



City of Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 15th February, 2023 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Monday, 20th February, 2023

With the exception of Decisions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, which are all subject to Full Council approval on the 27th February, 2023, the end of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 1st March, 2023. Therefore, decisions 6 and 7 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 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

Apologies:-

Apologies were received from Councillor Lani-Mae Ball and Councillor Andrea Robinson.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions submitted for the meeting.

Decision Record forms from the meeting held on 1st February, 2023 (previously circulated), were noted.

DECISION 1

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Approval of the 2023/24 Corporate Plan.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet endorsed the draft Corporate Plan 2023-24 and recommended its adoption to Full Council on 27th February 2023, as part of the formal decision making process.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Mayor Ros Jones, which proposed a revised Corporate Plan for the period April 2023 to March 2024 for recommendation to full Council for adoption.

The Plan set out the Council's contributions to Team Doncaster's Borough Strategy, 'Doncaster Delivering Together' (DDT), and its central mission: Thriving People, Places and Planet.

The Plan outlined the 'Doncaster Delivering Together' Borough Strategy wellbeing goals and Great 8 priorities, and identified the Council's key priorities/actions for 2023/24, under each of the DDT Great 8 Priorities, and the 'Regenerative Council', to be able to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

The Council had set out its long-term vision and ambition to become a regenerative Council and Borough, to deliver multiple wellbeing goals, whilst tackling the climate change emergency and reducing inequalities. The Corporate Plan detailed the Council's response to such issues during 2023-24. The Plan sets out how the Council will adopt a Localities focus, and references its commitment to fairness and inclusion. It also provides some narrative on how the Council's intended activity would be resourced, and how the Council will monitor progress.

The Mayor highlighted some of the Council's key achievements over the last year:-

- Continued support to residents and businesses in the recovery of the Covid pandemic and during the current cost of living crisis, including £26m of financial support for residents;
- Publication of Doncaster's first Locality Plans, developed alongside local residents and businesses to help address issues that are of concern;
- Progressed the new Council House Build Programme and the de-carbonisation of Council housing, buildings and vehicles.
- Continued flood mitigation project work and additional parts of the City have received green flag status;
- Undertook regeneration works across the City;
- Provided marketing and business liaison and support, which has contributed to increased footfall, economic activity and enterprise across the City;

- This year, the Council has seen the successful transition of the Children's Trust back under the management of the Council;
- The provision, coordination and support for Ukrainian families fleeing the war in their own country;

The Mayor stated that all this activity and more has helped Doncaster to achieve City Status. The Council was also pleased to welcome His Majesty, King Charles III and the Queen Consort during their conferment visit.

The Mayor explained that the Council was one of many 'Team Doncaster' partners that contributed to delivering the Borough Strategy, whereas the Corporate Plan sets out the Council's activities and plans for the coming year.

To conclude, the Mayor advised that further details regarding specific projects, interventions and activities would be included in the Council's service plans for 2023/24. The Mayor commended the report for Cabinet to endorse the Corporate Plan, prior to approval by full Council on 27th February 2023.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not to update the Corporate Plan, which would leave the Council without clear documentation of its priorities for 2023/24 (option B, not recommended).

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. Revenue Budget 2023/24 – 2025/26.

2. DECISION TAKEN

(1) Cabinet recommend to Full Council to approve the 2023/24 to 2025/26 Revenue Budget, as set out in the report. This includes:-

- a) the Medium-term Financial Strategy (MTFS) including all proposals in the report, as set out in Appendix A;
- b) a gross revenue expenditure budget of £575.7m and a net revenue expenditure budget of £255.8m, as detailed in Appendix A;

- c) Council Tax increasing by 3.99% to £1,571.32 for a Band D property (£1,047.55 for a Band A) for 2023/24. This includes:-
 - i) 1.99% Council tax increase, equating to an increase of £30.07 for Band D per annum, 58p per week (£20.05 for Band A per annum, 38p per week);
 - ii) 2% Government Adult Social Care precept, equating to an increase of £30.22 for Band D per annum, 58p per week (£20.15 for Band A per annum, 39p per week);
 - d) the revenue budget proposals for 2023/24, as detailed at Appendix B (pressures £17.2m) and Appendices C and D (savings £10.9m) of the report;
 - e) the 2023/24 Grants to 3rd Sector Organisations, as outlined in paragraph 56 and Appendix F of the report;
 - f) the fees and charges proposed for 2023/24, at Appendix G of the report. With the additional exception that all on-street and Council owned car park charges will be frozen;
 - g) note the Chief Financial Officer's positive assurance statements, as detailed in paragraphs 64 to 80 of the report; and
- (2) Cabinet delegate the approval to change Fees and Charges in year, as a result of increases or decreases in energy costs, to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, as detailed in paragraph 52 of the report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Mayor Ros Jones introduced a report which set out her Revenue Budget proposals for 2023/24 to 2025/26, for recommendation to full Council for adoption on 27th February 2023.

The Council must set a balanced budget, ensuring that the resources are sufficient to meet the Council's proposed spending plans.

The Mayor outlined that despite the significant financial challenges and ongoing uncertainty regarding government funding, the proposals set a balanced budget whilst maintaining investment in the City and protecting the most vulnerable people in communities.

The Council has 27% less to spend on services in real terms than in 2010/2011. She explained that this creates significant challenges and represents £340 reduction per resident. However, she highlighted that the budget would enable front line services to continue and deliver at their current service level, despite increased service pressures and rising inflation. An additional £7.5m has been allocated for the Fair Cost of Care, to help address market sustainability, including an additional £6m to recognise the additional cost of Children's Social Care.

The Mayor stressed that difficult decisions had been made to balance the budget to meet the overall re-current budget gap of £10.2m in 2023/24, and these were provided in paragraphs 34 to 40 and Appendices A to C of the report. She emphasised that it had been necessary for the Council to make savings, but, where possible, these had minimised the impact on service delivery. These savings would be delivered through close management of the budget and achieving efficiencies through improved working practices, and better use of technology, where possible.

Overall, the budget proposals meet the £22.3m budget gap over the next 3 years. In light of the pressures and future risks for the Council, the Mayor stated that the report proposed a Council Tax increase of 1.99%, alongside a further 2% increase for Adult Social Care precept, meaning there would be a total increase in Council Tax of 3.99%, which was less than the 5% maximum increase allowed by the Government. The Mayor explained that the Adult Social Care precept is specifically used to contribute to Adult Social Care funding pressures. Overall, this would increase Band A Council Tax by 77p per week and Band D by £1.16 per week.

To offset the impact and to help those residents that were struggling, the Council's new Council Tax Support Fund grant of £600k would be used to provide a £25 reduction to the Council Tax liabilities of working age and pension age Council Tax payers who are in receipt of benefits. This was estimated to cost £200k. The balance of the funding would be used to boost the Local Assistance Scheme budget to support people dealing with the cost of living increases.

From 2024/25, £300k of funding would be added to the Local Assistance Scheme. As there was no certainty from government regarding funding beyond the next year, the Mayor explained the difficulty in the Council being able to plan for the future. However, the Mayor pointed out that financially the Council was a well-managed Council, and she gave assurances that she would do everything that she could to mitigate the impact of uncertainty. She emphasised that she remained firmly focussed on supporting Doncaster's priorities, as outlined in the Corporate Plan and Borough Strategy, 'Doncaster Delivering Together' to create a safer, stronger, cleaner and greener Doncaster.

To conclude, the Mayor thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for their response to the Mayor's draft budget proposals, which she gave an undertaking to consider and formally provide a response.

Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement advised that further to the publication of the Mayor's draft budget proposals, Cabinet proposed that recommendation 1(f), as set out in the report relating to fees and charges, be amended in that all car parking charges and on-street parking for 2024/25 for Council owned car parks be frozen. This was to assist the Doncaster economy and residents and businesses of the City. It was noted that the amendment to the fees and charges would be included in the Revenue Budget proposals report submitted to full Council on 27th February 2023. The Council would have wished to provide free parking, but due to the reduction in local government funding, this was not affordable.

Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure and Culture, made reference to reduced government funding over the past 13 years which had impacted on public services, stating Council funding had been reduced by a third, but the Council had still managed its finances and delivered vital services.

Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities, highlighted the difficulties for the Council and impacts on residents in setting the budget each year including raising Council Tax to ensure services could continue to be delivered. She highlighted many Councils across the country have had to increase Council Tax to the maximum 5% allowed by the government, and welcomed that the Council had not chosen to increase to this level, in order to protect people who were struggling with the cost of living crisis. Councillor Blake pointed out that Doncaster continued to have the lowest Council tax rate in South Yorkshire, and one of the lowest in the country. In commenting on the savings to be made in Children's Social Care, she looked forward to seeing the implementation of those actions to deliver changes and savings in this service area.

Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services, welcomed the budget proposals and praised the Council for its financial management of the budget and sustaining services, despite the significant financial pressures of a 27% cut in the Council's core spending. He highlighted the growing inequalities between Councils in the north and the south of the country in respect of Council Tax. He pointed out that in Doncaster, the majority of properties were in the lowest Council Tax Band, and an increase in Council Tax in Doncaster by 1% would mean significantly less revenue for the Council than properties in the south of the country, which are of a higher value, and have a larger number of properties in the top Council Tax Band. Councillor Cole also commended the Council for the support provided to small and medium sized local businesses via the Council's direct spending, and highlighted that over the last year, the Council had spent £47m on local businesses.

The Mayor emphasised that this was one of the most difficult budgets the Council has faced over the years, but gave assurances that she would do everything that she could to support residents and protect vital services. She believed that the Council's decision not to increase Council Tax to 5% was the right decision, and acknowledged the disproportionate impact that the cost of living crisis was having on residents and low-income households.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

A range of options had been considered over the preceding months to arrive at the budget proposals.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

DECISION 3

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Capital Strategy and Capital Budget 2023/24 – 2026/27.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet recommend to Full Council to:-

- (1) approve the Capital Strategy, as set out at paragraphs 34 to 74 of the report;
- (2) approve the Capital programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27, as set out at paragraphs 12 to 33 of the report; and
- (3) note that Directors, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, take responsibility for allocating the block budgets to specific schemes in the Capital Programme. The block budgets are identified in Appendix 1 of the report and include the retained buildings programme, school condition programme, and integrated transport block.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Mayor Ros Jones that proposed the Capital Strategy and Capital Budget for the next 4 years, 2023/24 to 2026/27, as set out in paragraphs 34 to 74 and 12 to 33 of the report, respectively.

The Capital Strategy outlines the principles and decision making process involved when considering new bids and in the monitoring of Doncaster Council's capital programme. The aim is to ensure alignment with the Council's priorities and objectives, support the regeneration of the Borough and improve infrastructure, improved efficiency and effectiveness of operational of services, set within a context of being affordable and within available finances, as set out in the Council's Medium-term Financial Strategy.

The Capital and Major Projects Board (CAMP Board) provides strategic oversight of the Council's capital investments, to ensure that these principles are maintained and funding recommendations prioritised. The Capital Strategy has been used to produce the Capital Budget Proposals.

In presenting the report, the Mayor outlined that Doncaster Council continues to invest in the future of the Borough, despite the tough economic climate. The Council has an estimated £493m of capital investment planned over 2023/24 to 2026/27 that will continue to stimulate growth and prosperity, with almost £195m of investment planned for 2023/24.

The Council is investing in projects to further improve core services, such as Education, Housing, Infrastructure, Leisure and Culture. This includes £220.6m investment in the Council's social housing stock over the next four years, covering

maintenance, adaptations, acquisitions and the new build programme.

The Council would also be investing £11.5m over the next 4 years on flood alleviation measures, to provide greater protection to 738 residential properties which suffered from flooding during the November 2019 flood.

In relation to Council housing, across the 4 year programme, the Council have allocated £32.5m to acquire more Council house properties. This would accelerate the delivery of 232 homes at a time when need is at its greatest, and the homelessness system needs a much needed boost, in order to alleviate some of the current cost of living challenges facing Doncaster residents.

£22.7m of investment over 4 years is to be spent on Energy Efficiency Works across the Council's housing stock, to reduce energy consumption and respond to climate change.

The Council continues to invest in its leisure centres, with the Dome and Thorne leisure centres in line for key improvements this year. In relation to the Edlington leisure centre, following the unsuccessful bid under the Levelling Up Fund round 2, the Council hoped to be able to resubmit for LUIF round 3. Concern was expressed that the full criteria for this funding round was not known and the Council does not know when this would be announced. A further update would be provided in due course.

It was noted that the capital budget includes £46.2m investment in the Towns Fund Programme. This is broken down in to £20.6m for works in Stainforth, including the restoration and lighting of the colliery headstocks, a new community hub and improved station access, amongst a number of planned projects in the area. Doncaster City Centre will benefit from £25.6m of investment in the station gateway improvements.

Cabinet commended the proposals and welcomed £31m funding to make energy efficiency improvements to Council house stock. Despite the economic climate and financial pressures on the Council, the Council was investing in energy efficiency programmes for those residents in need by the creation of earmarked reserves to invest in low carbon projects to improve and future proof Council buildings. £1.9m had been earmarked for zero carbon, and the Council was producing a net carbon master plan.

Cabinet reiterated its disappointment that some of the applications submitted to the government for levelling up 2 funding projects in Doncaster, in particular in relation to building a new leisure facility in Edlington, had not been successful, and the value of this project, which would have made a difference to the area, had not been recognised. However, the Mayor had made a commitment to the residents of Edlington to look at all options to provide improved leisure facilities. In comparison with other local authorities, it was noted that affluent Boroughs had received this funding, but a deprived area such as Doncaster had not. It was recognised that some other local authority leisure centres had closed due to lack of funding. Members felt that levelling up fund monies should be allocated directly to local authorities to enable them to deliver local priorities and provide certainty over future funding.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – Do not support the Capital Strategy and proposal for the 2023/24 to 2026/27 Capital budget.

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 4

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

9. Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24 – 2026/27.

2. DECISION TAKEN

(1) Cabinet noted the report and recommended to full Council to approve the Housing Revenue Account budget proposals, as set out in the report as follows:-

- i. rents are increased from 3rd April 2023, by 7%, as detailed in paragraphs 8 to 12 of the report in line with Government policy. This will result in an average weekly rent increase of £5.33, resulting in an average rent of approximately £81.51 per week. Rents will be charged every week of the year;
- ii. the budget proposals for the HRA for 2023/24, which are contained in Appendix A of the report. These proposals set a balanced budget for the HRA and maintain a reserve of £3.8m;
- iii. fees and charges, as set out in paragraph 16 of the report; and

(2) Cabinet delegate the approval to change district heating charges in year, as a result of increases or decreases in energy costs, to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, as detailed in paragraph 16 of the report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report which sets out the Mayor's proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for the 2023/24 financial year and the medium-term forecast for the next 3 years.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business, introduced the report and reported that the HRA has a balanced budget.

It was noted that the Council was proposing that the level of the Council's housing rents be increased by 5%, including a further 2%, which would be used for the acquisition of approximately 230 additional Council properties to help address the demand for social housing, which would mean a total rent increase of 7% in 2023/24. This increase was in line with Government policy. The Deputy Mayor highlighted that the average rent in Doncaster would continue to be the lowest of all South Yorkshire Councils at £81.51 per week.

It was outlined that the Council have carefully considered this recommendation due to the current economic climate, but approximately 72% of tenants will see an increase in their housing benefit and universal credit payments to cover the impact of this change.

The Deputy Mayor pointed out that the average rent in Doncaster is almost £650 per month, whereas Council rents were on average £353 per month. There is currently almost 8,000 Doncaster residents on the housing register. The Council's House Programme will help to alleviate this in the medium term, but the 'Right to Buy' scheme continues to erode the Council's housing stock.

Cabinet was asked to note the report and recommend the HRA budget and rent increase proposals to Council for approval.

The Mayor explained the reason for the additional 2% rent increase is to enable the Council to grow its housing stock and highlighted the significant pressures on the Council budget. She recognised the financial impact of the increases faced by people on a daily basis, and, due to the cost of living crisis, some people were being made homeless. The Mayor gave assurances that the Council was to improve and increase its housing stock and maintain the current number of housing stock as properties continued to be sold.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 2 – A rent increase which is lower than 7%. The impact of inflation on costs for the 2023/24 financial year, and the fact that inflation has been much higher than budgeted in 2022/23, is £5.5m and inflation is projected to remain high in the medium term. In addition, there are also higher expectations in terms of the standard of properties, in relation to building safety and compliance, and as a result of the cost of living crisis. A rent increase of less than 7% could result in reductions in services to tenants at a time when the demand for services and investment is higher than ever before.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillors Nigel Ball, Joe Blackham, Mark Houlbrook and Jane Nightingale declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 9, 'Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24 – 2026/27'.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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

DECISION 5

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

10. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24 - 2026/27.

2. DECISION TAKEN

That Cabinet recommend to Council for approval:-

- a. the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24 – 2026/27 report and the Prudential Indicators included; and
- b. the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy, as set out in paragraphs 41- 42 and detailed in Appendix B of the report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the Strategy for the management of the Council's finances, and provided a framework for the operation of the Treasury Management function within the Council.

The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure.

Mayor Ros Jones, in introducing the report, explained that Treasury Management seeks to optimise the Council's cash flow and secure the most effective arrangements to support long term funding requirements. Key prudential indicators relating to borrowing limits were detailed in the body of the report, with the prudential indicators relating to affordability set out in Appendix A.

It was noted that this year, there had been a number of changes to the Treasury Management function, which was as a result of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management being revised.

The Mayor summarised the changes as follows:-

- The Council was required to produce a full mid-year report and a detailed out-turn report showing performance against key performance indicators;
- The requirement for training for all Members with responsible project management;
- The introduction of a new indicator in relation to the debt liability benchmark, which shows the Council's optimum borrowing level and identifies where the Council's current borrowing level sits; and

- The inclusion of environmental, social and governance considerations in the Investment Strategy.

The Mayor outlined that the Council remains under-borrowed against its total borrowing requirement, to avoid the higher cost of carrying debt. The Council is using its resources to reduce the need to borrow whilst interest rates are high.

Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services, in commending the report, wished to highlight that the Council is substantially borrowing below its permitted limit. He praised the Council for its long-term approach to minimise borrowing, which helps both residents and the Council save money, so that the Council could invest in services, which demonstrated that the Council is responsible in managing its finances.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Other options that have been considered, that would affect the investments and borrowing decisions, were detailed in paragraph 116 of the report.

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 6

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

11. Discretionary Relief Schemes for Business Rates 2023/24.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the proposed Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) relief scheme, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report, which will potentially benefit around 1,029 local businesses with relief totalling around £8,414,250, and
- (2) approved the proposed Supporting Small Business (SSB) relief scheme, as set out at Appendix 2 of the report, which will potentially benefit around 336 local businesses with relief totalling £813,297.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report, which set out two new discretionary relief schemes for Business Rates for 2023/24.

