



# Doncaster Council

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 16th March, 2022 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 17th March, 2022

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on 28th March, 2022. These decisions will not be implemented until after this date and time.

Present:

Chair - Mayor Ros Jones (Mayor of Doncaster with responsibility for Budget and Policy)  
Vice-Chair - Councillor Glyn Jones (Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business.)

### Cabinet Member for:

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball	Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Young People
Councillor Nigel Ball	Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Leisure, Culture and Planning
Councillor Joe Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement
Councillor Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities
Councillor Phil Cole	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Trading Services
Councillor Mark Houlbrook	Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Waste
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources
Councillor Andrea Robinson	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

## PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

### Public Questions and Statements

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

The Decision Record forms dated 2nd March, 2022 (previously circulated), were noted.

## DECISION 1.

### 1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 3, 2021/22.

### 2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted Doncaster Children's Services Trust performance outcomes, finances and the contribution that the Trust makes to support the Council's strategic priorities relating to safeguarding children in the borough.

### 3. REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities introduced the Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust Quarter 3 2021/22 report to Cabinet, which included the current progress of DCST's performance.

The report provided details on the current position with regard to the MOSAIC system that went live in August 2021 and details of how the Covid Pandemic had impacted on the demand for children's social care services. This transition to the new system had resulted in a lack of effective performance information and the report, therefore, has data that was not as fulsome or as accurate as it should be. A Rapid Improvement Plan and governance arrangements have been put in place to address this and Cabinet were confident that improvements would be seen in the next quarter.

Other key points to note that were included within the report were as follows:-

- Out of authority placements and the number of children in care remained high following an increase over the past year which raised concerns in terms of permanency planning as the recruitment of foster carers remained a problem. However this was not just a problem faced by Doncaster, but nationwide;
- Further pressures in addition to the number of children in care were arising as a result of the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and National Transfer Scheme and whilst Government funding for this was received, it did not go far enough to cover all costs incurred and needed addressing by the Government;
- The findings of the Ofsted Visit recently carried out were currently unknown. However, Councillor Blake stressed that the safety and support of young people was of the utmost importance and whatever action deemed necessary would be taken in order to achieve this.

Following Councillor Blake's presentation of the report, comments were received in terms of the transfer to the MOSAIC System, and it was requested that a further update with regard to this be received in the coming months.

In terms of the impact Covid had placed on the Trust, Mayor Jones queried what had been the overspend as a result. However, Officers reassured the Mayor that all issues that had been Covid related had been funded from Covid grants.

Councillor Andrea Robinson requested that their thanks be given to the staff within the Trust for their continued hard work whilst working in a difficult environment and there was hope for improvements moving forward.

**4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Not applicable.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations.

**6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

**7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills

**DECISION 2.**

**1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

7. St Leger Homes of Doncaster Ltd (SLHD) Performance and Delivery Update: 2021/22 Quarter Three (Q3).

**2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet:-

- (1) notes the progress of SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting Doncaster Council strategic priorities; and
- (2) accepts SLHD's VFM statement for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 (2020/21).

**3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business presented the St Leger Homes of Doncaster Ltd (SLHD) Performance & Delivery Update 2021/22 Quarter 3 report stating that performance is still significantly impacted by factors relating to Covid, but overall continues to gradually improve. The report also sought Cabinet's acceptance of the Value for Money (VFM) statement for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 (2020/21).

Appendix A to the report contained the SLHD 2021/22 Performance summary for Quarter 3 and this identified the KPIs that were agreed and then reviewed and measured throughout the financial year.

There were 20 KPIs to be measured and of these Councillor Jones outlined the key points to note:-

- **KPI 1:-**  
The critical indicator relating to overall rent arrears was performing considerably better than the profiled target, and it was hoped this would improve further in the final quarter of the year.
- **KPIs 4, 5 & 6:-**  
These KPIs covered homeless services, and performance in these areas has been extremely challenging. There had been an increase in requests for help since the start of the pandemic, and it was expected that these performance indicators would remain under pressure for some time.
- **KPI 7:-**  
This was also off target, and related to the number of upheld complaints. The majority of complaints related to the performance of the repairs service, where as a result of the shortage of materials and in some instances shortage of labour, an impact on repairs had been the result. However, in the last 2 months St Leger Homes had introduced a Repairs Excellence pilot and it was hoped that this would lead to significant improvement over the forthcoming year.
- **KPI 14:-**  
This Performance Indicator related to the number of residents in training, and was highlighted due to the inability of St Leger and Doncaster College to run a number of courses. However, this was somewhat affected by the buoyancy of the employment market which had resulted in St Leger being able to get more people than planned directly into employment.

As a whole, Councillor Jones identified it was evident that there were elements of good performance but it was apparent that against a background of national challenges there were still improvements in some areas of St Leger's performance that could be made. However, overall, it was felt that St Leger delivered medium to high performing services at a low cost, which was positive to see.

In terms of KPI 15, Councillor Nigel Ball welcomed the positive performance on supporting tenants into employment.

Members commended the work being done by St Leger Homes in terms of rent arrears and it was pleasing to see the performance in this area, which was testament to the affordability of rents in Doncaster. However, further to this, there was still an issue in terms of voids and rent loss, and it was important that there was a continued focus in this area to drive forward further improvements in time.

A final issue noted by Members referred to the Pilot identified within the report relating to repairs. This had been rolled out in one area and was performing well, with 'no access visits' being cut right down from 20%, meaning that jobs were being done in a much more timely and efficient way.

Cabinet noted that St Leger Homes were performing well nationally and improvements were being made across the borough for its residents.

**4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Not applicable

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations.

**6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

**7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Chief Executive, St. leger Homes of Doncaster

**DECISION 3.**

**1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

8. 2021-22 Quarter 3 Finance and Performance Improvement Report.

**2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the virement per the Financial Procedure Rules, detailed in Appendix B – Finance profile;
- (2) noted the allocations of block budgets in the Capital Programme, detailed in Appendix B – Finance profile, in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules (sections A & B);
- (3) approved payment to St Leger Homes as part of the contract management arrangements, for the COVID-19 pressures on homelessness services (£0.269m) with a reconciliation at year-end to ensure any surplus is returned to the Council;
- (4) approved payment to the Doncaster Children’s Services Trust, as part of the contract management arrangements, for the pressures on children social care, including additional funding for caseloads (£5.46m) with a reconciliation at year-end to ensure any surplus is returned to the Council;
- (5) approved the creation of an earmarked reserve of £0.374m for the refurbishment of Rossington Community Centre; and
- (6) approved the addition of £0.600m to the business rates incentive scheme earmarked reserve.

### **3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services, introduced the report, which focussed on Quarter 3 of the 2021/22 financial year. The report indicated the current financial forecast position against the 2021/22 budget and performance against key service standards.

It was reported that there had been a steep increase in Covid cases linked to the Omicron variant both nationally and locally in the later part of Quarter 3. The impact of this has put huge pressure on services as staff absence had increased due to isolation periods linked to Covid. Although this now seemed to have stabilised, the pressure on staff and services across the organisation, and partnerships, should be recognised.

Councillor Cole pointed out that the economic picture was improving with high number of vacancies, a healthy investment interest in Doncaster and a reducing number of people who are accessing unemployment related benefits. However, it was important to also recognise that it was still an important stage of recovery, as there remains significant reported issues from business around recruitment and availability of appropriate skills as well as lower rates of footfall across the town centres.

Additionally, it was reported that the Council continue to take forward the necessary stages in accessing government investment, including the Levelling Up Fund, two Town Deals and Community Renewal Funding, in order to maximise the opportunities to Doncaster.

Following consideration of the report, a number of comments were made by Cabinet in terms of the issues raised. Members were pleased to see the improvements being made. In terms of Fly Tipping, a huge improvement had taken place, and over 400 tonnes of waste had been removed and fixed penalties issued. This was pleasing to see, and testament to the hard work of staff.

With regard to concerns voiced over the impact of Omicron, and the impact on the performance of social care services, Cabinet were informed that this had massively impacted the services of home care providers, and only now was the service starting to recover. However, there was no room for complacency, and a lot of work was going on to make improvements in this area.

A point was raised in terms of 'Treewise' system as there had been problems with this system, but moving forward, a more efficient and responsive system was being introduced in order to ensure that a record was kept of all trees, down to the detail of where and what they were in order to achieve targets within 'Cleaner and Greener'.

### **4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Not applicable.

### **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations.

**6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

**7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Director of Corporate Resources

**DECISION 4.**

**1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

9. Doncaster Town Deal: Project C - Heritage Project.

**2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of the Doncaster Town Deals Heritage Project Business Case Summary document – confirming the intention of Doncaster Council to secure £561,000 Town Deals funding for key Doncaster heritage sites;
- (2) accepted the £561,000 Town Deal funding for use on the Heritage Projects, subject to satisfactory review of the SBC by the DLUHC and in accordance with the conditions and requirements of the funding which are set out in the report;
- (3) approved the roll out of the schemes as outlined in paragraph 17 of the report;
- (4) approved the increase of the budget for the Archives scheme in the Council's Capital Programme, subject to approval of the Business Case by DLUHC; and
- (5) noted that the Section 151 Officer will confirm the project and expenditure represents value for money, in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, and sign the Doncaster Heritage Project Business Case Summary submission.

**3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Cabinet received a report introduced by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, stating that as part of the Doncaster Towns Deal, agreed with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Doncaster were provisionally allocated £24,800.00 grant funding to support the delivery of three projects for Doncaster.

This was following the submission of Doncaster's Town Investment Plan (TIP) to DLUHC in January 2020. The submission was approved by Cabinet in January 2020.

There had been three projects identified within the Doncaster TIP and Cabinet were being asked to agree the actions raised in terms of Project C – Doncaster Heritage Project. Doncaster had been provisionally allocated £561,000 as part of the offer to fund the Town Deal Heritage Project, which would be utilised to support the revitalisation of key heritage assets within the Borough. Release of these funds would be subject to the production of a Heritage Project Full Business Case (FBC) and a Summary Business Case (SBC), which would be submitted to the DLUHC for review in March 2022.

As introduced in the Doncaster Town Investment Plan, and following favourable feedback from the public consultation exercise undertaken in December 2020 and January 2021, the Heritage Project would cover three distinct areas, including Doncaster Archive and Family Research Centre, Doncaster Grand Theatre and St James Church.

The Doncaster Archive and Family Research Centre would be used to create a multi-use space for heritage events, family history research and archive facilities and would incorporate developments to both the interior and exterior of the site.

Doncaster Grand Theatre - The impact of Covid-19 and emphasis of heritage and culture in the Government's Levelling Up Agenda meant that now was the optimum time to understand how The Grand can play its part in the Urban Centre. An updated study was required to pitch for investment as part of a consortium that would include the Frenchgate Centre who own the site, the Friends of the Grand Theatre and Doncaster Council. Without an updated study to reflect these changes, the Grand Theatre would remain vacant. The Grand Theatre was situated in a notable location within the Doncaster 'Gateway' and linked to the wider aspirations for this.

St James' Church - A full feasibility study along with design work from the Royal Institute of British Architects would work to identify how the Church's vision of enhancing the quality and offer to the local community and celebrating the church's heritage as the religious building for people working on the railway could be realised. This too, like the Grand Theatre, was located at the 'Gateway' to Doncaster.

Cabinet identified that other churches should also benefit from this assistance rather than just St James'. However, Cabinet were informed that this project related to a specific area of the town into which these three specific projects would fall and it was not possible at this time to incorporate others but that there were other funding streams that could potentially be accessed and this would be investigated for other areas across the Borough.

The project offered an excellent opportunity for Doncaster and using the work undertaken in the past for previous studies, provided an excellent base on which to build further to enable the submission of a successful business case.



**4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Do not submit Doncaster Towns Deal Heritage Project Summary Business Case to DLUHC. The inclusion of Doncaster in the Towns Deal recipients list is an opportunity, not a directive. Whilst this is an option, it would mean that Doncaster miss a significant opportunity to revitalize the identified key heritage assets that the Towns Deal could deliver.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations.

**6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

**7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Director of Economy and Environment

**DECISION 5.**

**1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

10. Department for Education - Holiday Activity and Food Programme.

**REASON FOR URGENCY**

It has not been possible to provide the full 28 days' notice on this decision, due to the need to accept the grant with sufficient time to notify the DfE of our proposed programme delivery or allow sufficient time to commission partners to support the delivery. If the urgency provisions for decision making were not applied, there is a risk that the grant is not accepted and the programme not be delivered in the timescales.

**2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet:-

- (1) accepted the grant totalling £1,364,470.00 to deliver the Holiday Activity and Food Programme across Doncaster in line with the Department for Education Grant Determination;
- (2) agreed to delegate decision making regarding the allocation of the grant to the Assistant Director: Partnerships, Early Intervention & Localities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Young People and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities; and
- (3) agreed to align delivery of the Holiday Activity and Food Programme to the wider Doncaster Offer.

**3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Cabinet received a report introduced by Councillor Lani-Mae Ball seeking consideration to the Section 51 Grant Determination for the Holiday, Activity and Food Programme (HAF) 2022. It was reported that the Department for Education had allocated Doncaster Council £1,364,470.00 to offer free places at holiday clubs in the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays for children in the local authority area, who are eligible for and receive benefits related to free school meals. In addition the DfE has given flexibility for Local Authorities to utilise 15% of the allocation for other vulnerable groups.

It was reported that whilst COVID has had some impact on the delivery of the programme, alongside changes in the COVID related guidance and legislation, the success of the programme has continued. An increase in the number of providers to deliver and the support given to the smaller groups will enable the programme to engage with a higher number of children in 2022.

It was important to note that activity will be mapped to ensure there was delivery across all areas of the borough, as well as a wide range of enriching activities to support children and young people’s physical and emotional wellbeing.

The funding from Government was welcomed but more was still needed to widen the offer which can be made and support should be offered to all families and children regardless of their situation and could provide a range of benefits across society.

**4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

No other alternative options were considered.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations.

**6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

**7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker