



# City of Doncaster Council

## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 16th August, 2023 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Friday, 18th August, 2023

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday 30th August, 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 Lani-Mae Ball	Portfolio Holder for Early Help, Education, Skills and Young People.
Councillor Nigel Ball	Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Communities, Leisure and Culture.
Councillor Joe Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement.
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources.
Councillor Sarah Smith	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care.

Apologies:-

Apologies were received from Councillors Rachael Blake, Phil Cole and Mark Houlbrook

## PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

### Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions or statements made at the meeting.

Decisions records dated 19th July, 2023, be noted.

## DECISION 1.

### 1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. City of Doncaster Council Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocation Policy Review.

### 2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) considered and noted the outcomes of the review and consultation;
- (2) considered the recommendations on policy changes consulted on, full details of which were included in Appendix A of the report; and
- (3) formally adopted the amended policy in Appendix D of the report.

### 3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received the report introduced by Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business, which set out recommendations for 10 proposed changes to City of Doncaster Council's Pitch Allocations Policy to the four council owned sites across Doncaster at the following locations with a total of 65 pitches

- White Towers, Armthorpe (although in Intake/Clay Lane ward)
- Little Lane, Long Sandall
- Land's End, Thorne
- Nursery Lane, Sprotbrough

Each of the eight changes were outlined in Appendix A and included an additional two recommendations identified following the consultation process.

Councillor Jones stated the overall objectives of the Pitch Allocations Policy was detailed within the report and included making the best use of available pitches and having due regard to cultural differences.

It was noted that Members from four wards were consulted on the proposed changes and had the opportunity to feedback on any additional changes. Engagement with site residents had been successful, with 95% (38) seen in person and 100% (28) of the waiting list contacted with a 54% (15) response rate.

Councillor Jones stated that the headline outcomes of the consultation were:-

- All eight proposals were fully supported by all responding consultees; and
- Two additional proposals have been included following the consultation process.

Regarding the two additional proposals, he stated that prior to a new pitch being allocated, the request to proportionately consult with residents about new allocations to ensure community cohesion was supported. Discretion for refusal was already included within the policy. Councillor Jones advised that it was understood by residents that there was a need to be fair and proportionate during

consultation and not disclose details of the applicant's circumstances; this was explicit within the application process.

In addition, the final change was to restrict anyone pulling onto site without permission from joining the waiting list for a 6 month period (dependent on circumstances). It was hoped this would act as a deterrent.

In conclusion, Councillor Jones stated that the proposed changes included clarity on who can and cannot join the waiting list, being clear on the maximum occupancy of pitches and ensuring local connection criteria is fair and recognises cultural difference.

Cabinet commended the report and welcomed the outcome from the extensive consultation process.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Options considered had been informed through legislative requirements, research, consultation, and input from the project group key officers, including the City of Doncaster Council's Legal services. None of the changes were deemed particularly contentious and this was reflective in the support from the consultation.

On review of Good Practice and policies in other authorities, consideration was given to changing the current structure of the policy, including implementing a points-based system as opposed to the current banding and date order approach. After seeking advice from the National Gypsy and Traveller Advisory Panel and reviewing related publications of good practice, the decision was to retain the current banding structure, as it is considered good practice to have parity between this policy and the Council's Housing Allocations Policy to promote consistency in approach. This is especially important to promote understanding, as residents and applicants may be on both registers.

#### **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

### **DECISION 2.**

#### **1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

7. City of Doncaster Council Local Lettings Policies Review.

## **2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet:-

- (1) considered and noted the outcomes of the review and consultation;
- (2) considered the recommendations on policy changes set out in Section 7 of the report; and
- (3) formally adopted the amended Local Lettings Policies set out in Appendix A of the report.

## **3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business, which set out recommendations following the review of 10 Local Lettings Policies which sit outside of the main Housing Allocations Policy in place across the city and relate to the allocation of council homes. This follows Cabinet approval of a revised Housing Allocations Policy in November 2022, which makes provision for Local Lettings Policies to be applied to specific schemes.

Councillor Jones reported Local Lettings Policies were introduced under the Localism Act 2011 and each one must be evidence based. The overall objectives of Local Lettings Policies were set out in the report, including to support community cohesion, recognise local priorities and reduce anti-social behaviour.

He advised that the Local Lettings Policy was last reviewed in 2018. It was noted that it was good practice to review the local lettings policies every three to five years and each of the 10 policies had been reviewed in consultation with relevant ward members and any associated partner agencies.

In conclusion he reported that 7 of the local lettings policies would be retained and 1 would be reviewed in 12 months' time with a view to removing it if deemed practical.

Cabinet welcomed the report and supported the recommendations following the consultation.

## **4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Options considered were based on analysis of evidence and consideration of the vulnerability of tenants, as well as local knowledge.

## **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

Councillor Jane Nightingale declared an interest by virtue that she was a St Leger Homes Tenant.

Councillor Sarah Smith declared an interest by virtue that she lived in a St Leger home property.

The Monitoring Officer has agreed a dispensation where a Member or their spouse, or a close relative or associate of the Member is a tenant/leaseholder of the

authority and they may remain in the meeting and participate provided that those functions do not relate particularly to that Member's/spouse's/relative's/associate's tenancy or lease.

This dispensation took effect from 11 February 2022 and being effective until the next Council Elections in 2025.

**6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

**7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

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

**DECISION 3.**

**1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

8. Accessible Housing Register - Review of Policy.

**2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet approved the amended Accessible Housing Register policy, attached as Appendix A, noting prior consultation with Doncaster people who could potentially be affected.

**3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Councillor Sarah Smith, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, which set out the significant issues that Doncaster people face within the current policy that governs usage of the Accessible Housing Register.

Councillor Smith reported that the Accessible Housing Register was set up to connect Doncaster People with disabilities who needed rehousing with adapted properties across the Borough. It was noted that for many people, housing adaptations make a huge difference in personal independence, dignity, and the ability to make a continuing contribution to Doncaster life.

She highlighted that the current register had several significant flaws that result in long waits and poor satisfaction for many Doncaster people and inefficiency in the usage of available housing.

The Council had made seven proposals to significantly improve the policy. These were:-

- To reduce the number of applicants on the Accessible Housing Register to those with specialist needs for majorly adapted properties, whilst enabling others to bid for properties sooner without the need, in most cases, for an Occupational Therapy Assessment.
- To simplify the assessment process, an Occupational Therapist would

only be used where a more in-depth and functional assessment of medical needs is required.

- To restrict the Accessible Housing Register to those who are unable to resolve their circumstances in other ways.
- To align the number of offers that individuals receive to the Main Housing Allocations Policy.
- To make sure people waiting to leave hospital, whose current home cannot be adapted to meet their needs (or who are homeless) are afforded the highest rehousing priority.
- To make best use of the significantly adapted properties available to relet. This means that the Council will be flexible on what type of property different households can have to meet their needs.

Councillor Smith advised that all the above proposals received significant majority support, within between 71% and 85% being in favour. Some people were neutral about the proposals, with only a relatively small minority (between 4% and 7% depending on the question) either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Cabinet welcomed the report and fully endorsed the proposals.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Not approving these changes would continue the current situation, with relatively long waits, low degrees of satisfaction and inefficient use of available housing.

#### **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

Councillor Jane Nightingale declared an interest by virtue that she was a St Leger Homes Tenant.

Councillor Sarah Smith declared an interest by virtue that she lived in a St Leger home property.

The Monitoring Officer has agreed a dispensation where a Member or their spouse, or a close relative or associate of the Member is a tenant/leaseholder of the authority and they may remain in the meeting and participate provided that those functions do not relate particularly to that Member's/spouse's/relative's/associate's tenancy or lease.

This dispensation took effect from 11 February 2022 and being effective until the next Council Elections in 2025.

#### **6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

#### **7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

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

## **DECISION 4.**

### **1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

9. St Leger Homes Doncaster Management Agreement Review 2023.

### **2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet:-

- (1) Noted the findings of the internal review undertaken during 2023;.
- (2) Agreed to the renewal of the Management Agreement between CDC and SLHD, for a 5-year period from the 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2029 with a review and optional break point in the contract at year 3; and
- (3) Delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, and the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Business, to agree the enhanced oversight measures to be inserted into the Management Agreement. (Strengthened KPI's)

### **3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Cabinet received a report introduced by Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business, seeking consideration and agreement to the renewal of landlord management services to St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2029.

A review had been undertaken to ensure the agreement was fit for purpose, alongside providing an opportunity to consider performance standards, value for money, what was working well, and areas that required improvement. In addition, the assessment also provided an opportunity to respond to the changes in social housing legislation and regulations which have been introduced since 2019, the most recent being the Social Housing Regulation Bill which received assent in July 2023.

He advised Cabinet that the outcome of the review had indicated that the agreement was working well, and there was appetite to extend the existing arrangement for a further 5 years from 2024-2029, retaining a review and optional break point in year 3. The Council regards the ALMO as offering the opportunity to respond effectively to the new regulatory and legislative requirements and to make financial efficiencies, working closely with CDC.

Councillor Jones stated that he believed St Leger Homes had provided a good quality of service to the Council, its tenants, and the people of Doncaster. They had responded well to emergencies such as the floods of 2019 and most recently the Covid pandemic. St Leger were not immune to the current cost of living crisis and increased demand for services, and yet they continue to support residents and support efforts to tackle homelessness.

In conclusion, he stated that Doncaster has the lowest average council housing rents in South Yorkshire and one of the lowest in the Country. Overall, St Leger

Homes do provide low cost, medium to high performing services.

Cabinet welcomed the report. Reference was made to the need to reduce anti-social behaviour incidents and it was noted that St Leger had put measures in place and established a multi-agency team to tackle anti-social behaviour. Cabinet also reiterated its commitment to being one of the lowest council house rents in the Country supporting residents during the current cost of living crisis.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Option 2: Bring all or part of the housing related functions that SLHD delivers back into CDC.

Not recommended, as evidence from the internal review undertaken demonstrates the service being delivered is value for money and meets the Council's requirements.

Option 3: Commission another provider to deliver the housing related functions on behalf of CDC.

Not recommended, as evidence from the internal review demonstrates the service being delivered is value for money and meets the Council's requirements.

#### **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

Councillor Jane Nightingale declared an interest by virtue that she was a St Leger Homes Tenant.

Councillor Sarah Smith declared an interest by virtue that she lived in a St Leger home property.

The Monitoring Officer has agreed a dispensation where a Member or their spouse, or a close relative or associate of the Member is a tenant/leaseholder of the authority and they may remain in the meeting and participate provided that those functions do not relate particularly to that Member's/spouse's/relative's/associate's tenancy or lease.

This dispensation took effect from 11 February 2022 and being effective until the next Council Elections in 2025.

#### **6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Not Exempt

#### **7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Dan Swaine, Director of Place.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker