



Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 7th September, 2022 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 8th September, 2022

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 20th September, 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 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 Rachael Blake

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

No public questions or statements were made at the meeting.

Decision records dated 10th August, 2022, be noted.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. 2022-23 Quarter 1 Finance and Performance Improvement Report.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) Approved the virement per the Financial Procedure Rules, detailed in the Appendix B – Finance profile;
- (2) Noted the allocations of block budgets in the Capital Programme, detailed in the Appendix B – Finance profile, in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules (sections A & B);
- (3) Approved the payment of £2.7m to the Doncaster Children’s Services Trust, as part of the contract management arrangements, for the pressures on children's social care based on an assessment of cash-flow at the end of August. A reconciliation will be done when the Trust is closed down to ensure any surplus is returned to the Council; and
- (d) Approved the delegation of spending decisions above £0.25m for revenue and £1m for capital from the ‘Revenue Contribution to the Capital Programme’ earmarked reserve to the relevant Director and CFO in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, in accordance with paragraph 137 in this report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received the Quarter 1 Finance and Performance Improvement report introduced by Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance, outlining how the Council continued to deliver whilst operating in a challenging and uncertain environment.

Councillor Cole firstly highlighted a couple of corrections to the report as follows:-

- Paragraph 37 should state that the Stainforth Town Deal projects “were” submitted in August.
- Paragraph 39 - Levelling Up Fund bids - the Second Proposal should say “Doncaster North” not “Don Valley.”

He stated that there were further omissions within the report, and they will be rectified in due course.

Councillor Cole reported that the rising cost of living continued to impact the borough, especially in terms of energy, food and material costs and people and businesses face difficult choices going forward. Through the hard work and dedication of staff, performance against service standards remained steady and the trajectory remained positive.

It was reported that a number of new service standards have been introduced to reflect the wider contribution the Council has to tackling climate change and work continues in implementing the recommendations from the Climate & Biodiversity Commission and the Environment and Sustainability Strategy.

There was continued focus on supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and young people and adults, to access equitable and inclusive lifelong learning opportunities.

Cabinet were advised that a new Doncaster Delivering Together Investment Plan had been produced and the Council were starting the development of a new Economic Strategy to ensure its ambitions to become an inclusive and regenerative economy can be realised.

High numbers of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, community cleanliness and affordable housing are key issues for residents and activity continues to tackle these priority areas.

It was also noted that a range of projects to improve transport and digital connectivity have been progressed through quarter 1, including the delivery of highways, active travel and digital infrastructure schemes.

It was noted that as a financially well managed Council it will be considering actions required to produce a balanced budget for 2023/24 and sustainable financial position going forward. It was also noted that Cabinet will consider the Medium-term Financial Strategy on 5th October, 2022, which will identify the estimated gap in funding for the next 3 years.

Cabinet welcomed the report and a number of comments were made as follows:-

- A reflection that third party data in the report was outdated and a request that the source of this data be identified in future performance reports;
- In regard to Adult Social Care, it was pleasing to see wait times were reducing;
- It was important to recognise that Doncaster has committed the resource to support hospital discharges, therefore relieving pressure on the NHS;
- Concerns were raised with regard to out of authority placements and the delay in utilising the new Council run facilities. It was important that the new properties were made fit for purpose, staffed and occupied as a priority; and
- It was noted that the reported overspend projections did not take into consideration the proposed staff pay award and therefore the projected overspend would increase when the pay award is confirmed.

In conclusion, Mayor Ros Jones reported that significant pressures on both capital

and revenue expenditure will continue. It was important that the Council continues to do all it can to mitigate the current overspends.

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

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 1, 2022/23

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, based on the information presented at the meeting.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Councillor Lani-Mae Ball which set out the Performance of the Children's Services Trust against key contractual targets in the first quarter of 2022/23. The report covered both service delivery targets and the budget position.

Cabinet noted that this was the last report of this type that will be presented, as the services formerly delivered by the Trust transferred to the Council on 1st September 2022. A revised governance and performance management structure to oversee these services has been developed.

Performance against Contractual indicators was as follows:-

- 3 indicators performing better than or within tolerance against target
- 3 indicators are below target
- Data is not available for 5 targets

Details of Strategic Partnership performance indicators were also highlighted at

paragraph 11 of the report.

Councillor Ball reported that demand for Children's social work services continues to be high and there is ongoing work to promote consistent thresholds at a broad level across the partnership. She also highlighted work being carried out in relation to the recognition and response to child neglect, through the implementation of the Graded Care Profile.

She went on to state that despite the high demand for services, the numbers of children subject to a protection plan are reducing and this downward trajectory has been maintained.

In addition, Councillor Ball pointed out that the largest cost pressure facing the Council in 2022/23 is spend on Children's Social Care. The overspend is currently forecast at approximately £5m and is mainly on placements and agency staff. It was noted that now that the children services have been transferred from Doncaster Children Trust, there will be a review of service delivery and resourcing, in order to achieve the Council's ambition of being a child friendly borough.

Cabinet welcomed the report and officers were thanked for the useful information presented with regard to the current situation on caseloads. However, some frustration remained in regard to supervision.

In conclusion, Mayor Ros Jones raised concerns that some performance data contained within the report required further validation and stressed the urgent need to see further data validation to provide assurance that services are being delivered and to have confidence that all children were being safeguarded.

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 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. St Leger Homes of Doncaster Ltd (SLHD) Performance & Delivery Update: 2022/23 Quarter One (Q1).

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting DC strategic priorities.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered the St Leger Homes Performance and Delivery Update 2022/23 Quarter 1 report presented by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business.

Councillor Jones reported that against a national background of higher demand for services and lower social housing performance, as evidenced by Housemark benchmarking, the Mayor agreed to set challenging targets for SLHD to ensure they strived to deliver the highest quality of standards possible.

He went on to state that there remained significant progress to be made, however, this quarter's performance showed a continued trend of improvement with 6 targets met, 1 within tolerances and 6 off target. For those targets met, the direction of travel predominantly showed improved performance.

Councillor Jones went on to report and provide explanation on some off target measures as follows:-

- KPI 2 - Void rent loss
- KPI 3 - Average Days to Re-let Standard Properties
- KPI 4 - Number of Households placed in B&B Accommodation
- KPI 14 – Number of residents undertaking training or education

On a more positive note, Councillor Jones mentioned the areas where performance was considerably above target, these included:-

- In terms of local expenditure, St Leger are spending in the region of 75% of all spends in the borough;
- The number of repairs completed on the first visit exceeding 94%; and
- The rent arrears figure was positive.

In conclusion, he pointed out that he had received comparative performance data comparing St Leger's performance nationally and sub-regionally and Doncaster benchmarks well, and in relation to voids were well ahead of the sub-region.

Cabinet welcomed the report. Mayor Ros Jones was delighted to see that the number of voids were continuing to reduce, money was being spent within the local economy and that rents are above target level, which showed the right direction of travel for Doncaster residents and its economy. However, showed concern in regard to the number of days to re-let properties. She stated that Cabinet would continue to watch progress in this area.

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

Dave Richmond, Chief Executive, St. Ieger Homes of Doncaster

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker