



Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 6th July, 2022 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 7th July, 2022

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 18th July, 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 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

Apologies:-

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Nigel Ball.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

No public questions or statements were made at the meeting.

Decision records dated 22nd June, 2022, be noted.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 4, 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 4 2021/22 report to Cabinet, which included the current progress of DCST's performance.

Councillor Blake reported that the report was more reliable than previously for performance reporting. However, there remain outstanding issues with Mosaic, which was highlighted as a red risk on the Trust's risk register. Details of performance against contractual targets and Strategic Partnership targets were detailed at paragraphs 13 and 14 of the report.

Councillor Blake commented that there were COVID and demand challenges for children's services nationally, regionally and for the Trust:-

- Staff sickness due to COVID continues;
- Recruitment and retention of permanent staff & trainee social workers had slightly improved but further improvements required;
- Caseloads continue to be a pressure;
- Out of Authority placements and Children in Care remain high;
- Domestic abuse and neglect referrals continue to be high;
- The Trust's improvement focus is ensuring consistency of practice quality throughout the social care system. The Trust is in the early stages and therefore progress is yet to be seen; and
- The financial impact of COVID was estimated at £2.4m for 2021/22.

Councillor Blake went on to advise that the Trust has a number of properties through the Future Placement Strategy that are likely to be ready for habitation during 2022/23 and the Trust is looking at how it can attract managers and staff for residential homes, which is being supported by the Council.

In conclusion, it was advised that Ofsted visited in Quarter 4 for a full inspection and the result was Requires Improvement to be Good. It was noted that the Trust has an improvement plan, overseen by a Doncaster Council appointed and DfE approved Improvement Advisor.

Cabinet commented on the good work being carried out and praised the achievement on youth re-offending rates. However, they highlighted the need to improve data management and the importance of progressing the Future Placements Strategy.

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

Riana Nelson, Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. Additional Investment Children's Social Care.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the information in the report and approved the following:-

- (a) Allocation of £4.03m one-off non-recurrent funding, as detailed in the report, to stabilise the workforce capacity and drive improvement;
- (b) Allocation of £0.84m ongoing recurrent funding for changes to foster carer payments, as detailed in the report, to improve the in-house offer and reduce the dependency on high cost independent foster care provision;
- (c) The proposed changes to the payments for foster carers, detailed in paragraphs 25 to 30 including the proposed additional skills payments to take effect from 1st September 2022; and
- (d) The financial handbook for foster carers provided at Appendix 2.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received a report introduced by Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities setting out the proposal for additional investment in Children's Services. The recent Ofsted inspections of children's social care and fostering service highlighted issues regarding practice in parts of children's services and this had impacted on services Doncaster families receive.

It was advised that Doncaster experiences significantly higher demand than comparator local authorities in terms of referrals to children's social care and this had created pressures throughout the system. Councillor Blake stated that the investment will create conditions in which social work practice can thrive, by creating manageable caseloads, appropriate levels of management oversight and access to therapeutic services to support children with complex needs. She also stated that the investments would also support changes to the payments for Foster Carers, creating a more competitive financial offer which will help to recruit more Foster Carers and reduce placement costs.

Councillor Blake went on to report that it is anticipated that in respect of the non-recurrent funding, this will lead to significant improvements within the social care system and that over time the same level of investment will not be required. Children will receive the help they need, at the right time, from social workers who have the capacity to undertake meaningful work which results in faster and more successful outcomes.

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball welcomed the additional support being given to Foster Carers.

Mayor Ros Jones stated that the additional investment was greatly needed and the Council will always seek to support its children and the vulnerable.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Do Nothing – current budget remains in place, demand continues to increase which results in higher numbers of children and young people in care and greater pressure on finding placements. The need for high cost independent out of borough placements will increase.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Riana Nelson, Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills

DECISION 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Refresh of the Get Doncaster Moving (GDM) Physical Activity and Sport Strategy.

2. DECISION TAKEN

That Cabinet:-

- (a) recognised the important role that physical activity plays in tackling public health issues and improving the wellbeing of our population;
- (b) adopted the refreshed GDM Strategy as the overarching document to support residents to be physically active, and ensure Team Doncaster partners provide all possible support to achieve the vision; and
- (c) noted the GDM Advisory Board and subgroups to oversee the delivery of the GDM Strategy.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received a report introduced by Councillor Andrea Robinson, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, which provided an overview and background for adoption of the refreshed Get Doncaster Moving physical activity and sport strategy. The report also set out a vision for supporting residents to move, be physically active and take part in sport until 2030 in line with the Doncaster Delivering Together Borough Strategy.

It was advised that the importance of keeping active has been highlighted throughout the COVID pandemic, with local and national messaging on the importance of 'exercise' and physical activity for mental and physical wellbeing, to reduce infection risk factors and support recovery. It was noted that evidence is overwhelming that moving our bodies, being active or taking part in sport has the ability to change people's lives.

Cabinet noted that Doncaster has some of the highest physical inactivity levels in the country, with almost a third of adults in Doncaster doing fewer than 30 minutes of moderate activity each week. For some people it is much harder to build physical activity into their daily lives than it is for others, and this is often due to factors outside their control.

Councillor Robinson commented that this systems change approach and adopting new ways of working to increase physical activity in Doncaster was a step change for all back in 2018 and it recognised the stubbornness and complexity of the challenge and that a long term view was needed in order to work towards real and lasting change. She went on to say that the Council will continue to activate the right for residents to be able to walk safely to the shops; play in the park; cycle to work; have access to good quality leisure centres and be in walking distance from local and affordable exercise classes.

Cabinet welcomed the report and a number of comments were made on the following:-

- Future Parks Programme - Doncaster was fortunate in having a large number of parks and investment in the Parks Programme will make Doncaster's parks hubs for activity which are accessible to all.

- Improvements in Health and Wellbeing – It was important to recognise the huge difference this will have on people’s lives, particularly in relation to rehabilitation and support for communities to be more involved.

Mayor Ros Jones commented that paragraphs 6 to 9 of the report identify the importance of the Strategy, stating that this was a long term collective commitment to Doncaster’s residents and was key to improving the health and wellbeing of people’s lives. Cabinet look forward to its implementation and its delivery.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 2

- a. Do not adopt the refreshed Get Doncaster Moving Strategy. This will:
 - (i) Increase inactivity and further increase inequalities in health and wellbeing
 - (ii) Encourage silo-working and a disjointed approach
 - (iii) Jeopardise future opportunities to attract investment to Doncaster

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Dr Rupert Suckling, Director of Public Health

Signed.....Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair