fenestration, paths and signs).

Woodland sites perform a range of qualitative functions. Whilst each wood will contribute to more than one function, knowing the priority objective for each site helps to create a decision hierarchy when setting work priorities in woodland management plans, which will be produced for every site.

A cornerstone of our woodland management strategy is the network of key managed woods. A key managed wood is defined as one "whose objectives will only be achieved through active woodland management and which is therefore a priority for the attention of the Council".

These key managed woods offer the best opportunity for delivery of overall woodland objectives by the quickest possible means, and will help support management of the remaining estate through income generation and are, therefore, the main focus of management.

The majority of silvicultural management will be through thinning. Whilst these works will provide an income, we must also recognise opportunities to exploit the commercial potential of single-species, non-native plantations in some of our woods, which have the potential for a greater economic return for reinvestment in woodland management and infrastructure improvements. Therefore, in some situations, we will undertake clear felling or select felling (and restocking) where the landscape impact will be limited.

Woodland often provides appropriate conditions for species of open ground habitats that are threatened in the wider landscape, so we will seek to restore and maintain existing rides and glades and, where appropriate, create new ones to enhance biodiversity and enjoyment for visitors.

Many woodland sites are relatively undisturbed and conserve historical or cultural features, such as remnants of charcoal and saw pits, historic boundary ditches and more modern buildings (e.g. ice houses). We will seek to protect these features and, where appropriate, provide interpretation for the benefit of visitors.

Conserving existing veteran trees is of great importance for biodiversity and a habitat priority in the Doncaster Biodiversity Action Plan. A veteran tree is a tree that is “of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its age, size or condition” [REF 13]. One of their key values is the amount and variety of deadwood they provide which is, in turn, an important resource for rare fungi and insects. We will manage our woods to protect and nurture veteran trees, for example by removing vigorous plantation trees that are overshadowing them, and to increase the presence of deadwood habitat.

POLICY 5 - Protecting Trees

Doncaster Council will seek prosecution of and / or compensation from any person or organisation responsible for causing malicious damage to or removing any Council owned tree(s) or for the theft of timber from its land.

Ideally we would like there to be no incidences of damage to trees on Doncaster Council land. However, the perceived value of trees varies greatly amongst Doncaster’s residents and communities and the public tree resource is being placed under increasing pressure as a reaction to real or perceived problems related to trees (e.g. perceived fear of tree failure or blocking of sunlight) and increased contact with human activity (e.g. land development and installation of utility services).

Malicious damage includes the unauthorised pruning or felling of a mature or semi-mature tree or the wanton vandalism of a newly planted tree on Council owned land, and may constitute criminal damage. In addition, with the increasing popularity of wood burners the theft of timber from our woodland estate is becoming an increasing problem.

We encourage local communities to report incidents of vandalism or illegal felling or pruning of Council trees. Incidents should be reported to South Yorkshire Police on their non-emergency number: 101 and then reported to the Council’s tree team via the contact centre.

We will investigate all incidents of alleged damage or theft to us and make a reasoned decision whether it merits further action. In making this decision, the decisive issue is whether the damage has unacceptably affected the wider public amenity. Where appropriate, we will calculate a

monetary valuation for the amenity of a damaged tree () or for stolen timber to assist in making a decision and to support any prosecution.

Even though a successful prosecution cannot remedy the damage caused it can have an important deterrent effect and we will publicise incidents to increase public knowledge as a deterrent to others.

UTILITY SERVICE MAINTENANCE AND INSTALLATION

Utility companies have a statutory right of undertakers to carry out works within the public highway in order to provide and maintain their apparatus. There is no need for damage to be caused by the installation and maintenance of utilities if work is properly planned, taking account of the presence of trees. However, there have been several instances of work leading to extensive root damage to trees.

We cannot unreasonably withhold permission for utility maintenance work but expect that the National Joint Utility Group (NJUG) guidelines [REF 14] are followed in all work around trees. All statutory undertakers have voluntarily signed up to this industry code of practice.

If a tree is damaged by utility works to a degree that can be remediated without tree removal then the utility contractor will be pursued for the full costs of remedial works.

If a tree is damaged to a degree that requires removal then the contractor will be pursued for the full costs of remedial works including tree and stump removal and replacement planting at a rate proportionate to the trunk diameter of the damaged tree ().

POLICY 6 - Tree Management Standards

All staff employed in the inspection and maintenance of trees on Doncaster Council land will be appropriately trained and all work will be specified and undertaken in accordance with current arboricultural best practice.

Tree work requires a high degree of skill and will only be specified and undertaken on Doncaster Council land by well trained and competent arborists.

All tree maintenance work will be specified and carried out to comply with current best practice for arboricultural operations [REF 15] and the policies set out in the Tree Policy and Tree Risk Management Plan for Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's Trees and Woodlands.

Maintaining an appropriately qualified and competent tree inspection and maintenance team is critical to the defensibility of the tree risk management plan. All our staff employed for the purpose of inspecting, managing and maintaining trees on Doncaster Council land are trained and competent to carry out all arboricultural operations relevant to their role. These competencies are kept up to date through regular training and updating of qualifications.

All woodland (silvicultural) work will be specified and carried out to comply with the UK Forestry Standard [REF 16] and Forest Industry Safety Accord [REF 17] guidelines. All contractors working in Doncaster Council woodland sites will be vetted through the procurement process.

POLICY 7 - Private Trees

The Council will aim to inform private tree owners of their legal responsibilities with regard to their trees and will, where appropriate, use its statutory powers to implement works to privately owned trees in the interests of public safety.

As well as its legal 'duty of care' to consider the risks posed by trees on its own land, Doncaster Council has responsibilities under the Highways Act, and powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act and in common law, to ensure that members of the public are not put at risk by trees on privately owned land.

Where concerns are raised about the safety of a privately owned tree, a site visit will be made and a routine tree survey carried out. Where clear and present signs of immediate instability (i.e. uprooting or other structural failure) are found the tree owner will be notified and advised what remedial work is necessary and given a timescale for completion.

Where defects that are not imminently hazardous are found or suspected Doncaster Council has no powers to intervene, but will seek to advise tree owners of their duty of care with respect to trees on their land.

Whilst it is not possible to anticipate every situation, table B1 at Appendix B will be used to guide decisions on what action Street Scene will take following allegations of dangerous trees on privately owned land and whether the Council will seek to recover its costs from the land owner.

12. COMMON LAW RIGHTS

In the English legal system, 'Common Law' refers to laws that have been developed through precedent set by similar court cases, as opposed to being created through legislative statutes. Under English Common Law, property owners have a right to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with trees encroaching onto their property.

The following advice is given for someone wishing to exercise their Common Law right with respect to the encroachment of Council owned trees:

- you can only consider removing those parts of the tree from the point where they cross the boundary of your property and have no legal right to cut or remove any part of a tree that does not overhang your property;
- legally, you do not own the encroaching branches, although, Doncaster Council does not require, nor expect, to have these returned and you should make appropriate arrangements to dispose of them yourself (e.g. in your green bin);
- you are strongly advised to consult a professional arborist for guidance on how best to prune back encroaching trees, unless the works are such that you could do them with hand secateurs or similar; o there is no legal right of access to Doncaster Council land to undertake tree work;
- unauthorised persons are not allowed to use a chainsaw or other power tools and equipment in parks or public open spaces; and
- before you consider doing any works to a tree you should find out if it is protected by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area as you will need to get consent from the Local Planning Authority for any works if the trees are protected.

Failure to follow the above guidance when pruning a Council owned tree may be classed as malicious damage and may result in enforcement action (policy 5; as below) or a hefty fine if a tree is protected.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT

QUANTIFYING RISK

In order to make proactive inspections of all Council owned trees as efficient and effective as possible, an inspection method, known as Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA)[REF 18], has been adopted.

According to the method's author and developer, QTRA and tree safety management is in essence:

“A matter of limiting the risk of significant harm from tree failure whilst maintaining the benefits conferred by trees. Although it may seem counterintuitive, the condition of trees should not be the first consideration. Instead, tree managers should consider first the usage of the land on which the trees stand, which in turn will inform the process of assessing the trees.”

The QTRA system applies established and accepted risk management principles to tree safety management. Firstly, the targets (people and property) upon which trees could fall are assessed and quantified, thus enabling tree managers to determine whether or not and to what degree of rigour a survey or inspection of the trees is required. Where necessary, the tree or branch is then considered in terms of both impact potential (size) and probability of failure. Values derived from the assessment of these three components (target, impact potential and probability of failure) are combined to calculate the probability of significant harm occurring.

The system moves the management of tree safety away from labelling trees as either 'safe' or 'unsafe', thereby requiring definitive statements of tree safety from either tree surveyors or tree managers. Instead QTRA quantifies the risk of significant harm from tree failure in a way that enables tree managers to balance safety with tree value and operate to a predetermined limit of reasonable or acceptable risk.

In terms of acceptable risk, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) suggests that the threshold of acceptable risk should be set at 1/10,000 per annum for members of the public who “have a risk imposed on them in the wider interest [REF 19]”. (Health and Safety Executive (2013) Management of the risk from falling trees or branches. SIM 01/2007/05, available at: http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/sims/ag_food/010705.htm)

On the basis of this, Doncaster Council has adopted 1 in 10,000 as its threshold of acceptable annual risk from any particular tree hazard. It is the intention of this policy to implement a system of proactive inspection of trees to identify those with a risk of harm greater than 1 in 10,000 and use current resources to reduce those risks to an acceptable level through appropriate tree maintenance practices

TREE INSPECTION

Tree inspections will be carried out only by trained, competent and qualified Tree Officers (policy 6) using the following inspection hierarchy (see right):

Explanation of the tree inspection processes and outcomes is set out at Appendix A.

As well as identifying trees with a risk of harm greater than 1 in 10,000, proactive inspections allow tree managers to identify emerging issues and specify appropriate remedial works to remove a potential structural weakness, obstruction or actionable nuisance before it develops, and to actively monitor the tree stock for the presence and spread of pests and diseases.

Level 1: Routine Tree Inspection

A basic proactive or reactive visual inspection

Level 2: Individual Tree Risk Inspection

A thorough ground-based inspection of defects identified or suspected during a 'routine tree inspection'

Level 3: Detailed Tree Inspection

Performed to provide detailed information about specific tree parts, defects, targets or site conditions

DECISION PATHWAY

Where a Level 3 inspection may lead to significant intervention or felling and replacement, a Decision Pathway will be followed (see Appendix for example, final format to be confirmed) that will provide a step-by-step process to be followed. Evidence for the completion of each step will be recorded in a register, which will then be used to inform any notification, consultation or communication with local stakeholders

RISK ZONING

For a programme of proactive tree inspections to be manageable and cost-effective, most resources need to be focussed in areas where there is potentially most risk to people and property. One of the greatest benefits of QTRA is that it enables an informed overview of the risks associated with a tree population to be carried out as a desktop exercise before a survey of the trees.

This initial 'target' analysis is achieved by placing sites within common categories of target value and occupation as set out in table 2. Large sites (e.g. parks) may contain two or more different risk zones dependant on nearby targets. Each tree is visited at the frequency determined by the allocated risk zoning of its location, or at an increased frequency where dictated by an individual tree risk survey.

Table:

Risk Zone Categories	Example Target Criteria	Inspection Frequency
High Risk Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o major infrastructure including, strategic distributor 'A' class roads, busy junctions prone to standing traffic and land adjacent to railways and motorways; and o areas of high density pedestrian use including town centre pedestrianised areas, busy parks and children's playgrounds. 	2 years
Moderate Risk Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o other 'A' class roads and principle 'B' class roads; o medium density pedestrian use including parks; o sheltered housing and open-plan housing estates. 	3 years
Low Risk Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o other classified and busy rural roads; o low density pedestrian use including public open space; o enclosed housing estate gardens; and o industrial estates. 	5 years
Very Low Risk Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o other rural roads and unsurfaced roads; o isolated green spaces; o woodland paths/tracks. 	5-10 years

14. TREE VALUATION

The Town and Country Planning Act introduced the concept that trees have a public amenity value. However, it does not prescribe how their value should be estimated.

Street Scene has adopted the Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) methodology, which is widely used in UK arboriculture as a valuation tool for amenity trees, and will use it to assess the value of a tree following malicious damage in support of a prosecution or claim for compensation. CAVAT has also been designed to allow integration with computerised tree inventories to express the value of a tree population as a whole and analyse how the value of the tree stock changes over time, and in particular how that relates to investment. Used in this way it will enable the effective demonstration of productive and cost effective use of financial resources, and provide an argument to safeguard the budget for continued tree planting and management.

CAVAT quantifies a tree's value as a general public asset, focusing on the wider benefits of trees to communities, rather than pure visual amenity or as the property of the Council. It calculates a value for the tree expressed in monetary terms as the **cost of replacement**; i.e. how much would need to be spent on new planting to give effective compensation for the loss of a tree, or a number of trees, based on the size of trunk area of an existing tree. That value is modified primarily by how strongly a tree contributes to public amenity using:

- public accessibility of a tree;
- its townscape and visual importance; and
- other factors, including its life expectancy and health.

CAVAT requires a significant amount of knowledge of the growth of trees and species' differences to value a tree reliably. All staff undertaking tree valuations will be appropriately trained and competent for the task.

CAVAT is not used where removal is deemed essential for safety reasons.

15. PESTS AND DISEASES

At a time of growing concern about the increasing threat of tree pest and disease epidemics worldwide, the Dutch Elm Disease (DED) outbreak of the late 1960s and early 1970s is a salutary reminder of the potentially devastating impact of a major tree disease outbreak, having resulted in the demise of an estimated 30 million elm trees across Britain by 1985. DED is still endemic in the borough.

We will actively monitor our tree stock for the presence and spread of tree pests and diseases and report the presence of any notifiable, significant or new pest/disease outbreaks to DEFRA and the Forestry Commission in order to identify and put in place a programme of preventative and remedial work. Sanitation felling to halt the spread of pests and diseases will only be undertaken where supported by the current advice of the appropriate Government agency. Any diseased tree that poses an unacceptable risk to persons or property will be removed in accordance with policy guidelines.

16. TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Where trees are removed in the course of risk management or routine arboricultural operations replacement planting will be undertaken on a one-for-one basis, with new trees normally specified at heavy standard nursery stock size, as defined by British Standard 3936 Nursery stock -Part 1: Specification for trees and shrubs.

The number of replacement trees required to compensate for the removal of trees for other reasons, such as a road improvement scheme or as a result of root damage from utility works, will depend upon the size of the tree(s) being lost and is set out in table 3.

Table 3: Replacement Tree Planting Requirements

Trunk Diameter of Felled Tree (cm measured at 1.5 metres)	Number of replacement trees (heavy standard nursery stock 12 – 14 cm trunk diameter)
Less than 19.9	1
20-29.9	2
30-39.9	3
40-49.9	4
50-59.9	5
60-69.9	6
70-79.9	7
80+	Determined by Amenity Valuation

Number of Replacement

This table has been adapted from the Bristol Tree Replacement Standard that has become widely used by Local Authorities.

It is recognised that replacement trees may take some years' growth before providing the full environmental, social and economic benefit that was provided by the tree removed. Some of the carbon stored may be retained where harvested wood is used for example in construction or the production of biochar.

Doncaster Council is committed to ensuring net increases in the overall volume of trees in the Council's Care, and will be compiling an annual report on the basis of available data to estimate changes in the carbon storage and sequestration potential of the tree stock.

17. CONSTRAINTS ON TREE MANAGEMENT

There are a number of legal constraints that must be complied with when Street Scene is planning tree work, which includes:

PROTECTED TREES

Where trees or woods have been protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) under the Town and Country Planning Act the owner requires the formal consent of the Local Planning Authority before starting any work. Doncaster Council is not exempt from this requirement and must apply for consent to prune or fell any tree on its land that is subject to a TPO, except for emergency work. This process can take 8 weeks to complete.

Whilst Doncaster Council is not required to give the Local Planning Authority six weeks written notice prior to carrying out any work to a tree on its land within one of the borough's 46 Conservation Areas we must ensure that tree work does not have an adverse impact on the 'special character and appearance of the conservation area'. To do this, we will always consult the Local Planning Authority prior to undertaking tree removal, except in an emergency.

FELLING LICENCE

Under the Forestry Act 1967 felling trees in certain locations, including woodland and street trees, requires consent in the form of a felling licence from the Forestry Commission. (Tree felling: Getting Permission, Forestry Commission 2020, sourced from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-felling-getting-permission>)

The licence application requires xyz

There are however exemptions for the requirement for a felling licence, which may include

- Prevention of danger or prevention or abatement of a nuisance.
- Immediately required for the purpose of carrying out development authorised under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- Carried out by a statutory undertaker (e.g. a Utilities)
- In compliance with any obligation imposed by or under an Act of Parliament such as Highways Act 1980 to maintain public highways.

Doncaster Council will always consider application for a felling licence prior to felling trees, considering exceptions to this in liaison with the Forestry Commission.

For a felling licence or exemption, each tree needs to be considered individually for the obstruction, risk or damage it proposes.

Where an exemption is used, Doncaster Council will keep a record of the full details of the tree removed and the rationale.

DECISION PATHWAY

The process for assessing and reaching the decision to fell will follow the steps laid out in the Decision Pathway (see Appendix for illustration – final version to be confirmed) and will be recorded in a Register, which will include the reason for felling and details of the relevant felling licence or exception at section 9 of the Forestry Act under which felling has been carried out.

ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS

Forestry Commission Guidance: Highways Tree Management Operation Note 051 recognises the value of street and urban trees and emphasises the need to properly maintain trees which can avoid the need for felling, and to look at a range of engineering and maintenance solutions that can be applied throughout a trees' life that allow both trees and the highway to mutually co-exist.

Doncaster Council, in applying the principle of minimal tree removal, will always consider the range of appropriate engineering solutions that may prevent felling of street or urban trees

Appendix B contain a list of potential engineering alternatives to street tree removal to be used as reference within the Decision Pathway. It should be noted that this is not a definitive list and that arboricultural good practice and highways maintenance methods resources and technologies will develop over time. This list will be updated as necessary.

BIRDS

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to kill, injure or take wild birds, their young, their eggs or nests and, for bird species listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, to disturb them whilst building or using a nest. For this reason, Doncaster Council will only consider removing or pruning coniferous tree species or undertaking woodland management outside of the bird nesting season and will not undertake any tree work where active bird nests are identified during pre-start checks.

BATS

Bats are a European Protected Species and all species are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Causing damage to or destroying a roost site is a criminal offence which can lead to imprisonment or fine. Trees in Doncaster Council ownership with signs of potential roost features will be subject to assessment by an Ecologist before any work commences. The consent of Natural England is required before any work on a tree supporting roosting bats can be started.

18. CONCLUSIONS, ACTIONS AND MONITORING

This document implements the aims and headline principles set out in Theme 2: Trees and Woodlands of the Doncaster Green Infrastructure Strategy 2014-2028 where they apply to trees on Doncaster Council land and specifically describes the way that Street Scene will manage the municipal tree resource around the central tenet of 'reasonable risk management', to maximise the benefits that trees provide, keep the risk they pose within acceptable limits to ensure that Doncaster's people and communities derive benefit with an improved quality of life, and to provide value for money.

19. ACTION PLAN

Five-year Priorities (2020-2024):

- complete work to record and map all trees on parks & open spaces and highways land;
- complete the first tranches of the routine tree survey and proactive tree works programmes and expand to other areas as mapping is completed;
- initiate service level agreements for tree management with other Council departments and institutions (e.g. schools) and start recording and mapping trees;
- complete broad condition assessments of public woodland estate and review / prepare management plans (policy 4); and
- complete an assessment of urban tree canopy cover across Doncaster borough and a valuation of the public tree stock ().

ANNUAL MONITORING

The effectiveness of the plan will be monitored annually against the following targets and results published on the Council's website:

- progress on implementing the action plan () in line with published timescales;
- the percentage of tree work undertaken by Street Scene as an emergency;
- the percentage of routine tree surveys completed before the specified inspection date;
- the percentage of reactive tree surveys completed within 24 hours (emergency) and 12 days (other enquiries) of receipt;
- the percentage of tree work undertaken by Street Scene as planned systematic work;
- the number of trees removed and replacement trees planted;
- the percentage of newly transplanted trees receiving systematic maintenance until independence in the landscape;
- the percentage of sites in the public woodland estate under positive conservation management;
- the number of enforcement incidents on Council owned trees;
- changes in the composition of the public tree stock and tree canopy cover.

FIVE YEAR REVIEW (2024)

The Tree Risk Management Plan and tree management policies will be reviewed in light of:

- changes to Council policy;
- changes in industry best practice;
- emerging threats (e.g. pest and disease or 5G infrastructure);
- changes in QTRA methodology;
- changes in legislation, legal judgments and emerging case law relating to tree risk management;
- a review of training and competence of council staff engaged in tree inspection and maintenance;
- annual monitoring data;
- a review of asset data relating to the municipal part of the urban forest; and
- a review of the action plan ().

20. Appendix A - Outline Decision Pathway – for illustrative purposes only

Inspection	Routine or specific	
	Professional inspection and judgement and assessment against criteria and policies	
Step 1 No action	-	No action required
Step 2 Limited action	e.g. Routine pruning	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site
	Professional inspection and judgement	
Step 3 Remedial intervention necessary	e.g. Severe pruning	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and possible consultation
	e.g. Pollarding	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and possible consultation
	Professional inspection and judgement	
Step 4 Remedial intervention necessary	e.g. Crown lifting	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and possible consultation
Step 5 Consideration of engineering solutions to structural problems	See Appendix 1	Notification through signs on trees and notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and possible consultation
	Tomography or other specialist inspection	
Step 6 Solutions not feasible or viable	Potential removal & replacement	Notification through signs on trees [if time-line allows] and explanatory notice on web-site. If major works for a significant tree or an avenue then prior notice and consultation essential except in the case of emergencies
Step 7 Emergency works	e.g. Severe pruning	Notification through explanatory notice on web-site.
	e.g. Removal	Notification through explanatory notice on web-site.
	e.g. Intervention on fallen tree or branches of	Notification through explanatory notice on web-site.
*Note for certain works a Forestry Commission felling license may be required; and subject to the current Environment Bill at Parliament, a public consultation may be necessary for major local authority felling programmes.		

21. Appendix B – Potential engineering alternatives to street tree removal

It should be noted that this is not a definitive list and that arboricultural practice and highways maintenance methods resources and technologies will develop over time.

Sensitive Engineering Solutions	
1	Installation of thinner profile kerbs
2	Excavation of footways for physical root examination prior to an ultimate decision being made on removal
3	Ramping/ Ro-profiling of footway levels over roots (within acceptable deviation levels).
4	Flexible paving/ surfacing solution
5	Removal of displaced kerbs leaving a gap In the channel
Tree based Options	
6	Root pruning
7	Root Shaving
8	Root Barriers and Root guidance panels
9	Excavation beneath the roots damaging the footway
10	Tree Growth Retardant
11	Creation of larger tree pits around existing trees
12	Heavy tree crown reduction / pollarding to stunt tree growth
13	Retain dead, dying, dangerous and diseased highway trees for their habitat value
Other non-engineering solutions	
14	Line markings on the carriageway to delineate where it is not safe to drive or park
15	Building out kerb line into carriageway
16	Footpath Deviation around the tree
17	Installation of a Geo-grid under the footway to reduce reflective cracking
18	Reconstruction of the path using loose fill material rather than a sealed surface
19	Filling in of pavement cracks
20	Reduce the road width and widen the footways as well as converting them to grass verges
21	Close a road to traffic
22	Change to contract specification to leave the footways as they are without carrying out any repairs and removing trip hazards
23	Abandonment of the existing footway In favour of construction of a new footway elsewhere
24	Permanent closure of footways to pedestrians. Dig up and replace as grass verges.
25	Seeking the views of residents about removal where that is considered by the Council to be the only option and getting the residents to sign a legal agreement regarding accepting liabilities.

22. Appendix C - GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

Crown

Crown lifting

Engineering solution

Felling licence

Pollarding

Pruning

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