In presenting the report, Mayor Ros Jones outlined that:-

- i. Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief awarded qualifying businesses with a 75% relief, up to a cash cap limit of £110,000 per business.
- ii. A Supporting Small Business Relief Scheme will cap bill increases at £600 per year for any business losing eligibility for Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief at the 2023 revaluation.

The Government had announced the schemes in the Autumn Statement on the 17th November 2022, and guidance was published on the 22nd December 2022.

It was noted that the Government was not introducing new legislation for these reliefs. Instead, the Council is expected to use its discretionary relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to grant the relief, in line with the relevant eligibility criteria.

The Council will be compensated for the cost of granting the reliefs through a Section 31 grant from Government.

An analysis of Business Rates records indicates that the schemes will benefit around 1,365 businesses, to a total value of over £9.2m, at a time when they continue to try and cope with the cost of living crisis.

The report sets out the full qualifying criteria for the schemes.

Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services welcomed the proposed schemes, in particular, the scheme relating to Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief, which would bring about needed support to the high street and small businesses. In relation to business rates, Councillor Cole highlighted that the Council had invested funding in employment zones to attract investment into the City, to create new developments and attract major employers. He spoke of how the large employment sites paid substantial business rates, which would benefit the Council and the local economy.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1: Do Nothing

The Government has not legislated for these relief schemes but has, instead, advised that local authorities can use their discretionary relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended, to grant relief. However, as Central Government is providing funding for the scheme, they will support local businesses as they continue to deal with the coronavirus outbreak and contribute towards the corporate priority of supporting local businesses. This option is not recommended.

Option 2: Award relief under different criteria to the government guidance and eligibility criteria

Using section 47 discretionary relief powers, the Council could decide on different criteria to award relief other than that specified in the government guidance. However, this option is not recommended as the relief would not then be funded via Section 31 Central Government grant, and the cost of the relief would have to be met by the Council.

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 7

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

12. Proposed Borough wide Dog Fouling and Control Public Spaces Protection Order renewal.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) noted the outcomes of a consultation on the renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog fouling and control across the Doncaster Borough; and
- (2) approved the Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog fouling and control, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement, introduced a report which provided the outcome from the consultation on the proposed renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Dog fouling and control.

The original Dog Fouling and Control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was authorised in February 2017, following a Borough-wide consultation process. The order was introduced following the review of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, where new powers such as the PSPO were introduced, updating pre-existing legislation. The PSPO was renewed in March 2020, following a further public consultation.

It was noted that a further Doncaster public and stakeholder consultation was undertaken over a 10-week period, between September and November 2022, which generated a positive response from the public and key stakeholders who were strongly in favour of all of the proposed prohibitions. The consultation also confirmed support for action to ensure issues of dog fouling and irresponsible dog control are addressed. The consultation responses evidenced that residents have a clear desire to see the PSPO renewed, with a higher response rate of 1532 seen from the consultation held in 2019/20 where 1439 were received.

The report set out the proposed prohibitions to be renewed and confirms that

implementation will be strongly focused on supporting and educating people to be responsible dog owners, taking an enforcement line when deemed necessary, and in answer to resident concerns and hotspot identification.

Cabinet was asked to consider the proposals, as part of a multi-agency and community led approach to improving cleanliness and safety for residents, with a mixture of tools and powers, ranging from educational activities, media campaigns, and focussed community action events through the appropriate use of targeted control and enforcement. Once approved, the PSPO would be in place for 3 years, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report.

To conclude, Councillor Blackham commended the report to Cabinet for approval.

The Mayor, in commenting on the report, stated that the report demonstrates that the Council is a listening Council and has carried out an extensive consultation with residents, and she hoped they would benefit from the controls provided in the renewal of the PSPO.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Tackle the issues linked to dog fouling and control without specific legislation in place to support management of the behaviour. This is not recommended as without a Public Spaces Protection Order in place, the Council's ability to take enforcement action is significantly reduced.

Pursue the renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Order as an isolated measure with an enforcement focus. This is not recommended.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Dan Swaine, Director of Economy and Environment.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker