



City of Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 17th January, 2024 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 18th January, 2024

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Monday 29th January, 2024. 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 Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care and Equalities
Councillor Phil Cole	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Traded Services and Planning
Councillor Mark Houlbrook	Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Waste
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources
Councillor Sarah Smith	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

No public questions or statements were submitted at the meeting.

Decision Records from the meeting held on 6th December 2023 were noted.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. "Your Care and Support": Doncaster's 2024 Local Account for Adult Social Care.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved the "Your Care and Support", Doncaster's 2024 Local Account for Adult Social Care.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report, introduced by Councillor Sarah Smith, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, which sought Cabinet's approval of the "Your Care and Support" Doncaster's 2024 Local Account for Adult Social Care.

Zac Martin and Issachar John, members of the Adult Social Care 'Making it Real' Board attended the meeting and presented their own lived experiences of care and support and their views regarding the 'Your Care and Support' Doncaster Adult Social Care Local Account 2024.

While not mandatory, there was a national expectation that all Councils with Adult Social Services responsibilities publish an annual Local Account, which reviews the previous year's performance and describes priorities for the next year.

"Your Care and Support" sets out the priorities for Adult Social Care for 2024, developed alongside local people with lived experience of care and support in Doncaster, using a co-production approach, under the auspices of the 'Making it Real' Board. The Board has an equal mix of adults with experience of seeking or drawing on care and support (people with lived experience) and senior leaders from the Adults, Wellbeing and Culture Directorate in the Council.

"Your Care and Support" showcases what is good in terms of care and support in Doncaster and reflects areas that require development, drawing on both comparative data and first-hand testimony from Doncaster people who have experience of care and support. It includes the priorities that Making it Real Board members have identified for Adult Social Care in 2024 and the key actions that are required to deliver these.

"Your Care and Support" is co-produced on an annual basis with each version improving as the Council further expanded its approach to co-production and to gathering feedback. The 2024 Local Account further develops the ambition and progress that was set out in the 2023 Local Account document.

Councillor Smith outlined the Council's vision for everyone to live in a place that they called home. She was pleased to see the continued improvements in Adult Social Care, compared to 2023, citing that people receiving care made them feel safe and secure and gave them control in their daily lives. However, she pointed out that the Council had more to do. She spoke of the pressures on public services and local communities, but she was pleased to see the positive direction of travel.

The Council's future ambition was to support more people in Doncaster to be supported at 3 home, rather than have to go into a care home and help more people with disabilities into sustainable and paid employment. She emphasised that the Council would not achieve anything unless they listened to the voices of the people. The report, co-produced by the Making it Real Board and Council officers, gave thanks for their time and passion and was particularly grateful, given the challenging circumstances that the Council was working in, and that it was also a privilege to work with residents and members of the 'Making it Real' Board.

Councillor Smith thanked Issachar and Zac for their welcome feedback on the report, which she felt was a testament to the work of the 'Making it Real Board', outlining the challenges and their perspectives as being people of lived experiences of care and support.

The Mayor echoed Councillor Smith's comments and thanked them for sharing their insight and personal experiences.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 Not producing a Local Account.

Option 2 Council officers compiling a Local Account.

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, Wellbeing and Culture.

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. School Admissions Arrangements for 2025/2026 Academic Year.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved the following admission arrangements for the 2025/2026 school year:

(1) Community School Admission Arrangements, as set out at paragraphs 13 to 14 of the report;

(2) Community School Nursery Admission Arrangements, as set out at paragraphs 13 to 14 of the report;

- (3) Primary Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements, as set out at paragraphs 15 to 18 of the report; and
- (4) Secondary Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements, as set out at paragraphs 15 to 18 of the report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball, Cabinet Member for Early Help, Education, Skills and Young People, introduced a report, which set out the requirements for the adoption of schemes for co-ordinating the Admission Arrangements for Primary and Secondary Schools and sought Cabinet's approval of the Admission Arrangements for the City of Doncaster's Community Schools for the 2025/2026 School Year.

The co-ordinated admission arrangements for the year of entry to all types of mainstream schools were a statutory responsibility of the Council under Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which must be determined annually.

Separately, each admission authority was required to set its own admission arrangements. The various bodies, responsible for admission to schools in Doncaster, were summarised in paragraph 3 of the report.

It was noted that the Council has an important role to ensure that parents are given every opportunity to apply for a place at their preferred school. This is best achieved through the Council co-ordinating and monitoring the process.

The co-ordinated arrangements apply to all types of schools in the City, including academies and free schools.

In September 2013 the Government withdrew the requirement to co-ordinate in year applications. This raised concerns within the Authority regarding the safeguarding of children. Since March 2012, each year Cabinet has reaffirmed its commitment to co-ordinate in year admissions and the Council is in a privileged position with all schools taking part.

Co-ordinating year of entry admissions is a statutory function of the Council, which it achieves through an online application and paper based system, with nearly 100% of applications received online.

Outcomes for applicants in Doncaster are very positive. For Secondary admissions in 2023, 87% of children were offered their first preference and this was even higher at 96% in primary schools. These figures improve further when we look at children receiving a place at one of their preferred schools, to over 96% in secondary and 98% in primary.

Separate to the Council co-ordinating the overall process, each admission authority in the City must set its own admission arrangements which include the order in which places are offered when a school is full.

The Council was responsible for setting these for 18% of the schools, which is 21 out of 118 schools in Doncaster, the remainder are the responsibility of church 5

schools and academies.

The Council's arrangements reflect the requirement to give first priority to children in care and are followed by catchment area children. In recognising the importance of keeping families together, the Council then prioritise children with siblings attending the same school.

These arrangements are reviewed annually and updated as necessary to take into account relevant legislation, guidance and local changes.

It is crucial to offer support for parents throughout the admission process to minimise any disruption to a child's time in education. The support provided by the Council through the Admissions Service has previously been reviewed and a number of actions were taken to ensure smooth transition into and between schools. This includes having dedicated support staff for each phase of education, minimising complaints and allowing the processing of applications in a timely manner.

To conclude, Cabinet was asked to approve the recommendations in the report.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, in welcoming the report, stated that the report was a testament to the good work undertaken by the Council and the efficacy it provides in allowing the first preference for both primary at 96% and secondary at 87%, which gives peace of mind to both children and parents in relation to their preferred school.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The options considered were set out in paragraphs 21 to 28 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

Riana Nelson, Director of Children, Young People and Families.

DECISION 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Calculation and Approval of the Council Tax Base for 2024/2025.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the City of Doncaster Council's Tax Base for the 2024/2025 year as 686,730 Band D equivalent dwellings, as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (2) approved the City of Doncaster Council's Tax Base for the 2024/2025 year for each part of its area at Parish level, as detailed in Appendix 2 of this report.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance, Traded Services and Planning, introduced a report, which sought Cabinet's approval of the calculation of the proposed Council Tax Base for Doncaster for the 2024/25 financial year, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Council was statutorily required under the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 to determine the level of Council Tax base for individual properties and to enable local council precepting authorities to set their levels of Council Tax for 2024/25. It represented the number of properties that would be subject to Council Tax, and which were expressed in terms of their Band D equivalents using a prescribed formula after allowing for the effect of exemptions, discounts, premiums, and reliefs.

The agreed Tax Base for the City of Doncaster Council for 2024/2025 would be used in the 2024/2025 Budget and Council Tax setting calculation. The Tax Base was also used by the major precepting bodies (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and South Yorkshire Police) and the local Parish and Town Councils to determine their precept requirements and must be set before the end of January, in order to meet their requirements.

The report proposed that the Council Tax Base for the City of Doncaster for 2024/2025 was 86,730 band D equivalent dwellings. This represented an increase of 751 band D equivalent dwellings compared to the current year's Tax Base of 85,979. The report reflects an estimated loss on collection of 1.4%, the same as 2023/24.

A schedule of the proposed Council Tax base for each Parish/Town Council was set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 prescribe how the calculation of the Council Tax Base must be carried out. No other options were considered.

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. Furnished Tenancy Scheme.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the proposal to introduce a Furnished Tenancy scheme;
- (2) approved the service charges, as set out in paragraph 11 of the report;
- (3) agreed that the scheme to be evaluated after 12 months to establish take up, financial viability, opportunities for expansion to a wider group of tenants and the delivery model/providers; and
- (4) following the evaluation set out in recommendation 3 (above), any future decision to widen the proposed Furnished Tenancy scheme be delegated to the Assistant Director of Strategic Housing and Sustainability, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Business.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report, introduced by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities, which proposed a Furnished Tenancy scheme for the City of Doncaster Council tenants, managed by St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD).

Furniture poverty is a nationwide issue and plays a key role in the sustainability of a tenancy. In January 2020, the national 'Living Without' campaign reported that over 48% of under-30s are still moving into properties without at least one essential item of furniture. Providing furnished tenancies can help people live more comfortably, alleviate financial pressures, and reduce problematic debt or high-cost lending, enabling tenants to feel more settled and invested in their homes, leading to longer, more successful tenancies. With cost-of-living pressures not expected to rebalance soon, this is particularly relevant.

The scheme would provide furniture and white goods to tenants in return for a weekly rental charge, known as a service charge. This service charge forms part of the tenant's weekly rent, and, subject to strict criteria, is eligible under Housing Benefit and Universal Credit. Under the proposed scheme, new tenants would be able to rent essential items from the start of their tenancy, enabling them to furnish their homes to a basic standard. Tenants would never own the items, which was a key stipulation of benefit regulations, as well as the right to occupy a tenancy being dependent upon the charge being paid, i.e. it must form part of the tenancy

agreement. The scheme would offer maintenance and a 5-year replacement programme on all items. The tenant could exit the scheme and return the items at any time. If the tenant leaves the property, the furniture can be returned, or the tenant can take the furniture with them, provided they were moving to another 8 SLHD tenancy.

The proposal had been based on a scheme with Your Homes Newcastle (YHN), in conjunction with Newcastle City Council, although other providers would be considered in the future. St. Leger Homes would be responsible for assessing the applications, ensuring tenants could afford to be involved and collecting the service charge. Newcastle Council would be responsible for the provision and the maintenance of the furniture. The scheme would be monitored, with a full review after one year.

Housing Benefit and the Department of Works and Pensions have been consulted regarding the proposed scheme and have confirmed that it adheres to the regulations and that the estimated charges are reasonable. Appendix A of the report provided details of the seven furniture packages available to tenants and service charges.

Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities, Leisure and Culture welcomed the report, which provided tenants with security, rather than having to approach loan sharks who charged extremely high rates of interest.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 No Furnished tenancy provision is made. This would mean that the current difficulties for tenants would continue and there would be the same pressures on budgets, charities, and grants, including the Local Assistance Scheme.

Option 2 SLHD to set up their own independent scheme and purchase items to lease to tenants. The benefits of this option would be that SLHD had control over cost and quality of items, with any savings passed on to the tenant through the service charge. However, this option also has some considerable risks; it required a significant up-front financial outlay to purchase the furniture items for the scheme and could take 3-5 years to recover the costs, or longer depending on take-up and economic factors. This option also required significant staff and logistical resources, as SLHD would be responsible for the entire process, from purchasing items, arranging delivery and installation, maintenance, and repairs, along with assessing tenants for the scheme and supporting them to set up their tenancy. If demand or take-up of the scheme was lower than anticipated, then the income from the scheme would not cover staff and set up costs. There is a risk of financial loss through this option.

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 of Doncaster.

DECISION 5.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

10. Biodiversity Net Gain and Red House Farm Habitat Bank Boundary – Revision to 19th July 2023 Cabinet Decision.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet gave approval, subject to planning permission being granted for application 23/02196/3FULM, that the boundary of Red House Farm Habitat Bank, previously agreed by Cabinet on 19th July 2023, be amended to exclude areas of land, as identified at Figure 2, of Paragraph 9 of the report, that will be used to deliver offsite compensation required for planning application 23/02196/3FULM.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Consideration was given to a report, introduced by Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance, Traded Services and Planning, which sought approval to amend a previous decision made by Cabinet on 19th July 2023 in relation to the opening of a Habitat Bank at Red House Farm.

The report proposed the removal of an area of land from the Habitat Bank that would be used to deliver offsite compensation, subject to the granting of planning permission for the proposed Waterfront (East) Remediation Scheme (Planning application 23/02196/3FULM), which would alter the extent of the Red House Farm Habitat Bank to exclude the areas, as shown at Figure 2, of Paragraph 9 of the report.

The removed area of this land would be used to secure delivery of offsite biodiversity units as part of any Waterfront planning permission (if granted). The financial mechanism of paying for the habitat creation and ongoing management of parts of the Red House Farm site removed from the Habitat Bank scheme were proposed to change because of this decision, but on the ground, post habitat creation, there would be no material difference in what was delivered as part of the Habitat Bank project.

It was intended that the biodiversity units created on this site be sold on the open market, once biodiversity net gain becomes a legal requirement of all planning applications. It was envisaged that between 100 and 150 biodiversity units would be created on the site.

The Habitat Bank at Red House Farm is 2.7 km from the proposed Waterfront (East) Development. As described in background paper 1, as set out in the report, it was intended that a range of habitats, including woodland, scrub, trees, and neutral grassland would be delivered on the site. As the Waterfront development needs to deliver grassland, scrub, and tree units offsite, it had been identified that the Red

House Farm site would be an appropriate location to deliver the necessary offsite biodiversity units, as it is also within the main urban area and relatively close to the site.

The Mayor was supportive of the scheme and emphasised the need for the Council to achieve net zero and that the habitats were vital for both the city and the country.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 2 To not approve the removal of areas from the Red House Farm Habitat Bank and require that the planning application at Waterfront find an alternative site on which to deliver the necessary offsite biodiversity units. This is not recommended because there is a risk that alternative offsite units would need to be procured from outside the Borough. Cabinet have previously expressed a desire to see biodiversity net gain delivered locally. In addition, if units could not be found, then planning permission for the Waterfront Scheme would not satisfy planning policy requirements and risks being refused.

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 Place.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker