



City of Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 1st March, 2023 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Monday, 6th March, 2023.

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 15th March, 2023. 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 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 for absence were received from Councillors Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Rachael Blake and Joe Blackham.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements.

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

Decision Record Forms dated 15th February 2023 (previously circulated) were noted.

DECISION 1

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. 2022-23 Quarter 3 Finance and Performance Improvement Report.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the Quarter 3 Performance and Financial information, including the virements per the Financial Procedure Rules, as detailed in the Appendix A – Finance Profile of the report;
- (2) noted the allocations of block budgets in the Capital Programme, as detailed in the Appendix A – Finance Profile of the report, in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules;
- (3) approved the payment to St. Leger Homes, as part of the contract management arrangements, for the cost of additional inflationary costs over and above those budgeted (£1.15m) within the Housing Revenue Account, with a reconciliation at year-end to ensure any surplus is returned to the Council;
- (4) noted the introduction of a new fee for planning site histories, as referred to in paragraphs 152-155 of the report;
- (5) noted the increase to cremation fees, as referred to in paragraphs 156-157 of the report; and
- (6) approved the use of earmarked reserves, as detailed in paragraphs 173-176 of the report, to fund the remaining overspend balance at outturn.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services, introduced the Finance and Performance Improvement Report Quarter 3, for the 2022/23 financial year, which set out the Council's current financial forecast position towards the 2022/23 budget and performance against key service standards.

It was noted that the Council continues to deliver whilst operating in a considerably challenging and uncertain environment.

The rising cost of living continues to impact the Borough, especially in terms of energy, food and material costs, and people and businesses face difficult choices going forward.

The Council is not immune from these rising inflationary pressures, in addition to facing increasing service cost pressures, particularly in high cost service areas e.g. Children's Social Care placements and home to school transport. Along with the rest of the Local Government sector, there are some challenges for the Council with regard to managing its costs and delivering the savings required. The financial pressures are also ongoing and this week, Full Council agreed a balanced budget for 2023/24 that deals with those estimated pressures. At Quarter 3, a £7.8m overspend is forecast for 2022/23. Additional spending controls have been put in place to improve this position, but it is likely that the remaining overspend will need to be funded by reducing the Council's earmarked reserves held for transformation.

However, the Council's performance for Quarter 3 remains predominately positive and the Council will, or has achieved:-

- Continue to explore all options to retain a functioning airport in Doncaster including working with parties interested in purchasing DSA;

- A very high standard in relation to the successful collections of household waste and recycling;
- During this quarter, £330,000 has been made available for small to medium sized enterprises to access Low Carbon Grants;
- Work continues on the Education and Skills 2030 programme, and, in this quarter, we have drafted a high level strategic action plan;
- At the end of Quarter 3, investment into Doncaster was at £90.15m, with £49.7m of new inward investment facilitated by Business Doncaster; and
- A strong performance focus has brought about improvement in waiting lists for 'open' Adult Social Care needs assessments.

The Council continues to review activity to improve its challenging areas of performance including:-

- Persistent absence in secondary schools has risen significantly;
- The performance in relation to the timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans for children with Special Educational Needs in quarter 3 has fallen;
- The number of people supported by Council Re-ablement Services who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital has declined in the last quarter; and
- The number of children and young people in and out of authority residential placements has grown significantly, raising year on year during the last 3 years.

On behalf of Cabinet, Councillor Cole thanked the Council's workforce for their efforts in achieving the required service standards in challenging circumstances.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and identified pleasing performance in respect of services to veterans, and the number of local parks achieving Green Flag Status. Whilst progress was made in relation to Safeguarding, further improvement was needed on such a vital area.

Councillor Mark Houlbrook welcomed the report, but stressed the importance of improvements in relation to the Completion of Environmental Permitting.

The Mayor and Cabinet Members were pleased by the work done in relation to fly-tipping, but were saddened that this remains an issue in the Borough.

The Mayor was pleased by the performance in relation to highways which reflected the additional funding her Cabinet had provided, but identified that further government funding should be provided.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

There were no other alternative options considered or rejected.

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. St. Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited (SLHD) performance and delivery update Quarter 3 ended 31 December 2022 (2022/23) and Value For Money Statement (VFM) for the year ending 31 March 2022 (2021/22).

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the progress of St. Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) performance outcomes and Value for Money Statement, and the contribution St. Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) makes to supporting Doncaster Council's (DC) strategic priorities.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report, which provided an update on St. Leger Homes of Doncaster's (SLHD) performance successes and challenges against the 2022/23 key performance indicators, as detailed in Appendix A of the report. The report also provided details of SLHD's Value For Money (VFM) annual statement for the financial year 2021/22, ending 31st March 2022, as appended to the report at Appendix B.

SLHD, as part of its Management Agreement with the Council and governance arrangements, was required to produce an Annual Development Plan, which identifies the key deliverables, outcomes, milestones and performance measures. SLHD presents annually to the Council, a review of its performance, including a Value for Money reporting and assessment, which includes a quarterly report of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and an annual VFM statement.

At the end of December 2022, 8 of the 15 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) measured had been met, or were within tolerance levels of the set target. Further commentary in relation to the targets were set out in the body of the report. A summary of the KPI dashboard as at 31st December 2022, together with performance comparatives of previous years, were set out paragraph 6.2 of the report.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business, provided an overview of the key performance indicators information and outlined that:-

St Leger Homes continued to see considerable pressure in various areas of housing activity, including the numbers of people that approach SLHD fearing and becoming homeless are extremely high, and the demand for repairs has remained high since the end of the Covid pandemic, with a further spike as a result of the publicity surrounding damp, mould and condensation. These are considerable

national trends.

There remains some room for improvement in some areas, but it is evident that there is some excellent performance, and he was pleased that the Value For Money results are the best levels of performance ever recorded by St Leger Homes Doncaster.

St Leger continues to face considerable challenges, but they continue to do all they can to support both their existing tenants and the people of Doncaster during times of crisis.

The Council would continue to do all it can to support SLHD and would continue to invest substantially in Council housing stock, with energy efficiency improvements and the Council house build programme that will see over 600 new properties over the course of the programme.

The Mayor has set SLHD some very challenging targets, wanting SLHD to push as hard as they could to deliver excellent services for Doncaster tenants.

The Deputy Mayor highlighted some of the key performance indicators that were off target and required further improvement:-

- KPI 2 Void Rent Loss.
This is one element of total arrears. Measured nationally, top quartile performance on this indicator is 0.94%. The Council's target of 0.5% is almost half of that. Whilst this measure is off target, it is pleasing to see that performance has improved consistently since the summer of 2020, and at 0.67%, sits comfortably within the best 20% of performers nationally.
- KPI 3 concerns the average number of days a property is void.
St. Leger has set a challenging target of 20 days. Last year, national top quartile performance was 28.2 days. St. Leger's performance has consistently improved since Quarter 1 of 2020 and now stands at 26.8 days. Whilst there is some way to go to get it to the excellent standard the Council wants to see, there is good performance when benchmarked against other landlords.

The Deputy Mayor advised that in terms of performance, taking into account the cost to deliver the service, SLHD's Value for Money performance for 2021/22 was very positive, and compared favourably to its peers and housing providers nationally. Following a benchmarking exercise, this showed that SLHD had more cost and performance indicators in the upper quartiles (above median) and had improved its VFM dashboards, with the majority of indicators in the low cost, high performance of the dashboard. The table at Paragraph 7.4 of the report set out the cost and performance indicators selected with the dashboards for 2021/22 for SLHD's Peer Group.

Overall, the report was excellent and evidenced that despite Doncaster having the ninth lowest rents in the country, the Council can still expect to see good quality high performing services.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and the work done by SLHD. In response to a question about the level of complaints received, the Chief Executive of SLHD explained the work being done around this area, particularly the changes being made to the Repairs Service, as repairs was an area which many complaints related to. Nationally, rising complaints have been a feature for Housing providers, and SLHD's number of complaints were lower than most other housing providers nationally.

Cabinet were pleased to note that no child in Doncaster requiring accommodation had spent a Christmas, or new year, in a hotel. The continued meeting of the high local spend target, and the reduction in the number of days of void rent loss, were praised by the Mayor.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

There were no other alternative options considered or rejected.

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 Officer, St Leger Homes Doncaster.

DECISION 3

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Adult Social Care Market Sustainability Plan and Provider Fee Rates 2023/2024.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the Adult Social Care fee rate increases for 2023-24, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and approved the fees used in the calculation of the financially assessed client contributions, as detailed in the report;
- (2) approved Doncaster's Market Sustainability Plan, as attached at Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (3) noted the consultation feedback from Doncaster's Care Providers, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 of the report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Andrea Robinson, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, introduced a report that detailed proposed fee charges for 2023/24 across Doncaster's Adult Social Care provision, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report. The report also sought approval to endorse the Market Sustainability Plan for Doncaster's local care market, as appended to the report at Appendix 2.

The Council was legally required to consult with care with regard to the proposals for the setting of fees for care, and to publish a Market Sustainability Plan detailing how the Council would work over time towards ensuring a fair cost of care.

The Council was also contractually bound by statute to carry out a Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care exercise, to review care provider fees on an annual basis, to reflect inflationary pressures in line with the Care Act 2014, and support statutory guidance, which required the Council to:-

- Reflect a fair cost of care in fee setting and not to set arbitrary or unsustainable fees;
- Enable providers to pay at least the national minimum/living wage; and
- Understand the business environment and risks faced by providers.

For 2023/2024, the key inflationary factors effecting care provider costs are:-

- The National Living Wage (for adults 25 or over) increasing by 9.68% from £9.50 to £10.42 hour, with effect from April 2023; and
- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) 12-month rate was 10.1% in September 2022.

The Council had undertaken a Fair Cost of Care exercise with care homes and domiciliary care providers in the summer of 2022, and submitted the findings to the Department of Health and Social Care in October 2022. A summary of the feedback received from domiciliary care providers and care providers is detailed at Appendices 3 and 4 of the report respectively.

Councillor Robinson outlined that Doncaster people are supported by Adult Social Care in a range of settings. The largest proportion receive care and support in their home. Others need to move into a care home, extra care housing, or supported living. All of these people depend on care and support to ensure a decent quality of life, and access to opportunities that many of us take for granted.

The report proposed significant increases in the fee rates paid by the Council to Doncaster's care providers. The rate that the Council propose to pay for care in a person's own home will increase by almost 26% from April. The rate proposed to pay for support in a care home will increase by over 22%. These increases are well above the current rate of inflation and will enable good quality care for Doncaster people supported by a workforce, with greater reward for the essential work that they do.

Councillor Robinson advised that the Council has received a significant proportion of funding from Government to support increases in fee rates, but highlighted that this was not sufficient to cover all these proposals. The Council has prioritised funding from other sources to illustrate the Council's commitment to people and families in Doncaster who, because of age, illness or disability, need reliable and good quality care and support more than ever. She hoped that the Government and future Governments would develop a clear, long-term, funded strategy for Adult Social Care, which will support the work that this Council is doing on a sustainable basis.

Councillor Robinson paid tribute to the many staff who worked in organisations across Doncaster, supporting people, day in day out in their own homes, in care homes, in supported living and in Extra Care Housing. She stated that without their compassion and their skill, the lives of a huge number of Doncaster people and their families would be all the poorer. Councillor Robinson highlighted that the City of Doncaster Council has been running a 'Proud to Care' campaign to encourage more people to work in Adult Social Care, and make this difference with all the job satisfaction that comes with it.

To conclude, Councillor Robinson commended the recommendations in the report to Cabinet for endorsement, that prioritises the needs of Doncaster people receiving care and support and also protects the wellbeing of frontline staff across the adult social care sector. It also shows that the City of Doncaster is serious and is 'proud to care'.

The Mayor drew Members' attention to the Market Sustainability Plan, at Appendix 2 of the report, which acknowledged the current key challenges for all areas of the Social Care market, in terms of the availability of staff, due to recruitment and retention, which had emerged from the Covid pandemic and continued into recovery. The Council has invested in supporting the market through the 'Proud to Care' campaign, the Social Care Academy and the Care Certificate Induction. Doncaster Council will continue to work with the market to ensure that the workforce support provided is timely and effective. The Mayor recognised the difficulties for the Council recruiting to such posts, and the additional costs incurred by the Council.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – Do nothing.

Option 2 – Do not incorporate the cost of care exercise and only apply inflation to the current 2022-23 fee rates.

Option 3 – Accept the median returns of care providers to each cost of care

Exercise at face value, and apply inflation to this.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Phil Holmes, Director of Adults, Health and Well-Being.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker