

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER, 2021

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, on THURSDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER, 2021, at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Richard A Jones
Vice-Chair - Councillor Ian Pearson
Mayor - Ros Jones
Deputy Mayor - Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Daniel Barwell, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, Glenn Bluff, Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Linda Curran, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Julie Grace, Martin Greenhalgh, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie Hutchinson, Barry Johnson, Jake Kearsley, Jane Kidd, Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracey Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlins, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Thomas Noon, Andy Pickering, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith, Sarah Smith and Gary Stapleton.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Allen, Bob Anderson, Aimee Dickson, John Healy, Cynthia Ransome, Dave Shaw and Austen White.

39 Minute's Silence for the recent death of former Councillor Barbara Hoyle

Prior to the commencement of formal business, Elected Members, Officers and members of the public, observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect and remembrance in relation to the recent death of former Councillor Barbara Hoyle.

40 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

41 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23rd September, 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday, 23rd September, 2021, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chair of Council made the following announcement:-

"I would just like to highlight two special events that have taken place in the past few days.

On 4th November, His Royal Highness, the Earl of Wessex, visited the new Danum Gallery, Library and Museum. His Royal Highness was given a tour of the new facility and spent over an hour talking to staff who had been involved in the design, building and running of the new building, as well as spending time with local schoolchildren.

It was a great honour for our Town and afterwards, we received a letter from the Royal household saying how much His Royal Highness had enjoyed the visit.

Last Sunday we held our annual Remembrance Observance at the Cenotaph. Following the removal of restrictions, we were able to welcome a large contingent of regular and reservist members of our Armed Forces, veterans and cadets to the war Memorial at Bennetthorpe, to pay our respects to those men and women who gave their lives in two World Wars and other conflicts.

Members of the public turned out in large numbers to pay their respects too. It was a very moving occasion and one that I will long remember.”

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

“I would like to make a statement in relation to the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North, which has been published today.

The new rail plan includes major changes to the proposals for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail. It will have significant implications for Doncaster and our communities.

This Council has long since had disagreements in relation to the planned route of HS2 through Doncaster, which would destroy family homes, split communities and blight a number of areas in the West of the Borough.

Despite today's headlines, I should make clear to Council that the Government is still committed to looking at options on how best to take HS2 services to Leeds. As a consequence, safeguarding of the previously proposed high speed route North of East Midlands Parkway will remain in place, pending conclusion of this work.

That does not give certainty to our residents and businesses. In the short to medium term, it continues to leave people facing an uncertain future. In my view, this is not acceptable and our position on the previous HS2 route has of course not changed.

I do welcome the Government announcement to deliver significant further investment in the East Coast Main Line as part of the plan. However, we do need to take time to understand the full implications of the new proposals.

Ultimately, what I want to see is certainty for our communities and improvements to our local rail network, with more services and better trains. We need a safe and reliable public transport network in order to encourage higher usage, which will support our ambitions to combat climate change.

That is what I will be working with local partners to achieve.”

Councillor Mark Houlbrook, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Waste, made the following announcement:-

“Many had great hopes, but few had great expectations of an agreement being made in Glasgow, which sets out a plan to a 1.5 degree pathway.

Under the Glasgow Climate Pact, nations have been requested to consider, formulate and publish updated Nationally Determined Contributions (the amount of emissions generated by each country), by the time COP27 begins in Egypt next year.

The UK, for example, updated its NDC after exiting the European Union, targeting a 68% reduction in emissions by 2030.

Doncaster made a Borough-wide commitment to achieve 85% reduction in emissions by 2030, and so we continue to set a high level of ambition for our contribution to the national and global response to climate change.

As a reminder of the pledges and commitments made by Doncaster Council:-

1. Borough-wide commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 85% by 2030 and achieve net zero carbon by 2040;
2. To plant 1 million trees across Doncaster with both public and private sector landowners;
3. To allocate £5m for the initiation of environment and sustainability activities;
4. To move to a zero emission Council fleet;
5. To support the creation of habitat banks for developers to deliver on their biodiversity net gain obligations;
6. To pilot a naturalisation approach to the management of greenspaces; and
7. Allocation of Doncaster Council resources to co-ordinate and drive activities to support carbon reduction and nature recovery across Doncaster.

In response to publishing our new Environment & Sustainability Strategy and Net Zero Carbon Masterplan, and in response to these pledges, we have initiated a number of projects and developments:-

1. We now have 25 electric vehicles in the Council fleet and 25 on order;
2. We are developing our charging infrastructure with 34 fleet charging bays installed and a further 20 approved for development including a solar carport at the rear of the Civic Office;
3. Funding approved for 80 new public charging bays for development before March 2022, doubling the current public charging offer in Doncaster across all public and private car parks;
4. Planning approval given for developing Scarborough House car park providing a further 50 charging bays for fleet and public use;

5. £18.8m has been approved for housing retrofit, to insulate over 2,000 homes, with a further £3m that we have bid for;
6. Funding secured and works underway to decarbonise the heat supply at Askern Leisure Centre; one of only 2 remaining coal heated Leisure Centres in England. Bids submitted for the same works at 2 more Leisure Centres;
7. £2.6m approved for lighting upgrades and solar installations on 11 Council buildings; and
8. Tree planting; we are now in the main season for tree planting. We have plans in place to plant 50,000 over the next couple of months. We are currently receiving reports every week from residents and businesses of planned tree planting. Together, we can and we will meet the pledge to plant a million trees across Doncaster.

Finally, I must pay a special vote of thanks to the three Rotary Clubs of Doncaster and our Street Scene Team who will start planting over 1,500 trees this weekend at Sandall Park, to create a Covid Memorial Woodland to remember those that we have lost at the hands of the pandemic.”

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

- (a) Question from Mr Gary Wilson to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement:-

“Why does Doncaster Council allow the Assets of Community Listing process to be detrimental and biased against community applications?”

Councillor Joe Blackham, gave the following reply:-

“Thank you for your question Mr Wilson.

The listing of Assets of Community Value is determined by a process set down in the 2011 Localism Act; this is national legislation which we have to follow.

The process is not biased for or against any party; but follows the legislation and is based on the evidence provided in the application. The Council provides resources on its website to explain what an Asset of Community Value is, how to make an application and how an application is determined; and the management of all applications follows this process.

I would encourage any individual or group wanting to put forward a listing for Asset of Community Value, to ensure that the application is as detailed as possible, consult with residents, Parish Councils, community groups and if at all possible, the legal owners.

In relation to Brodsworth Miners Welfare, I am pleased to see that dialogue is ongoing and I know our Director of Economy and Environment is reviewing the initial decision in respect of its nomination as an Asset of Community Value.

I am also aware that Ward Councillors and Ed Milliband MP, are engaging with a range of organisations and the trustees, to see what can be done to help preserve and retain the Asset, and I would urge you to continue to be part of this dialogue. Hopefully, by the relevant parties working together, a solution can be found and agreement reached."

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.10, Mr. Wilson asked Councillor Joe Blackham, the following supplementary question:-

"I have two additional questions. Regarding the refusal, is it appropriate for Strategic Asset Management to copy and paste objections to a community listing as a refusal from the owner who wants to sell an asset? What due diligence did Strategic Asset Management undertake to check the veracity of the assertions about the Welfare Hall's use both past, present and future, and its community use?"

In response, Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following reply:-

"I am quite surprised that there has been a deferral of the auction which was scheduled to take place. Mr Wilson will be aware of that. The Director of Economy and Enterprise has directly intervened, on a good will basis, with the owners of the property, and agreed that they will defer the planned auction of the property. We can only make decisions on the evidence presented and regrettably, there was not sufficient evidence to prevent the owner from disposing of the property. The onus is always on the people wishing to have the listing, not the owner who was wishing to sell."

- (b) Question from Mr Christopher Nowak to Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services:-

"Regarding Wool Market traders, on two separate visits only three non-food traders were open at 2.30 pm. I have since been told by a trader that the reason for this is that all non-food traders have been given notice to quit after Christmas by Market Asset Management. Was the Council aware of this when they gave MAM nearly £1m recently, and if true, what are MAM going to replace the non-food traders with?"

Councillor Phil Cole, gave the following reply:-

"Thank you for your question Mr Nowak.

You will have seen the announcement we made about the planned changes to the Wool Market, which I sent you last week, but for the record, since the Wool Market re-opened in 2019, it was designed to be a mixed-use development of both hospitality and retail, to provide a varied offer that would complement the Market and Town Centre.

The hospitality element of the Wool Market has done incredibly well and we are building on this strength. With minimal disruption to the existing traders, we will be able to create a new family leisure and hospitality space which will hopefully bring new people into the Wool Market as a new family destination.

In relation to retail units in the Wool Market, these will move to the Corn Exchange. No retailers are being asked to quit our Town Centre Market.

Your question referred to £1m to MAM, Market Asset Management, the Council's chosen partners to run and promote our markets. The Council provided temporary investment in September 2020, during the depths of the Covid pandemic.

This was outlined in a report to Cabinet and duly considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, whose minutes are publically available. The temporary investment supported the costs of running the day to day operations of the market without which, the current trading activity would not have been possible.

We are proud of our market traders, selling top class produce, and we are equally pleased to have niche and specialist retailers from selling art to collectables, mainly at the Goose Hill end of the market, in addition to the traditional fruit, veg, flowers and dairy traders.

Since the Council partnered with MAM to run the markets, Doncaster Market occupancy has risen by 9% to 86%, and is currently 85% at Mexborough, which has just 5 vacant stalls.

We are incredibly proud of our markets and committed to supporting them as we bounce back from the pandemic. There will be further announcements of improvements to our Town Centre and Mexborough Markets in the coming months.

The buildings that house our markets are wholly owned by Doncaster Council and we will continue to invest to make them safe, modern and fit for purpose.

We are investing in our markets at the time when High Street retailers have taken a battering. The long period of lockdown only reinforced the rise of online retail, reaching around one third of sales in 2021.

In the face of those challenges, the Council will do everything in our power to improve the offer and variety our markets provide, to complement our Town Centre retail and hospitality. For 800 years, Doncaster Town Centre has been home to a market and long may that continue."

Mr Nowak asked why his submitted question had been amended without his knowledge and then, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.10, Mr. Nowak asked Councillor Phil Cole, the following supplementary question:-

"Where is the consultation for the new proposal for the Wool Market and I presume Market Asset Management will be paying for the renovations and if not, then DMBC will be keeping any profit and pay MAM a management fee. I would hate to think, as I am sure we all would, that a private company will be profiting from public money?"

In response, Councillor Phil Cole gave the following reply:-

"Thank you for your supplementary question Mr Nowak.

In relation to the improvements, I tried to draw a distinction in my first reply. If there are any changes made to the buildings at Doncaster Council that house Doncaster Council Markets for whatever reason, we own these buildings, those are our decisions and we will make the necessary investments. We have a partner firm that manage and promotes the Markets, it collects the rents and sorts out the day to day running. The Council will arrange any works, just as we have done at Mexborough Market; we will do that as Doncaster Council as they are our buildings. We value them, we want them to be modern, safe and fit for purpose."

Councillor Cole invited Mr Nowak to contact him further with any other concerns.

44 Proposal to appoint additional Independent (Co-Opted) Member to the Police and Crime Panel

The Council considered a report which sought approval to endorse the Police and Crime Panel's decision to commence the process to appoint a third Independent (Co-opted) Member.

It was reported that as the Police and Crime Panel had a significant turnover of Members in May 2021, one of the current Independent Members suggested that the Panel consider an application to the Secretary of State (Home Office) for an additional Independent (Co-opted) (non-voting) Member. The proposal to appoint a third Independent Member was a necessary means of ensuring there was some critical mass to secure consistency in the membership of the Panel. A third Independent (Co-opted) Member would give a membership of 12 Elected Members from across the four South Yorkshire Districts and 3 Independent (Co-opted) Members recruited by advertisement. This proposal would not impact on Doncaster Council's current representation on the Police and Crime Panel.

It was noted that in addition to an application to the Secretary of State, an extra Co-opted Member required a change to the Police and Crime Panel's arrangements, and those changes had to be approved by the four District Councils which must be unanimous across all four Districts to proceed.

RESOLVED that the Police and Crime Panel's decision taken on 20th September, 2021 to commence the process to appoint a third Independent (Co-opted) (non-voting) Member to the Police and Crime Panel, be endorsed.

45 To consider the following Motion, written notice of which has been given by Councillor James Church and Seconded by Councillor Gemma Cobby, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.1

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.1, a Motion was submitted by Councillor James Church, and Seconded by Councillor Gemma Cobby:-

"Doncaster Council notes that:-

- 1 in 10 workers have experienced 'fire and rehire', told to reapply for their jobs on worse pay, terms or conditions or face the sack, with BME workers facing this at

twice the rate of white workers. Since March 2020 (TUC research January 2021), a quarter of all workers have experienced a worsening of their terms and conditions since the pandemic began.

- That whilst the Prime Minister has called the practice ‘unacceptable’, he and his Government have continually refused to take action to outlaw the practice, raising concerns that they will not intervene in this race to the bottom as an escalating number of employers across all sectors abuse our weak employment protections to force their staff to accept worse terms and conditions, leaving many having to work longer hours and for lower pay, with what can be devastating consequences for workers and their families.
- Even before the pandemic, 1 in 9 workers, 3.8 million people, were already insecure, meaning they did not have access to basic rights at work and could be dismissed at will, including those on zero hour contracts and agency workers.

Doncaster Council therefore resolves to:-

- Support local residents, through their Trade Unions, against such unprincipled employers and write to the Prime Minister demanding the Government outlaw fire and rehire, and act now to keep his promise to local residents to protect their employment terms and conditions.
- Not use fire and rehire itself as an employer and to prevent its use by Council contractors, by ensuring the Council has a procurement practice that ensures we are working with contractors that have good employment, trade union, equality, environmental records and appropriate policies.
- Promote the increasing number of progressive local employers prioritising their employee’s standard of living and their wellbeing, work with our anchor institutions and key partners, to bring forward plans to ensure all have best practice employment and to work with recognised trade unions on this.
- Support the TUC campaign for a New Deal for working people.”

Following the Chair affording Members in the Chamber the opportunity to speak on the Motion, an amendment was MOVED by Councillor Glenn Bluff and Seconded by Councillor Jane Cox, that the paragraphs at bullet points 2 and 7, be deleted.

A vote was taken on the amendment to the Motion proposed by Councillor Glenn Bluff, which was declared as follows:-

For - 11

Against - 32

Abstain - 1

On being put to the meeting, the amendment to the Motion was declared LOST.

A vote was taken on the Motion which was declared as follows:-

For – 43

Against – 0

Abstain – 1

On being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that Doncaster Council notes that:-

- 1 in 10 workers have experienced 'fire and rehire', told to reapply for their jobs on worse pay, terms or conditions or face the sack, with BME workers facing this at twice the rate of white workers. Since March 2020 (TUC research January 2021), a quarter of all workers have experienced a worsening of their terms and conditions since the pandemic began.
- That whilst the Prime Minister has called the practice 'unacceptable', he and his Government have continually refused to take action to outlaw the practice, raising concerns that they will not intervene in this race to the bottom as an escalating number of employers across all sectors abuse our weak employment protections to force their staff to accept worse terms and conditions, leaving many having to work longer hours and for lower pay, with what can be devastating consequences for workers and their families.
- Even before the pandemic, 1 in 9 workers, 3.8 million people, were already insecure, meaning they did not have access to basic rights at work and could be dismissed at will, including those on zero hour contracts and agency workers.

Doncaster Council therefore resolves to:-

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- Not use fire and rehire itself as an employer and to prevent its use by Council contractors, by ensuring the Council has a procurement practice that ensures we are working with contractors that have good employment, trade union, equality, environmental records and appropriate policies.
- Promote the increasing number of progressive local employers prioritising their employee's standard of living and their wellbeing, work with our anchor institutions and key partners, to bring forward plans to ensure all have best practice employment and to work with recognised trade unions on this.
- Support the TUC campaign for a New Deal for working people."

A. Questions on Notice

There were no questions from Elected Members for the meeting.

B. Questions Without Notice

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

A. Questions to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones.

Q. Councillor Jake Kearsley asked the following question:-

“The Prime Minister was in Doncaster today. Can I ask if Doncaster Council knew of his planned visit.

Also, Nick Fletcher MP, has celebrated the funding that has been given to Doncaster over the last couple of years. Can you give me a rough total of how much we have received into Doncaster and how much has been taken from Doncaster Council funding since 2010?”

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

“Thank you for your question Councillor Kearsley.

I can inform you that this Council was completely unaware of the Prime Ministers planned visit to Doncaster; we found out by a ‘tweet’ after the visit had happened.

Now, of course we are happy to host the Prime Minister as the Leader of this country, but it would have been good to have been made aware of his visit and even to meet with him to discuss the challenges being faced by Doncaster, and how he can support the levelling up of Doncaster through properly funded public services.

Over the past 18 months, we have been awarded the following funding from Government:-

Doncaster Town Deal - £24.8m;

Stainforth Town Deal - £21.6m;

Doncaster Levelling Up Fund - £18.6m;

Community Renewal Fund – £2.2m;

These mentioned figures add up to just over £67m.

These investments are of course welcome and will support some key projects across the Borough. To see real levelling up in Doncaster will require significantly more than what has currently been pledged.

We must also remember that Doncaster Council is now £119m per year worse off since Austerity began in 2010. So the £67m from Government is but a fraction of what has been taken away from this borough.

What we are now facing is a constant competition with neighbouring Local Authorities for funding. This does not provide best value for money and is not the best way of ‘levelling up’ Doncaster and the North.

If this Government is serious about ‘levelling up’ in Doncaster, then we need a new Hospital for Doncaster, properly funded Council services, Police Officers on our streets, affordable and reliable public transport, supporting the most vulnerable of our society, and a national settlement to tackle the nationwide backlog of highway works.”

- Q. Councillor Andy Pickering asked the following question:-

“In view of the announcement today that the great white elephant that is HS2 will not come through Mexborough, can you assure us that you will look into the current situation which appears to us to leave the area blighted. Now that the railway is not going ahead, we need to get blight removed as soon as possible?”

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

“Thank you for your question. I’m not certain if you heard my earlier announcement which actually states that at this moment in time, the route that has been identified is still in the process and it is still therefore blighted, but we will continue to press for this to be lifted, but my initial statement said this including:-

‘Despite today’s headlines, I should make clear to Council that the Government is still committed to looking at options on how best to take HS2 services to Leeds. As a consequence, safeguarding of the previously proposed high speed route North of East Midlands Parkway, will remain in place, pending conclusion of this work.’

So we will continue to press as always, but that is how it stands at the moment.”

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

There were no questions put to the Deputy Mayor, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business.

- C. Questions to Councillor Lani-Mae Ball, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Young People

There were no questions put to Councillor Lani-Mae Ball, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Young People.

- D. Questions to Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Culture and Planning

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

- E. Questions to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement

There were no questions put to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement.

- F. Questions to Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities

There were no questions put to Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities.

- G. Questions to Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services

There were no questions put to Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services.

- H. Questions to Councillor Mark Houlbrook, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Waste

There were no questions put to Councillor Mark Houlbrook, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Waste.

- I. Questions to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources

There were no questions put to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources.

- J. Questions to Councillor Andrea Robinson, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

There were no questions put to Councillor Andrea Robinson, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

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

In the absence of Councillor Austen White, Members were asked to submit their questions in writing and a written response would be provided.

- L. Questions to Councillor Ian Pearson, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee

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

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

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

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

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

47 To receive the minutes of the following Joint Authorities

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

- A. South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Board held on 20th September, 2021.
- B. South Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board held on 9th September, 2021.
- C. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 13th September, 2021.
- D. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority held on 9th September, 2021.
- E. South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on 20th September, 2021.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____