



# City of Doncaster Council

## Agenda

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To all Members of the

# CABINET

**Notice is given that a Meeting of the Cabinet is to be held as follows:**

**Venue:** Council Chamber, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU

**Date:** Wednesday, 17th January, 2024

**Time:** 10.00 am

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### **BROADCASTING NOTICE**

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**Damian Allen  
Chief Executive**

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Issued on: Tuesday, 9th January 2024

**Governance Services Officer for this meeting:**

Andrea Hedges  
01302 736716

City of Doncaster Council

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## Items

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To consider the extent, if any, to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.
3. Public Questions and Statements.

**(A period not exceeding 20 minutes for questions and statements from members of the public and Elected Members to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones. Questions/Statements should relate specifically to an item of business on the agenda and be limited to a maximum of 100 words. As stated within Executive Procedure Rule 3.3 each person will be allowed to submit one question/statement per meeting. A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by e-mail to the Governance Team no later than 5.00 pm on Friday, 12th January, 2024. Each question or statement must give the name and address of the person submitting it. Questions/Statements should be sent to the Governance Team, Floor 2, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU, or by email to [Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk)).**

4. Declarations of Interest, if any.
5. Decision Record Forms from the meeting held on 6th December 2023 for noting (previously circulated).

### **A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded**

#### **Key Decisions**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 6. "Your Care and Support": Doncaster's 2024 Local Account for Adult Social Care. | 1 - 48  |
| 7. School Admissions Arrangements for 2025/2026 Academic Year.                    | 49 - 66 |
| 8. Calculation and Approval of the Council Tax Base for 2024/2025.                | 67 - 78 |
| 9. Furnished Tenancy Scheme.  | 79 - 90 |

#### **Non-Key Decisions**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 10. Biodiversity Net Gain and Red House Farm Habitat Bank Boundary – Revision to 19th July 2023 Cabinet Decision. | 91 - 98 |
|---|---------|

## **Cabinet Members**

### **Cabinet Responsibility For:**

**Chair – Ros Jones, Mayor of  
Doncaster**

Budget and Policy Framework

**Vice-Chair – Deputy Mayor  
Councillor Glyn Jones**

Housing and Business

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

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## Doncaster Council

### Report

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Date: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024

To: The Chair and Members of Cabinet

#### **“Your Care and Support”: Doncaster’s 2024 local account for adult social care**

Relevant Member(s)	Cabinet	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Cllr Sarah Smith		All	

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. While not mandatory, there is 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. This report presents Doncaster’s local account for 2024, entitled “Your Care and Support”.
2. “Your Care and Support” has been put together alongside people with lived experience of care and support in Doncaster 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.
3. “Your Care and Support” showcases what is good in terms of care and support in Doncaster and also 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.
4. “Your Care and Support” is now co-produced on an annual basis with each version improving as we further expand our approach to coproduction and to gathering feedback. The 2024 version further develops the ambition and progress that was set out in the 2023 document.

#### **EXEMPT REPORT**

5. This report is not exempt.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. To approve “Your Care and Support”, Doncaster’s 2024 Local Account for Adult Social Care.

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

7. Our vision for Adult Social Care is for every person in Doncaster to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to them.
8. The planned improvements to Adult Social Care set out in “Your Care and Support” will result in:
  - Increased satisfaction and better lives for Doncaster people
  - Increased satisfaction and morale for Doncaster’s Adult Social Care workforce
  - More sustainable use of resources by preventing, reducing and delaying people losing independence and wellbeing.

## **BACKGROUND**

9. “Your Care and Support” is structured around six themes:
  - Wellbeing and independence
  - Information and Advice
  - Active and Supportive Communities
  - Flexible and Integrated Care and Support
  - When Things Need to Change
  - Workforce
10. These themes are taken from the national “Making It Real” framework developed by Think Local Act Personal (TLAP). Each theme comprises a number of “I” statements (what people should experience) and “We” statements (what we should do to make the experience happen). This provides accountability for Adult Social Care as all focus is upon improving the experience of people in their own terms.
11. The approach means “Your Care and Support” defines Adult Social Care in the ways that are important to the people that receive it, for example as a route to better information so you can plan your next steps, to being connected with your community, to getting support when you need it but always being able to stay in control of your life.
12. Key performance statistics are provided for each theme. The majority of these are from the national Department of Health and Social Care survey that a sample of recipients of Adult Social Care receive as well as the wider dataset that is measured nationally. Benchmarking enables the Council to understand relative performance: the focus of benchmarking is on South Yorkshire and national comparison because these are most relatable to the intended audience, Doncaster people. There is also appropriate reference to key local indicators that are publicly reported to Cabinet as service standards for Adult Social Care in Doncaster.
13. Because the document is co-produced there is considerable emphasis upon qualitative feedback using the voices of people with lived experience of care and support in Doncaster.
14. People with lived experience supporting the work have been very clear they do not want to be part of any tick-box exercise that pretends the lived reality for people in Doncaster is better than it actually is. But they have also felt strongly that good examples need to be highlighted and that overall the document, while being honest, seeks to promote hope and possibility to a Doncaster population and an Adult Social Care workforce that has been through a huge amount.
15. “Your Care and Support” will be produced in different formats, both on-line and in hard copy. Although the document has been drafted in an engaging and readable way, it is important that it is as accessible as possible. An Easy Read version has been produced and this will be used as the basis

for a summary document. Videos are also being developed covering the key themes. The videos will themselves be co-produced and include the voices and testimony of Doncaster people with lived experience of care and support. This will include people who speak different community languages.

16. Making “Your Care and Support” available in this way is intended to encourage more Doncaster people to share their own stories and work alongside Council officers and partners to help Adult Social Care improve further, including by addressing the following nine priorities that have been identified for 2024:

- Increase opportunities for local people with lived experience of care and support to influence Doncaster’s approach, from improving our services to recruiting the right people.
- Make sure that we make public information and advice about rights (including to independent advocacy), responsibilities and sources of support routinely available.
- Continue to improve local, timely access to care and support, making sure we listen to people seeking support, their families and local communities to understand what matters most to them.
- Create and sustain more employment opportunities for disabled people in Doncaster.
- Increase the choice and control people have over their support at home, whether they choose to have a direct payment or to have care and support arranged by the council.
- Support more people to live in a place they call home by helping more people to leave hospital and mental health in-patient stays promptly, and reducing the number of people living with restrictions on their liberty.
- Improve our support for young people who require care and support in their teenage years and into early adulthood, to make sure they can plan ahead and have enough time to make informed decisions about their future.
- Develop and support the wellbeing of Doncaster’s adult social care workforce so they can support Doncaster people to live their best lives.
- Improve equality, diversity and inclusion.

17. The first six priorities above are consolidations from the 2023 Local Account, intended to build on 2023’s achievements. The last three priorities, relating to preparation for adulthood, workforce and equality are areas identified for increased focus following feedback from people with lived experience.

18. “Your Care and Support” describes how Doncaster people with experience of care and support can be paid for their time and expertise as well as travel and any other expenses if they are involved in specific coproduction activities and if they are contributing either in a personal capacity or as the representative of an organisation that does not already pay them or cover their expenses. This investment is in recognition of the significant financial pressures that people with experience of care and support often face. It is a worthwhile investment because unless change in Adult Social Care is consistently informed by the lived experience of Doncaster people it risks missing the mark.

## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

19. Not producing a Local Account (option one).

20. Council officers compiling a Local Account (option two).






21. Council officers compiling a Local Account alongside Doncaster people with lived experience of care and support as part of an ongoing programme of improvement (option three).

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION


22. Option Three is recommended. Publishing a Local Account is not mandatory and takes up resources. However not publishing one would reduce the Council's public accountability to the people depending on Adult Social Care for a better quality of life. Producing a Local Account that is written by Council officers but which lacks significant involvement from Doncaster people who have experience of care and support would risk providing an inaccurate picture.

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

23.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 <b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	✓			
Adult Social Care priorities include supporting our workforce to think locally and act personally, improving local connections and reducing carbon footprint from unnecessary travel time.				
 <b>Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work</b>	✓			
Adult Social Care priorities are focused on supporting people to live their lives on their own terms, developing the skills that are important to them and maintaining their sense of personal independence and contribution.				
 <b>Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs</b>	✓			
Adult Social Care priorities include developing employment opportunities both for recipients of care and for people who would like to work in the field.				
 <b>Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all</b>	✓			
Adult Social Care priorities include increasing information, advice and access to support that will support health and wellbeing.				
 <b>Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs</b>	✓			
Adult Social Care priorities include ensuring access and opportunity for all of Doncaster's communities, built on a shared understanding of human rights.				
 <b>Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough</b>	✓			
The scope of Adult Social Care includes helping children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to prepare for adulthood.				
 <b>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</b>	✓			



Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
Adult Social Care priorities include connecting people with their communities (including communities of interest) and using digital means to help achieve this where appropriate.				
 <b>Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</b> ✓				
Adult Social Care priorities include connecting people with their communities, including the local strengths that different neighbourhoods have in relation to their cultural, sporting and heritage opportunities.				
<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>	✓			
The first Adult Social Care priority is ensuring as many Doncaster people as possible are given the opportunity to influence and drive our approach so that we support and connect with all of our communities in the ways most important to them.				

**Legal Implications [Officer Initials: SRF | Date: 03/01/2024]**

24. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**Financial Implications [Officer Initials: CL | Date: 03/01/2024]**

25. The contents of the Local Account are in line with existing Adults, Wellbeing and Culture budgets and therefore there are no current financial implications arising from this report. Any future financial implications arising would need to be managed within the overall Adults, Wellbeing and Culture budgets.

**Human Resources Implications [Officer Initials: AT | Date: 04/01/2024]**

26. There are no direct human resource implications in relation to this report.

**Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW | Date: 04/01/2024]**

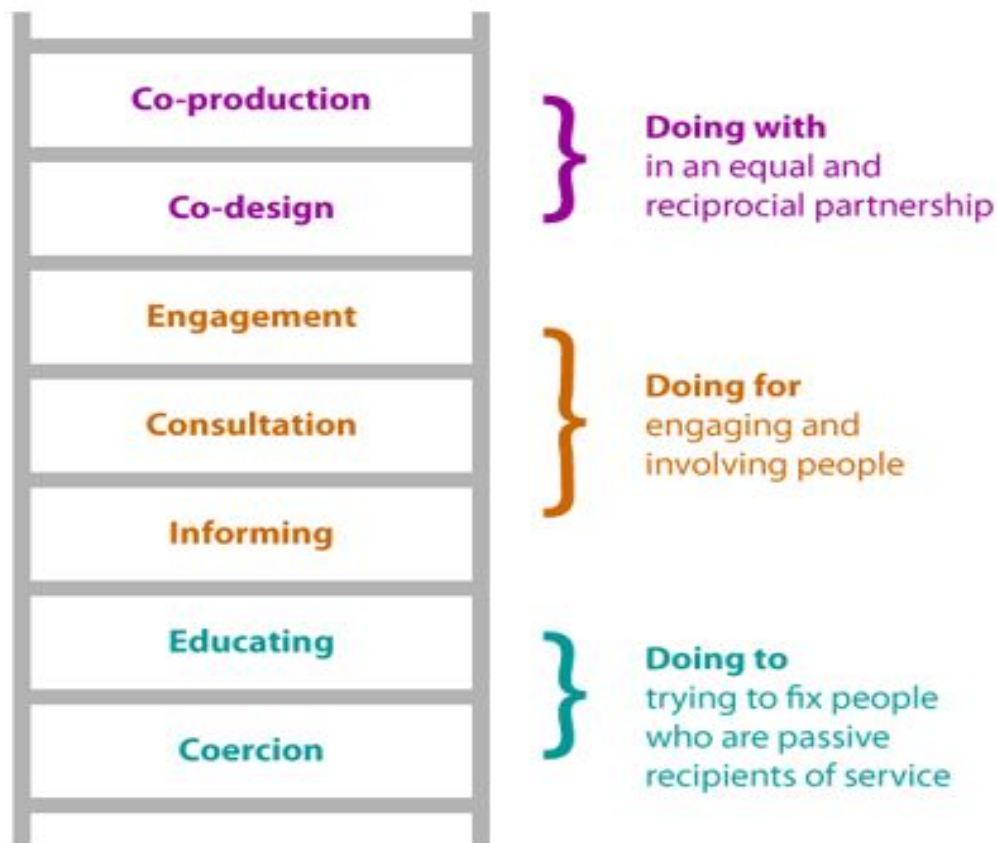
27. Any new technology requirements to support the key priorities will be considered by the Council's Technology Governance Board (TGB) for inclusion in the Technology Forward Plan, to ensure the resources, expertise and capacity within services is available. This will be monitored and continuously reviewed via TGB.

**RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

28. "Your Care and Support" sets out Adult Social Care priorities for 2024 co-produced alongside Doncaster people with lived experience of care and support. Full delivery of many of these improvements will also require joint work alongside a wider range of partners.

**CONSULTATION**

29. "Your Care and Support" has been developed alongside local people with experience of care and support using a co-production approach. The difference between co-production, consultation and other forms of engagement are set out in the diagram below (source: Think Local Act Personal).



## BACKGROUND PAPERS

30. Your Care and Support: Doncaster's Adult Social Care Local Account 2024

31. Easy Read version of the above.

## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

32.

TLAP Think Local Act Personal

TGB Technology Governance Board.

## REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

**Bryony Shannon, Strategic Lead for Practice Development**

01302 736896 | [bryony.shannon@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:bryony.shannon@doncaster.gov.uk)

**Phil Holmes**  
**Director of Adults, Wellbeing and Culture**  
[Phil.Holmes@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Phil.Holmes@doncaster.gov.uk)  
 01302 737529

2024



City of  
Doncaster  
Council

# Your care and support: Doncaster

## Adult Social Care Local Account 2024

Co-produced by the  
Adult Social Care Making it Real Board,  
City of Doncaster Council



# Welcome



**Glyn Butcher,**  
Peer  
Ambassador  
Making it Real  
Board co-chair

We've done some absolutely amazing work together this year. Impactful, real work, driven by the community. People giving their time to make Doncaster a better place. It feels like there is a different energy. A freshness.

We're not worried that we won't get support if we challenge. In Doncaster it's not like that. We're building trust together. People are welcomed as critical friends.

Being involved in interviews has been a highlight for me. Asking our own questions. Brilliant.

There's lots that is good but we know we're not finished. We've still got a long way to go. Next year we want to do more work around rights and advocacy. And sort out direct payments. My main goal for next year though is to have more diverse voices in our Making it Real Board and working groups. **We want more people to join our movement. Our revolution.**

Finally I'd just like to say thank you to all the Board members, and to Councillor Sarah Smith. Her involvement, enthusiasm and creativity has enhanced the Board this year.



**Councillor Sarah Smith,**  
Cabinet Member  
for Adult Social  
Care

Our local account uncovers the rich tapestry of journeys and challenges that shape adult social care across Doncaster. And most importantly: its priorities are made by you.

Some of my highlights are the positive changes underway, created by your priorities. From transforming how we support people right from the first contact by working with people accessing support, to co-producing job adverts and appointments that align with our community's values. We're not just creating spaces; we're co-creating vibrant places within communities, both new and existing, bringing support closer to where people live.

The authenticity of our local account shines through its collaborative creation with the Making it Real Board - real folks in Doncaster who have walked the path of care and support. Since joining the Making it Real Board in June 2023, I've witnessed the Board's invaluable contributions, ensuring our local account remains unfiltered and honest about our challenges ahead. This transparency not only celebrates our successes but also spotlights areas calling for urgent and creative ways of working and solutions.

I invite everyone to join us on this meaningful journey, as we rewrite the narrative of what adult social care can be in Doncaster, using the local account's priorities made BY you. While many challenges lie ahead, I'm thrilled and privileged to be part of the journey.

## Contents

3. Introduction
4. Doncaster's Making it Real Board
5. Adult Social Care practice framework
6. Key facts and figures
9. Working together in 2023 (co-production)
10. Wellbeing and independence
12. Information and advice
14. Active and supportive communities
16. Flexible and integrated care and support
18. When things need to change
20. Workforce
22. Key actions and priorities for 2024
25. Help shape the future of care and support in Doncaster

## Introduction

**Our vision is that every person in Doncaster lives in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to them.**

Sometimes people need some extra help to live good lives, and that's the role of Adult Social Care.

Our purpose is to listen to people seeking some support, understand what matters most to them and the people who love them, and work together to achieve that.

When people require some urgent support, we aim to work with them until there is no immediate risk to their safety, health or wellbeing, and they have regained stability and control in their life.

And if people require longer term support, we work with them to understand what a good life looks like for them, at whatever age or stage of life they are at. We make sure they have the resources and support to live the life they choose and do the things that matter to them, with choice and control over their lives.

**“At its heart, the local account – and our actions, champions the belief that Doncaster Adult Social Care should support us to live our lives authentically - surrounded by loved ones, in communities that embrace our unique identities.**

**I want to give a heartfelt appreciation to the Making It Real Board for all their hard work offering both challenges and the creative hope vital for navigating the national challenges in adult social care. To all the magic-makers who work with and in adult social care, your contributions and hard work are truly appreciated.”**

- Councillor Sarah Smith

## About this report

This report has been co-produced by Doncaster's Adult Social Care Making it Real Board.

It is structured around the six themes of the Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) Making it Real framework.

The report showcases and celebrates what's good, and also gives an honest account of what's not so good. At the end, we've set out the key actions and priorities we've agreed for 2024. Some of these build on our 2023 key actions, because there is still a lot of work to be done. We've added some new actions and priorities too, relating to preparation for adulthood, the adult social care workforce, and equalities, diversity and inclusion.

The content of this report is based on lots of conversations in 2023 with Making it Real Board members, discussions in working groups set up to look at the things that matter most to Doncaster people, and on things we've heard and learned over the last year.

For each theme, we've included:

- **spotlights** on great things going on in Doncaster that we're proud of and we want to celebrate – including the progress we've made against the key actions we agreed for 2023
- **data** to show how we're doing, and how we compare nationally with other councils in England, and locally with the three other councils in South Yorkshire
- **quotes and stories** from Doncaster people who have shared their experiences.

We've also included information about different ways you can work alongside us to help to build better care and support – and better lives – for Doncaster people.

# Doncaster's Making it Real Board

**"I really do feel there's been a real shift in the last year and people are really trying to work together now. That's not always been there, but we're really trying to make things happen now. I'm really happy with it all."**

– Glyn, Making it Real Board co-chair

Our Making it Real Board gives strategic oversight to Adult Social Care in Doncaster, influencing and challenging decisions and agreeing priorities for improvements and developments.

The Board has an equal mix of people with lived experience and senior leaders from Adult Social Care. It's co-chaired by Glyn Butcher – a person with lived experience, and Phil Holmes, Director of Adults, Wellbeing and Culture, and meets once a month.

Board members work together as equal partners to make sure both the practice framework and Making it Real framework are embedded across Adult Social Care, and to make sure we keep making progress against our key actions and priorities.

Find out more about how you can help shape the future of care and support in Doncaster on **page 25** of this report.

**"As civil rights activist James Baldwin aptly put it, "the longer I live, the more deeply I learn that love - whether we call it friendship or family or romance - is the work of mirroring and magnifying each other's light."**

**Here's to the ongoing journey of magnifying each other's light!"**

– Councillor Sarah Smith

## The "I" in Activism

I used to be a woman who was driven to achieve,  
I was taught as a child that my life is all about me.  
As I started to grow I seen the aftermath,  
Many people battling against each other a real blood bath.

There is also an "I" in community and we are part of such,  
Doing things together we can overcome so much.  
At times we all face problems so we require outside support,  
And that is ok even though it goes against what we've been taught.

The reason there's so much separation is because of the education,  
So in order to create change it requires gathering as a nation.  
We can think of others whilst also supporting ourself,  
We can combine our skills to support collective growth and health.

There is no "I" in team it is about all not just self,  
However there is an "AM" because you're not left on a shelf.  
I AM PART OF creates connection and through which we grow,  
Coming together to support brighter futures creating those inner glows.

Thank you for caring about me,

I care about you too.

Together we rise

One love.

**Issachar John**  
**Making it Real Board member**

Written following a Making it Real Board meeting working on creating more inclusive offers for people and communities - September 2023

# Adult Social Care Practice Framework



<b>WHY?</b>	We want every person in Doncaster to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to them.					
	<b>WHO?</b>		<b>HOW?</b>		<b>WHAT?</b>	
	Everybody	People who require urgent support		People who require longer-term support		
	We listen to people to understand what matters to them. We make connections and build relationships to improve people's wellbeing and independence.	We don't make long term plans in a crisis. We work with people until we're sure there is no immediate risk to their safety, health or wellbeing, and they have regained stability and control in their life.		If people need longer-term care and support, we work with them to understand what a good life looks like for them. We make sure they have resources and support to live the life they choose and do the things that matter to them as independently as possible.		
	Hope	Connection	Relationships	Inclusion	Flexibility	Rights
	We focus on possibilities, dreams and aspirations. We don't limit people's choices.	We explore ways to involve people in their communities. We make and maintain meaningful connections.	We support people to keep existing relationships and make sure they have opportunities to build new ones.	We don't judge people or make assumptions. We involve people as equal partners in conversations and decisions about them, their families and their communities.	We are willing and able to adapt. Our approach is responsive and proportionate.	We make sure people know their rights. We promote autonomy, choice and self-determination.
	We're kind	We behave	We're trusting	We're transparent	We're present	We're honest
	We respect and understand people as individuals. We don't make snap judgements.	We know and follow the law, ethics and best practice. We are always open to improvement.	We know people tend to be honest and know what's right for them. We listen and we keep an open mind.	We're open about our rules, making them clear so people know what they can and cannot expect.	We connect and engage well with people. We respond in a timely manner.	We are honest about what we're going to do. When we say we are going to do something, we do it.
	We know the language we use matters. We use plain, respectful and kind language.					
	Wellbeing and independence	Information and advice	Active and supportive communities	Flexible and integrated care and support	When things need to change	Workforce
	Living the life I want, keeping safe and well	Having the information I need, when I need it	Keeping family, friends and connections	My support, my own way	Staying in control	The people who support me
<b>SO?</b>	Better experiences and better lives for Doncaster people		Improved morale and satisfaction for Doncaster's workforce		More sustainable use of resources	

# Key facts and figures

**Around 308,100 people live in Doncaster.**

It's the 15<sup>th</sup> largest city in the UK.

60% of people are aged 18-64

**(184,205 people)**



Almost 20% of people are aged 65 years and over

**(59,851 people)**



20.2% of people living in Doncaster are disabled.



## Unpaid carers

The 2021 Census showed almost 1 in 10 people in Doncaster are unpaid carers, supporting a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who relies on them for help to live their life. We think the actual number is probably much higher.

In 2022 we launched Doncaster's All Age Carers Strategy 'We hear, we listen, we care, if you care', and our Carers Action Group have led the co-production of a report giving an update on progress against the six main priorities in this strategy, and outlining key actions for 2024.

## New requests for support April 2022 - March 2023

We received **4,735** requests to support people aged 18-64 – 1,390 more than in 2021-22.

Almost all requests (96%) came from community routes. Just 3% related to people leaving or being diverted from hospital.

We received **9,195** requests to support people aged 65 and over – an increase of 1,980 from 2021-22.

Most requests (85%) came from community routes. 14.7% related to people leaving or being diverted from hospital.

## These requests led to people accessing:



## People drawing on long-term support by ethnic group April 2022 - March 2023





# Key facts and figures

## People drawing on long-term support April 2022 - March 2023

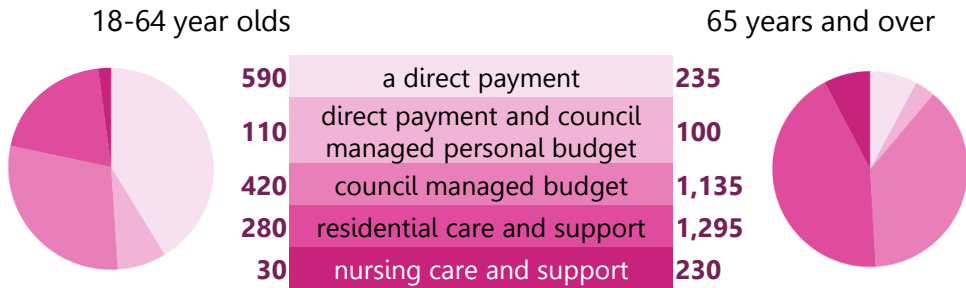
**1,435** people aged 18-64 drew on long-term support – 40 more people than last year.

**3,000** people aged 65 and over drew on long-term support – down from 3,080 people last year.

### The main reason for support was:



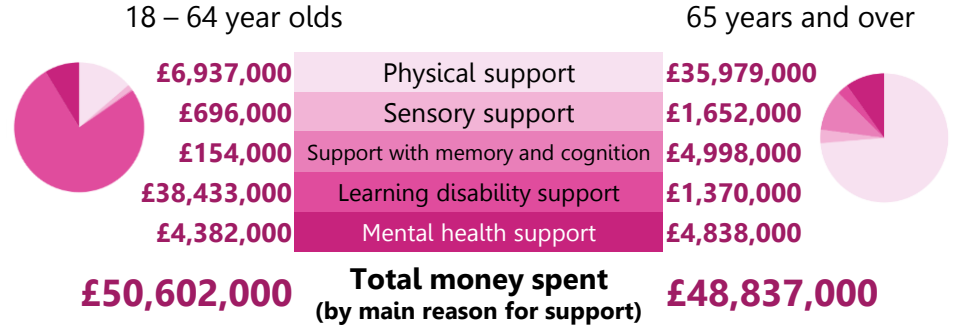
### People's long-term needs for support were met by:



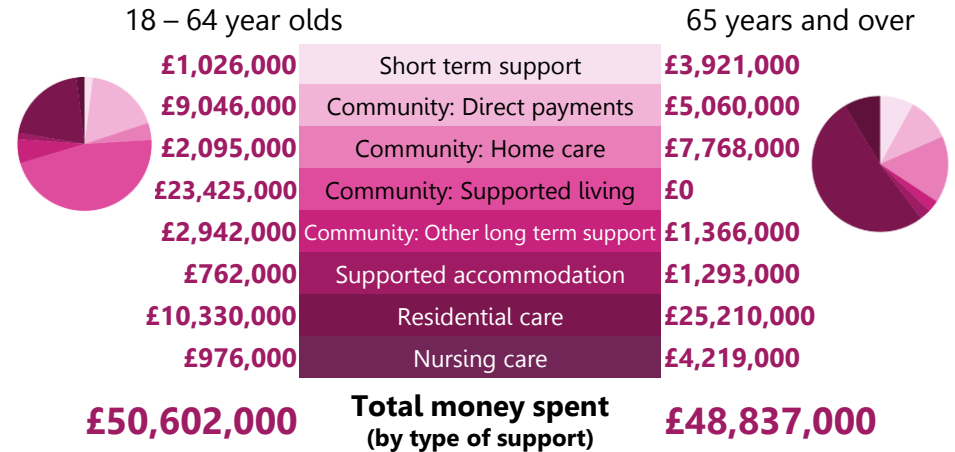
We completed **1,590** review conversations with people drawing on support for over 12 months – two-thirds (67%) of all people drawing on long-term support, up from just 43% last year.

## Money spent on care and support in Doncaster (2022/23)\*

### Total money spent by main reason for support



### Total money spent by type of support



\* These figures represent total money spent on the reasons and type of support listed. They include care and support funded both by the Council and by people who have been assessed as being able to afford to contribute to their care and support.

# Key facts and figures

## People working in care and support in Doncaster (2022/23)\*

In 2022/23 there were an estimated **9,200** jobs in adult social care in Doncaster – up from 8,700 in 2021/22.

Approximately 8,600 of those posts were filled, split between the council (9%), independent sector providers (80%), roles working for direct payment recipients (6%) and other sectors (4%).

The staff turnover rate across the independent sector and the council was 33%, which is higher than the national average of 28% and regional average of 30%.

The majority (85%) of the social care workforce in the independent sector and at the council were female, and the average age of workers was 45 years old.

Fewer than one in ten workers (9%) were on zero-hours contracts. Around two thirds (61%) of the workforce usually worked full-time hours and 39% were part-time.

\*Data from Doncaster summary (skillsforcare.org.uk)



## A note on the data in this report

Most data in this report comes from two main sources:

- Information from the records we – and other councils – keep about the people we support and serve. All Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities send local data every year to NHS Digital.
- The results of the national 2022-23 Adult Social Care Survey.

Around **375** people who draw on care and support in Doncaster completed the survey between January and March 2023.

Overall people who draw on care and support from 149 out of 152 Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities in England took part in the 2022-23 survey.

We've included our statistics, and information about how we compare with the other three councils in South Yorkshire (Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield) and with the other councils across England that took part in the Adult Social Care Survey last year.

More detailed data is available for Doncaster and all other councils on the NHS Digital Adult Social Care Analytical Hub.

The work is wonderful, it's going to make a huge difference to me. The whole team from start to finish have been fantastic.

A banner for 'Proud to Care Doncaster' featuring a woman in a blue uniform and a light blue surgical mask. The text on the banner includes: 'Proud to Care DONCASTER', 'Find out more and apply for a range of care roles in doncaster', 'GET IN TOUCH 01302 737908', and 'proudtocare@doncaster.gov.uk'. There are green star icons on the banner.



## Working together in 2023 (co-production)

### Key action for 2023

Increase opportunities for local people with lived experience of care and support to influence Doncaster's approach, from improving our services to recruiting the right people.

### What we've done in 2023

We've increased the membership of the Making it Real Board in 2023, so more people with lived experience are now involved in strategic decision making. We've also set up working groups with a mix of people working in Adult Social Care and people with lived experience, to focus on making each of our key actions happen.

We co-produced the job description and job advert for our Carers Strategic Lead with carers, who were also fully involved in the shortlisting and interviewing. We also involved an equal mix of senior leaders and people with lived experience in the interview panels for the recruitment of our new Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships, and two Heads of Service.

We've co-produced guidance for involving people with lived experience in recruitment and selection, based on our learning this year.

We co-designed and co-facilitated a staff conference on our new approach to access to care and support in August 2023, and our Festival of practice in November 2023.

And we've paid people with lived experience for their time on more than 50 occasions, in line with our co-production payments policy.

**Co-production** happens when people with lived experience work alongside people working in organisations on an equal basis, to agree what good looks like, and to work together to achieve it.



**“My experience of being involved with the whole process of recruiting a new Carers Strategic Lead felt as if we as carers were valued, listened to and were an important part of the process.”**

- Debbie, Carers Action Group

**“I feel proud of myself. I feel proud that I have been asked to be part of this work, that my views and experience are seen as important. It's felt very inclusive from start to finish.”**

- Helen, Access to Care and Support Working Group

**“Being involved in the staff conference was great. Doing things together – no them and us.”**

- Mark, Access to Care and Support Working Group

**“We get stuff done around here.”**

- Glyn, Making it Real Board

**“We're in there and at it.”**

- Wendy, Making it Real Board



# Wellbeing and independence

## Living the life I want, keeping safe and well

### Key actions for 2023

Reduce bureaucracy and delays by improving local access to care and support and safeguarding, and making sure that all conversations start with what matters to people

Improve local access to social work and occupational therapy that works preventatively alongside people and communities to increase their quality of life

Increase the number of people who maintain or regain their independence by improving access to equipment, technology and housing support

We feel we're moving forward at last. Your reassurance, kindness and above all respect towards our situation is so very much appreciated.

Once I contacted your team, you responded very swiftly, so thank you very much.

I have for over 12 months been asking for a social worker to help my daughter. This has not happened, and I feel the local authority is letting her down.

### Feeling safe

Almost three quarters (73%) of people who draw on care and support in Doncaster who responded to the survey say they feel as safe as they want to. We're ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> nationally and first in South Yorkshire for this indicator, with younger adults generally reporting feeling safer than older adults.

The majority of people who draw on care and support in Doncaster who responded to the survey (92%) say that their care and support services help them to feel safe. Doncaster is ranked 11th nationally and second in South Yorkshire for this measure.

We aim to complete all safeguarding enquiries in 130 days. Our data shows that in 2023 it took an average of 145 days to complete a safeguarding enquiry. Our data for 2023 also shows that 75% of people experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, felt safer after we supported them – an increase from 70% in 2022.

**"It's just about walking along alongside somebody and that's really, really powerful in itself"** - Issachar, Making it Real Board

We've significantly reduced the length of time people have to wait for conversations with social care workers and occupational therapists. It took an average of 42 days for social work teams to complete assessment conversations with people in 2023, down from 51 days in 2022. And it took an average of just 2 days to complete Occupational Therapy assessments with people in 2023, compared to an average of 137 days in 2022!

### Living in a place called 'home'

Over three quarters (78%) of adults with a learning disability in Doncaster live in their own home or with their family. Doncaster is ranked 109 nationally and third in South Yorkshire for this measure.

Half of adults in contact with secondary mental health services live independently with or without support.

We're ranked 124 nationally and first in South Yorkshire for the number of younger adults (aged 18-64) with long-term care and support needs who live in residential and nursing care homes (19.5 per 100,000). We rank 126 nationally and third in South Yorkshire for the number of older adults (aged 65 and over) with long-term care and support needs who live in residential and nursing care homes (720 per 100,000).





# Wellbeing and independence

## Living the life I want, keeping safe and well

### What we've done in 2023

We've made changes to how we support people when they first contact us for support – designing these changes together with people with lived experience and our workforce, based around five principles we agreed together: personal, local, timely, collaborative, and equal.

We've made it easier for people to contact us to ask for support, including introducing a new online contact form.

People told us they don't want to have to continue to repeat their information to several different workers, so we've prioritised relationships and continuity in our new approach. We've removed our centralised first contact team, so when people contact us they are immediately connected to a named worker from their local team and provided with the team's contact details. This means people know who to contact, and it also means they're supported by a team with knowledge of the resources and support available in the person's local area.

We've made some changes to how we record these conversations, introducing a new conversation record to support workers to write information about what matters most to people and how we'll work together to achieve that, and meaning workers spend less time on the paperwork and more time with people.

We've also made significant changes in relation to our Accessible Housing register, meaning people who need to move to adapted homes can do so in a more timely manner.

**"How we have got there has been our 'greatest success' – 18 months of co-production with people with lived experience and our staff!"**

- Annika, Access to Care and Support Working Group

**'We have gone back to basics but that has been what was needed. Often overlooked but important – how do we have good conversations with people.'**

- Glyn, Access to Care and Support Working Group



### Quality of life

Doncaster ranks quite highly compared with other councils in England in relation to how people who draw on care and support feel about their quality of life – a significant improvement on the 2021-22 measures.

We're ranked 27th nationally, out of all the Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities who took part in the 2022-23 Adult Social Care survey – up from 146th last year – and second (up from third last year) out of the four councils in South Yorkshire.

Our score was 39th nationally and second locally for older adults aged 65 and over, while the score for younger adults aged 18-64 was 32nd nationally and first locally.

**We are really proud that we have significantly reduced the waiting times for an assessment in adult social care. This means that people are not waiting for long periods of time before they see a social care worker.**

- Annika, Access to Care and Support Working Group

**"Being more visible to the community and creating more opportunities is definitely giving the team a renewed sense of achievement and pride".**

- Team leader

**"I do genuinely believe that this approach is really positive. I really do love this way of working."**

- Social worker





## Information and advice

Having the information I need, when I need it

### Key action for 2023

Make sure that we make public information and advice about rights (including to independent advocacy), responsibilities and sources of support routinely available



### Finding information

Almost two-thirds of people (62%) who draw on care and support in Doncaster who responded to the survey – and who had tried to find information and advice in the last year – felt information about support and services was very or fairly easy to find. However, over a third of people reported they felt it was either fairly or very difficult to find information. We rank 126th in England for this indicator and fourth in South Yorkshire.

“I am at a loss and cannot comprehend the lack of information coming forward as to what the actual process is and no communication on timescales.”

“I rang someone the other week. The telephone number didn't even work.”

**“When someone gives me a telephone number as a means of access and tells me to ring it myself, I don't ring it. They don't know about the anxiety. That you're already overwhelmed in that space and then to have to do that and explain it all again and do it all again. It's like, just leave it. I'll just sit in this problem. I can't be bothered.”**

Issachar, Information and advice working group



### Woodlands Library

In the past year, Woodlands Community Library has blossomed into a dynamic community, arts, and support hub in Woodlands, Doncaster.

Beyond the traditional library role, this space thrives with a rich tapestry of events, groups, and services, including initiatives like Your Place and partnerships with organisations such as the MIND charity and the Great North Medical GP practice. Local people contribute to diverse activities like our Wellbeing Reading Group and Art Groups. From menopause support workshops to daily communal lunches, family activities, and literary, artistic and craft events, the library has become a central point of connection for residents of all ages, including the remarkable 101-year-old Bernard, who never misses a good lunch!

Since its relaunch in October 2022, the library has become a haven for connection, creativity, and support, thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers. These volunteers, many of whom are disabled, play a crucial role in creating a space centred on belonging and safety. Led by our invaluable head volunteer, Liz White, this team ensures that Woodlands Library is more than a place; it's a community treasure.

In this supportive environment, people feel empowered to make time for themselves and their communities, embodying the essence of good social care. We want this place to grow and be used more by people working in social care to connect residents to what's close to them, and for them to be a part of this story as well!





## Information and advice

Having the information I need, when I need it

### What we've done in 2023

We set up an information and advice working group, with a mix of people working in Adult Social Care, and people with lived experience, to focus initially on:

- improving information about people's legal rights
- making sure our public information is tailored to people's individual needs, and provided in a timely and proportionate way
- co-producing the structure and content of the 'Support for Adults' section of the Your Life Doncaster website.

Our information and advice working group has co-produced clear and simple easy-read information to support people to understand their rights.

There is information about human rights, disability rights, carers' rights and rights to fair treatment. There's also information about people's right to care and support and right to make decisions about their lives, and information to help people if they feel their rights aren't being met, as well as how to complain.

This information is available on the Your Life Doncaster website. Next year we will make this information available in more formats, to make it even more accessible.

We've also co-designed a new structure for the 'Support for Adults' section of the Your Life Doncaster website, to make it easier for people to find information.

We're developing standards for public information and a style guide containing information to support people to use language that is plain, respectful and kind. Anyone producing information about care and support in the council will be expected to follow these standards. The working group will use the standards and style guide to approve all new public information.

**"To get to the draft information pages like this is fabulous. In my opinion it's the furthest we have ever got in producing an abundance of accessible information."**

– Liz, Information and advice working group

**"This looks good. Very informative."**

– Karen, Information and advice working group

**"You're not gonna be thinking about your rights til your rights are affected. And that's when you start looking for your rights. When you know they're not being met."**

– Wendy, Information and advice working group

**"People are exhausted and overwhelmed. They've often had a lot of information thrown at them already, and they can't navigate through it. So, it's just about keeping it simple."**

– Issachar, Information and advice working group



## **Active and supportive communities** Keeping family, friends and connections

### **Key action for 2023**

Create and sustain more employment opportunities for autistic people, people with a learning disability and people in contact with secondary mental health services

### **Spending time with family and friends**

Less than half (48%) of the people who draw on care and support in Doncaster who responded to the survey report that they have as much social contact as they would like. Doncaster ranks 42nd nationally and second locally for this measure – up from last place both nationally and locally last year.

### **Being active and involved in communities**

40% of people who draw on care and support who responded to the survey feel they can spend their time as they want, doing things they value or enjoy. 22% of people feel they don't do enough things they value or enjoy, and 7% don't do anything they value or enjoy.

35% of people living in residential care homes and 66% of people in nursing care homes who responded to the survey said that they don't leave their home. 23% of people who draw on care and support but don't live in residential care homes said they don't leave their home.

Overall, almost a third of people (30%) who draw on care and support in Doncaster who responded to the survey reported that they don't leave their home.

Just 28% of people say they can get to all the places in their local area that they want to. 20% of people find this difficult and 23% of people say they are not able to get to all the places that they want to.

### **Steven**

Stirling SMILE supports people to learn the skills they need to do the things that matter to them. Every person has something to give and likes to feel the sense of pride and achievement of taking part.

Steven says: "staff supported me to learn how to make toast in the big toaster. I can do it by myself now and I make it to sell for breakfast at the centre. I like doing this as it stops people being hungry and I feel good and useful.

I also go to SMILE Horticulture Learning Centre. I waited a long time to go back and am really happy that staff have helped me to do this. I like working with Emma – she's the boss, Neil and Dom. We are a good team. I go out with them to help with people's gardens – I like to be busy and helping older people.

I go to the allotment and help to grow food. We sell this so we can choose what seeds we need to buy for planting next year. I love doing this. It's good to see things grow but not good when it floods and ruins our plants. We don't give up, I help clean up and start planting again.

I have a busy life and I like it. SMILE staff help me to learn things so I can do a good job and help others. It makes me very happy."



Today, due to the efforts of both [social care workers], [people] enjoyed a wonderful days outing on a canal boat sailing between Swinton and Conisbrough. I can appreciate the amount of work this entails to make this possible. As a result of the enthusiasm and dedication of these two young ladies the outing went without any problems. The group were favoured with a lovely sunny day which allowed the party to enjoy the views in the open. I understand a lovely buffet lunch on board was enjoyed by all."



## Active and supportive communities Keeping family, friends and connections

## Having opportunities to learn, volunteer and work

Just 4% of adults with a learning disability in Doncaster are in paid employment. We rank 78th nationally and second in South Yorkshire.

11% of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in Doncaster are in paid employment.

### Charlton

Before his involvement with the Local Supported Employment (LSE) Initiative, Charlton had been out of work for two years and this was impacting on his self esteem and mental health. He'd tried other forms of employment support, but they didn't suit Charlton.

He joined the LSE initiative in March. The LSE worker helped him to create an action plan around the things that mattered most to him. They discussed his skills and looked at jobs he might enjoy. Initially Charlton wasn't keen to leave his local area, but after identifying different coping strategies, they started to meet weekly at the library in the city centre. Each week Charlton became more confident and started going out alone. He also joined a social group at a local church, which has led to him meeting new friends.

After seven weeks Charlton attended his first informal interview with support, and got the job. He's been there since May - the longest he's worked anywhere. We worked with the employer to arrange in-work support for Charlton and he also has access to mental health first aiders at work. This has helped him move into working in different areas of the organisation.

Without this support, Charlton would have struggled to gain employment. He says **"I feel a lot happier and its given me the confidence that I haven't been able to get anywhere else"**.

**"When I think back to over a year ago, we had one or two 'paid' providers that we used to refer people to, to support people to get into work. These services aren't free. We have come a long, long way from this. It's now about connections, support, connecting people up with what exists in their community and identifying opportunities for people to access."**

- Jake, Employment working group

### What we've done in 2023

We've set up an employment working group, with a mix of people working in the council, and people with lived experience, to increase the number of disabled people in jobs that match their skills, interests and abilities. We've also set up an employment support group where staff can share knowledge and provide peer support and ideas of how to unblock barriers for people to gain employment.

We've joined the Local Supported Employment (LSE) Initiative and introduced a new dedicated worker in the community learning disability team to support people to find work by helping with things like CV writing, interview practice, confidence building and using public transport to get to interviews. We're aiming to support 27 people with a learning disability to gain paid employment over the next two years.

Our Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Boards have started to scrutinise the data that exists within the council in relation to the number of autistic people and people with a learning disability we employ, and asked key partner organisations to share their data too.



# Flexible and integrated care and support

## My support, my own way

### Key actions for 2023

Make support at home more accessible to people who need it by developing a more personalised and local approach that improves satisfaction and outcomes

Increase the choice and control that people report when they use direct payments

### Having choice and control over care and support

Four in ten people drawing on care and support in Doncaster receive a direct payment. Doncaster ranks highly (9th in the country and first locally) for the number of people who receive direct payments, ranking 5th nationally and first locally for the number of 18-64 year old direct payment recipients and 14th nationally and first locally for the number of people aged 65 and over who receive direct payments.

Two-thirds of people (62%) said they have enough choice over their care and support, and 83% of people said they felt that care and support services help them to have control over their daily life.

We're 51<sup>st</sup> in the country in terms of people who draw on care and support feeling they have as much control over their daily life as they want – up from 100<sup>th</sup> last year – but fourth locally. Only 30% of people said they have as much control over their daily life as they want, while 49% of people said they have adequate control, 14% of people said they have some control but not enough, and 7% of people said they have no control over their daily life.

"Thank you so much for all your help in getting this care plan all sorted for us. It's been a long drawn out process but we got there in the end. I feel a lot better to not have to worry about this now."

"My mum was placed in [a] dementia unit last February/March 2022. She should have received an annual review which she never had. No one has been in contact with us either."



### Satisfaction with care and support

Two thirds (65%) of people who draw on care and support who responded to the survey said they were extremely or very satisfied with their care and support and a further 24% were quite satisfied. This is very similar to last year.

Doncaster ranks 75th nationally in terms of the percentage of people who draw on care and support who are satisfied with the care and support they receive – just above the average score for the country. We rank third out of the four councils in South Yorkshire.

Satisfaction is lower among older adults (we rank 87<sup>th</sup> nationally and second locally) than younger adults (we rank 36 nationally and third locally), and much lower for men (128<sup>th</sup> nationally and fourth locally) than women (33<sup>rd</sup> nationally and second locally).

"I'm disgusted and appalled by the lack of support and compassion for me and my needs. Asking for help is encouraged but when you are consistently let down not listened to dismissed and made to feel like [you are] not worthy of support something is seriously wrong."

"Despite a number of phone calls and many conversations, the care fell short of the agreed contract from the start of care until the end."





## Flexible and integrated care and support

### My support, my own way

#### What we've done in 2023

We've listened to people who live in Supported Living accommodation, and their families, to understand what works well for them and what they would want to see in the services we commission in the future. We used the 'Deciding Together' process to make decisions with people drawing on support about the commissioning of support providers.

We've listened to feedback about our Managed Accounts service, which provides finance and payroll support to people with direct payments, to reflect changes within the new commissioned service.

We worked with our commissioned home support providers to increase capacity through recruitment and retention to ensure people are able to access the support they need in a timely way.

**"Being involved allowed me to do my very best for my family member as I am representing him, his life, and his future. Being invited to the Deciding Together session has been valuable to me and I would definitely be happy to be involved again".**

Supported Living family member representative

**"People have shared their experience and given us valuable insight into their lives. This has enriched the outcome of our commissioning activities, and we will continue to grow, learn and develop our practice and strengthen our services through continued co-production."**

Commissioning Officer

#### Wendy and Kyla

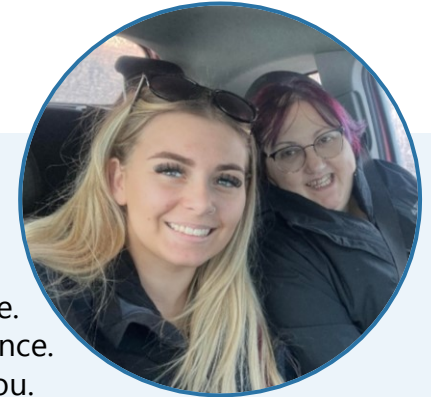
**Wendy:** "Having a personal assistant (PA) has made it possible for me to stay independent and still live at home. The big thing for me is my independence. I can attend all these meetings with you.

Like Kyla just got me online, because I didn't have a clue. She took me yesterday to a meeting where we had dinner and everything. [That] doesn't seem a lot to people but to me that keeps me buzzing for a week because I'm getting my fingers stuck in all them pies.

I stand up on treetops and shout about [direct payments] all the time. I tell people that though it's a ball ache at the beginning, once you've got it and you know you're sorted, you can have a really good life and that is what's important. But the best thing about having a PA with me is I still get to be a wife and I still get to be a mother and a granny."

**Kyla:** "I've never done anything like this before. I've always worked in pubs and stuff like that. And coming from an environment like that to here, it's just amazing. Even if we just go to the shop or go out for the day or we go for some food or we watch a film together, things like that, it makes such a massive difference to Wendy's life, but it does to mine as well because it makes me leave work knowing I've made her feel happy today. She just needs someone there to support her. And I will do that."

**Wendy:** "When Kyla came and she'd never done care before, I thought this is great. I can mould her. She can learn her job and we can learn together you know. I thought - we're going to be a good team."





## When things need to change

### Staying in control

#### Key actions for 2023

Help more people to leave hospital and mental health in-patient stays promptly, increasing the proportion of people who return home and regain independence



#### Regaining skills, confidence and independence

Doncaster has improved since last year in terms of the number of older people (aged 65 and over) offered reablement services following discharge from hospital. Reablement services are free for up to six weeks, and support people to retain or regain their skills, confidence and independence while they're recovering from being unwell. We are ranked 93 nationally for this measure (up from 123rd last year) and second in South Yorkshire – up from fourth in 2021-22.

81% of older people (aged 65 and over) were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services. We rank 90th nationally and third out of the four councils in South Yorkshire.

"After her discharge from hospital she had Steps carers that were amazing for six weeks after which time she was changed over to [provider] and no financial contribution was ever mentioned or signed for."

"I would like to express a big thank you to you and your team for all your support yesterday when my mum found herself in A&E following a fall. Once I contacted your team, you responded very swiftly. [The social worker] messaged me to keep me updated, showing care and consideration. [He] went above and beyond. He visited my mum in A&E, spoke to the physios, the medical team and to the care home all in the space of a very short time. He kept me fully updated throughout the afternoon. I felt I needed to commend your staff, what an amazing team."

#### Charlie

Before Charlie was admitted to hospital he enjoyed life - living independently in his own home in the community. Following a nasty fall and treatment in hospital he remained unable to bear any weight on his leg. Charlie was extremely keen to return home but acknowledged that things had changed following the fall and that he may need some additional help at home. Charlie initially moved from hospital into a short stay home with the aim of putting things in place to support his wish to return home as soon as possible.

Our social care worker worked jointly with the Community Physiotherapy Service, Home First HEART (Home Alarm Service) and a local care provider to arrange for support for Charlie to return home and have a bit of help with things like getting washed and dressed, and doing the laundry. Charlie was incredibly pleased to be going home.

Fast forward four weeks and Charlie told us that he didn't think he needed the additional support that was put in place. He was back to living his life as he had prior to going to hospital - spending quality time with his daughters, and visiting the local market which he loves to do.

The worker received positive feedback from both Charlie and his family, who thanked them for "everything they'd done" and for being "a great help in supporting dad, getting him home and back to his old self."



## When things need to change

### Staying in control

#### Sam and Lee

Working in the mental health ward multi-disciplinary team means my role sometimes involves challenging other professionals. A great example of this is my work with Lee.

Attending Lee's ward rounds, I observed that most of the discussion in meetings about Lee appeared to focus on risk. Risk appeared to be the lens through which the team viewed Lee's progress and upon which decisions about his discharge from the ward appeared to be based.

Ward rounds should give people the chance to be involved in discussions about their care, but Lee was only invited in at the end of each ward round, once decisions had been agreed by the team. I challenged this because I felt that Lee had become marginalised and his voice wasn't being heard, and asked that the ward rounds were changed so Lee could be present for the whole of his meetings.

I spent time getting to know Lee and what was important to him. He told me that he struggled to understand information he'd been given about his illness. He felt quite embarrassed about this. I worked with the team on the ward to make sure any information provided to Lee was accessible and that time was spent explaining any written information.

Lee asked if I could continue to support him while he was on the mental health ward. We continued to spend time talking about what was important to Lee, what he felt would keep him well and what help he needed to stay well. I supported Lee to make notes for his ward rounds to prepare for things he wanted to say, to ensure his views were heard by the whole team.

#### What we've done in 2023

We've made some changes to our in-house learning disability direct care services. This means we can better support people who are in crisis, and help more people leave places that restrict their freedom – like mental health hospitals.

Social workers are now part of the teams who support people receiving treatment on mental health wards to recover and leave hospital.

A 'hospital to home service' has been introduced (delivered by the People Focused Group (PFG)) to help people to return home from hospital.

The Mentally Well Alliance continues to grow. This alliance meets on a monthly basis. It brings together a range of partners and people with lived experience to drive forward positive changes to improve the support provided to people with mental health challenges.

We've started to connect with people who have experienced receiving support as an inpatient on the mental health wards to identify any challenges to supporting people to be discharged and return home in a timely way.

We've really focused this year on reducing the number of people with a learning disability who are in hospital. We've supported a number of people with a learning disability to leave long stay hospitals and return to living in the community.



## Workforce

The people who support me

### Key actions for 2023

Reduce the number of people living with restrictions on their liberty by increasing understanding of human rights and mental capacity legislation

### What we've done in 2023

We've established a mental capacity forum, where workers meet up to reflect on practice, consider legal literacy and share best practice.

Our staff Festival of Practice in November 2023 had a focus on working towards 'gloriously ordinary lives' for people in Doncaster, with a particular focus on citizenship and human rights.

We've continued to develop our 'innovation site approach', based on learning from Partners4Change. Innovation sites are spaces to try out new ways of working, where workers involved have permission to experiment, and where we can learn through stories and data about the impact of new ways of working, and build evidence to inform wider practice change.

Each site runs for 12 weeks, during which workers meet regularly with the senior leadership team to share evidence around progress, and discuss how bureaucratic barriers to change can be addressed and removed. There is ongoing evaluation to understand the impact on Doncaster people, our workforce and our budget.

Learning from our first innovation site informed our new approach to access to care and support, and has led to more teams adopting a successful 'huddle' approach to decision making in teams.

**'The huddles have been a great success'** – Team leader

"From [being assigned] to Mum, [social worker] has been approachable, professional and thorough, her commitment to clients and her approach with family members is second to none. She has been amazing from the moment we met her and has gone above and beyond to ensure the right care and situation is reached for all of us. Again this is to commend her and all she has done and is doing for our family.

**"In the last three weeks, I've been a bed builder, flat pack extraordinaire, fridge de-fumigator, tea-maker, personal shopper, light-bulb changer and admin assistant but most importantly I guess a friendly, supportive social worker. All in a days work. 😊"**

**Social work is all about building relationships and connecting with what is important to the person at that time."**

Sam – Mental Health Ward Social Worker



Our Adult Central Locality Team were Adult Services **'Team of the year'** 2023 finalists at the Social Worker of the Year Awards in November – recognised for the great work they've done to improve access to care and support.



# Workforce

## The people who support me



### Adult Social Care Festival of Practice 2023

We held our second autumn Festival of practice in November 2023.

The week long festival was aimed at all adult social care staff, as well as people with experience of drawing on care and support.

The theme – identified and agreed by members of the Making it Real Board – was working towards ‘gloriously ordinary lives’ for people in Doncaster, with a particular focus on citizenship and human rights.

We had ten webinar sessions during the week on topics including relational working, peer support, citizenship, direct payments and social care and the law, with a range of speakers sharing relevant lived and learned experience.

Making it Real Board member Wendy opened our main conference day on the Wednesday, with Councillor Sarah Smith welcoming everyone and sharing her own personal experience of drawing on care and support. We heard from brilliant key note speakers, and had a series of workshops, including sessions on understanding neurodivergence, equipment and assistive technology, and peer support, which were all co-facilitated by members of the Making it Real Board.

Here’s some of the feedback from the week. **“Really enjoyed and inspired, thank you”**

**“Interactive informing enlightening thought provoking.”**

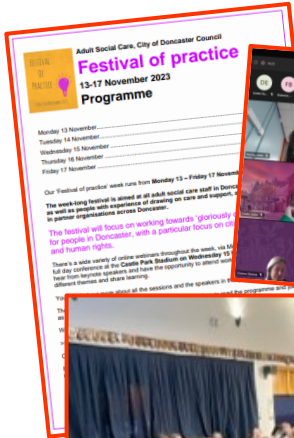
**“Really forward and free thinking atmosphere.”**

**“It was refreshing not to hear buzz-words but practical and achievable ideas.”**

**“Feel valued and supported as a worker.”**

**“Keynote speakers and their messages were brilliant. I loved how the first two speakers linked their topics to their lived experience. They made this relatable.”**

**“The most interesting and moving session I have ever attended”**



# Key actions and priorities for 2024

## 1 Increase opportunities for local people with lived experience of care and support to influence Doncaster's approach, from improving our services to recruiting the right people

In 2024 we will

- review our co-production payments policy and fund, to understand the impact it has had so far, and to ensure that people with lived experience continue to be recognised and rewarded for their time and expertise.
- explore opportunities for developing peer support worker roles within Adult Social Care, in recognition of the importance and value of peer support
- co-produce a 'glimpse of the future' to describe how we anticipate local people will experience care and support in Doncaster in three years' time.
- continue to embed co-production across all our work, with a particular focus on the 'heart and soul stuff' and the 'day-to-day stuff' to make sure that no decisions about people are made without them being fully involved.



## 2 Make sure that we make public information and advice about rights (including to independent advocacy), responsibilities and sources of support routinely available

As well as co-producing more content, in 2024 we'll

- take a more proactive approach to information and advice, linking in with the work on improving access to care and support
- focus on supporting people to make and maintain meaningful connections rather than just signposting people to sources of information, advice and support
- develop our approach to advocacy, so we tell more people about their rights to advocacy and representation and make sure these services are available
- do more work on changing the story of social care in Doncaster, so people know and trust that they can get the support they require to live the lives they choose to lead.

## 3 Continue to improve local, timely access to care and support, making sure we listen to people seeking support, their families and local communities to understand what matters most to them

In 2024, we'll focus on

- becoming more visible and physically present in communities – working from within community bases
- build on our 'think local' principle, supporting social care workers to spend time finding out what resources exist in local communities, and to build connections and relationships within their locality.
- make safeguarding personal – reducing bureaucracy and delays and ensuring that safeguarding is based on relationships and what matters most to people
- improve our assistive technology offer, supporting more people to use assistive technology to live their life in the way that they choose.



## Key actions and priorities for 2024

### 4 Create and sustain more employment opportunities for disabled people in Doncaster.

In 2024 we will

- develop and commit to employment standards so we can show how we apply these standards in practice
- increase opportunities within the council and partner organisations for employment of autistic people and people with a learning disability
- work alongside people with lived experience to identify and attempt to remove some of the barriers to gaining employment that disabled people face
- increase support for disabled people to stay in work.

### 5 Increase the choice and control people have over their support at home, whether they choose to have a direct payment or to have care and support arranged by the council.

In 2024, we'll

- co-produce accessible information about direct payments to increase people's awareness about how they work, and to support social care workers to actively promote them
- improve the advice and support available to people receiving or considering a direct payment, including in relation to the recruitment and management of personal assistants, to enable people to make the best use of their personal budget
- ensure our organisational policies and procedures reflect our legal duties in relation to direct payments and do not inadvertently restrict people's choice and control
- listen to people drawing on home support to understand how they feel about the support they currently receive, and make sure people with lived experience are fully involved in shaping our future approach to support at home
- test out a co-designed approach to home support in specific local areas to learn about what works well for people, communities and partners, and to inform further development of this support.

### 6 Support more people to live in a place they call home by helping more people to leave hospital and mental health in-patient stays promptly, and reducing the number of people living with restrictions on their liberty.

In 2024 we will

- increase the number of people who are able to safely return to their own home after a hospital stay, rather than having to move to a care home either temporarily or permanently
- continue to build on the work started to listen and connect to the experiences of people who have received support on the mental health wards in Doncaster, to identify any barriers to people being discharged and returning home and what needs to happen to remove these barriers.
- co-produce accessible information about people's rights when they are in a mental health hospital and when they leave hospital

# Key actions and priorities for 2024

**7 Improve our support for young people who require care and support in their teenage years and into early adulthood, to make sure they can plan ahead and have enough time to make informed decisions about their future.**

In 2024 we will

- improve how we use information and data to identify young people who require support from adult social care early – so that we can provide proactive, timely support, building relationships with young people to help them plan and prepare for their future as an adult, focusing on their goals and aspirations in life
- review and make changes to our existing arrangements for supporting young people preparing for adulthood, based on best practice and what young people tell us could improve
- develop and co-produce with young people and their parents a preparation for adulthood charter, which will set out expectations and standards for what young people and their families can expect from us when moving to drawing on support as an adult.

**8 Develop and support the wellbeing of Doncaster's adult social care workforce so they can support Doncaster people to live their best lives.**

In 2024 we'll continue to embed our Workforce strategy by

- working on recruitment and retention initiatives and campaigns to promote a positive image of social care as a rewarding, challenging and fulfilling career
- increasing values-based recruitment to attract and retain the workforce we need
- developing roles to ensure the social care workforce are more visible and active in communities, using strengths-based approaches to work alongside people who require care and support to ensure they are supported to live the lives they choose
- developing and enhancing the skills of both paid and unpaid carers so they can support the people they care for and about to flourish
- continuing to develop peer support networks so workers can share ideas and issues, and draw on support from colleagues in similar roles or circumstances, or with shared experiences.

**9 Improve equality, diversity and inclusion**

In 2024 we'll

- co-produce a shared commitment to improve cultural competency across adult social care, benefitting Doncaster people and the workforce
- introduce a programme of leadership development, including reverse mentoring, to ensure senior managers lead by example
- improve the effectiveness of staff equality, diversity and inclusion training by connecting with wider adult social care changes that seek to build on inclusion and respect for human rights
- develop diversity networks and champions that bring people together to provide support, build empathy and influence policy.



# Help shape the future of care and support in Doncaster

We have three main ambitions in Adult Social Care. We want Doncaster people seeking and drawing on care and support to have better experiences and better lives. We want to improve the morale and satisfaction of Doncaster’s adult social care workforce. And we want to make more sustainable use of resources.



We think we’ve come a long way in 2023, and we’re proud of what we’ve achieved together. But we also know there is lots more to do.

Making it Real Board members have decided our key actions and priorities for 2024. Now we need more people with lived experience to work alongside people working in Adult Social Care to make these priorities real.

This is your opportunity to help shape care and support across Doncaster. There are lots of ways to get involved.

Maybe you’d like to help recruit new members of staff to make sure we’re selecting the right people. Or you might want to help to create accessible public information, in formats that work for you. Or use your personal experience of direct payments or home support to make changes that benefit you and lots of other people across our city. Or you might have your own suggestions for things you feel could be better. You might even like to join our Making it Real Board, and help to hold us to account on the things we’ve said we’ll do in 2024, and to shape our priorities for 2025.

If you’d like to know more about getting involved, please talk to your social worker or email [coproduction@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:coproduction@doncaster.gov.uk)



## Paying people for their time and expertise

Co-production starts from the idea that no one group or person is more important than any other group or person. Everyone is involved as an equal, and valued for the unique knowledge, skills, experience and aspirations they bring. There are responsibilities and expectations on everyone, and people involved should receive something back for putting something in.

In 2022 we introduced a ‘co-production payments policy’ to ensure a consistent, fair and equitable way of recognising and rewarding people with lived experience who work alongside people working in Adult Social Care, for example through participation in Making it Real Board meetings, working groups, project teams, recruitment and selection, and learning and development.

The policy means that we will pay people with lived experience for their time and expertise, as well as travel and any other expenses, if they are involved in co-production and if they are contributing either in a personal capacity or as the representative of an organisation that does not already pay them or cover their expenses.

**‘Strong relationships have been built, and these have been built from trust. This is what has made the difference in supporting these changes to be a success. It has also changed our relationships with social workers and how we see social care.’**

- Glyn, Access to Care and Support Working Group



# Your care and support: Doncaster 2024



City of  
Doncaster  
Council



2024



# Your care and support: Doncaster Adult Social Care Local Account 2024



## Easy read report

Co-produced by the  
Adult Social Care Making it Real Board,  
City of Doncaster Council

# About this report



This is an easy read report about Adult Social Care in Doncaster.

Adult Social Care helps people to live good lives.



This report tells you about what things are like for people in Doncaster who are supported by Adult Social Care.

It tells you about things that are going well.



It also tells you about things that we need to improve.



At the end, it tells you about the nine things we want to do in 2024 to improve Adult Social Care in Doncaster.

People from the Making it Real Board have worked on the report together.



The Making it Real Board includes people with lived experience and people who work for Doncaster Council.

# About social care in Doncaster



We want every person in Doncaster to live in a place they call home.



We want people to be able to share their lives with people and things that they love.



We want people to feel part of communities that help each other.



We want people to be able to do things that matter to them.



Adult Social Care supports people who need some extra help to live a good life.

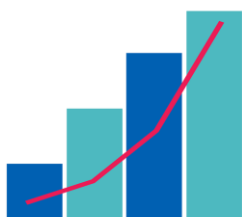


Our purpose is to listen to people to understand what that good life looks like for them, and to work together to achieve that.

# Facts and figures



This page gives you some information about how many people were supported by Adult Social Care between April 2022 and March 2023.



A lot of people asked for support from Adult Social Care last year – more than in the year before.

We had 4,735 requests to support people aged 18-64. This was 1,390 more requests than in 2021-22.

We had 9,195 requests to support people aged 65 and over. This was 1,980 more requests than in 2021-22.



A lot of people were supported with some information or advice, some equipment, or some local help from the community.



1,435 people aged 18-64 and 3,000 people aged 65 and over drew on long-term support from adult social care.



We spent almost the same amount of money on younger adults than on older adults, even though we supported twice as many older adults.



There were 9,200 jobs in adult social care in Doncaster last year - 500 more than the year before.



# Working together in 2023



In 2023 we wanted to work with more people with lived experience of care and support to make good changes happen in Adult Social Care.

We call this way of working **co-production**.

Co-production means making something together.



More people with lived experience joined our Making it Real Board this year.



People with lived experience interviewed people for jobs in Adult Social Care.

They played an equal part in making decisions about who should get the jobs.



We held some big events for staff.

People with lived experience helped to plan and run the events.



We paid lots of people with lived experience for their time.



People with lived experience said that being involved made them feel valued and proud.

# Living good lives and keeping safe and well



In 2023 we wanted to improve what happens when people first ask for some support from Adult Social Care.



We have changed how we work so people do not have to wait as long to get support.



These changes also mean people do not have to talk to lots of different workers before getting some support.



We have changed our forms, so it is easier for workers to write down things that matter to people.

This also means workers can spend more time with people and less time on computers.



Many people supported by Adult Social Care told us they feel safe.

Most people said their care and support helps them to feel safe.

A lot of people experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, felt safer after we supported them.



People supported by Adult Social Care in Doncaster feel pretty good about their life, compared to people living in other places.

# Having good information and advice



In 2023 we wanted to improve information about people's rights.



We have set up a group to work on improving information.

The group includes people with lived experience and people who work in Adult Social Care.



We have produced some easy read information about people's rights.



We have agreed a better way to organise information about support for adults on the Your Life Doncaster website.



We are developing some standards for information and a guide to make sure workers use plain, respectful and kind language.



Many people who had tried to find information and advice about care and support said it was easy to find.

Lots of people said it was hard to find though.

It is harder to find information about care and support in Doncaster than it is in lots of other places.

# Keeping family, friends and connections



In 2023 we wanted to make sure more disabled people could get the right job for them.



Hardly any people with a learning disability in Doncaster have a paid job.



We have made some changes so we can support more people to get jobs they want to do.

Now we can help people to find work by supporting with things like writing a CV, interview practice and using public transport to get to interviews.



Lots of people supported by Adult Social Care in Doncaster don't feel they have as much social contact as they would like to.



Almost a third of people supported by Adult Social Care said they don't leave their home.



Lots of people said it was hard for them to get to all the places they want to go.

# Having support that works



In 2023 we wanted to make support at home more accessible to people who need it.

We also said we'd make direct payments work better, so people have more choice and control.



We have worked with people in Supported Living, and their families, to decide together about who should provide their support in future.



We have made some changes to the way our Managed Accounts service works.

This service helps people who have a direct payment to manage their money.



We have helped home support providers in Doncaster to employ more workers.

This means more people can get support at home when they need it.



Lots of people said they are very or quite happy with their care and support.



A lot of people in Doncaster who are supported by Adult Social Care have a direct payment.



Quite a lot of people said they have enough choice about their care and support.

People said the support they have helps them have control over their life, but lots of people said they would like to have more control.

## Staying in control when things need to change



In 2023 we wanted to make sure more people could leave hospital and return home.



We offered more older people support to recover after being in hospital last year than the year before.



We have made some changes to our learning disability service so we can help people in crisis.



We helped some people with a learning disability to leave hospitals they had been in for a long time.



People who are in hospital because of their mental health can get more help from social workers now.



We are starting to listen more to people who have had support with their mental health in hospital, so we can make changes that mean more people can return home quickly.

# People working in care and support



In 2023 we wanted to make sure more workers understood the law about human rights and decision-making.



We have set up a group for workers to meet up and talk about the law and good practice.



We held a festival of practice week in November.

The week was about people's human rights.

Lots of people talked about their lived experience, and about what good care and support looks like.

Workers said they really enjoyed the week.



We have encouraged workers to try out new ideas to improve Adult Social Care.

This helps us to test out what works well and helps us to make bigger improvements.

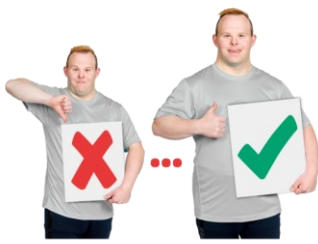


Teams now get together in 'huddle' meetings. This is helping them to support each other and to make decisions together.



Our Central Locality Social Work Team were runners up in a national award for social work team of the year.

# Things we want to do in 2024



We want to keep making things better for people in Doncaster who are supported by Adult Social Care.

We want to improve things for people working in Adult Social Care too.

We also want to make the best use of the money we have.



There are 9 main things that we want to do in 2024 to improve Adult Social Care in Doncaster.



1. We want to work with even more people with lived experience of care and support to make good changes happen in Adult Social Care.



2. We want to make sure that information about rights, advocacy and care and support is easy for people to find and understand.



3. We want to continue to improve what happens when people first ask for some support from Adult Social Care.

We want to make sure we listen to people and understand what matters most to them.



# More things we want to do in 2024



4. We want to make sure more disabled people can get the right job for them.



5. We want people to have more choice and control about care and support at home.



6. We want to help more people to leave hospital and have more freedom.



7. We want to improve the way we support young people who need care and support, to make sure they get the right support when they become adults.



8. We want to develop and support the wellbeing of people working in Adult Social Care so they can support people in Doncaster to live their best lives.



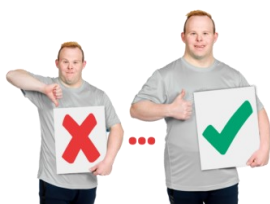
9. We want to make things fairer and more equal for people in Doncaster.

# Help shape the future of care and support in Doncaster



We are proud of what we have done together in Doncaster.

We think we have come a long way in 2023.



We know we need to do a lot more to keep making things better.



We want to work with even more people with lived experience of care and support to make good changes happen in Adult Social Care.



Would you like to help?

You could interview people for jobs in Adult Social Care. Or help to make information easier to find and understand. Or work with us to improve direct payments. Or do something else you think is important.



We pay people with lived experience for their time and any extra money they spend, for example on bus fares or parking.



If you would like to know more, please talk to your social worker or email [coproduction@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:coproduction@doncaster.gov.uk)



# Your care and support: Doncaster 2024

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### Report

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**Date: 17 January 2024**

**To: the Chair and Members of the  
CABINET**

**Report Title: SCHOOL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2025/2026 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Lani-Mae Ball, Cabinet Member for Early Help, Education, Skills and Young People	All	Yes

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report outlines the requirements for the adoption of schemes for Co-ordinating the Admission Arrangements for Primary and Secondary Schools and the approval of the Admission Arrangements for Community Schools in the 2025/2026 School Year.
2. The co-ordinated admission arrangements for the year of entry to all types of mainstream schools are a statutory responsibility of the Council and must be determined annually.
3. Separately, each admission authority is required to set its own admission arrangements. The various bodies, responsible for admission to schools in Doncaster, are summarised below:

Type of School	Community Schools	Church Schools	Free Schools	Academies	Total
Responsible Body	City of Doncaster Council	Governing Body	Trust	Trust	
Infant Schools	3	0	0	6	9
Junior Schools	1	0	0	6	7
Primary Schools	17	6	0	59	82
Secondary Schools	0	0	3	17	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>118</b>

#### EXEMPT REPORT

4. There are no exemptions.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

5. The Mayor and members of Cabinet is asked to approve the following admission

arrangements for the 2025/2026 school year:

- Community School Admission Arrangements (paragraphs 13 to 14 below).
- Community School Nursery Admission Arrangements (paragraphs 13 to 14 below).
- Primary Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements (paragraphs 15 to 18 below).
- Secondary Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements (paragraphs 15 to 18 below).

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

6. The Co-ordinated Arrangements noted above are intended to provide an equal opportunity for all parents to apply for school places at the same time through a process co-ordinated by the Council.
7. The School and Nursery Admission Arrangements set out the process by which applications by parents for community schools are considered and ensure that they are administered consistently and in a fair and equitable manner.

## **BACKGROUND**

8. The Council has a duty under Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to make arrangements for enabling the parents of children in its area to express a preference for a maintained school and to give reasons for that preference.
9. By 1 January in the relevant determination year the Council is required to formulate schemes for co-ordinating the admission arrangements for all maintained schools and academies in the City and to seek the agreement of other admission authorities to the co-ordinated admission arrangements. These are intended to make school admissions easier, more transparent, and less stressful for parents. They require parents to rank preferences on a single common application form which they must submit to their home council. Parents will then receive a single offer of a school place for their child from the Council on a designated day.
10. By 28 February each year the Council is required to determine the admission arrangements that will apply to schools for which it is the admission authority i.e., community schools. This has been brought forward from previous years by the Department for Education to allow more time for any necessary objections to be lodged with the School Adjudicator.
11. In drawing up its arrangements the Council has to have regard to relevant legislation, the School Admissions Code (the Code) and guidance from the Department for Education. These contain a number of mandatory requirements which all admission authorities are required to follow and those requirements have been taken into account in the proposed arrangements.
12. The Private, Voluntary or Independent sector make their own arrangements for places within the City for 3 and 4 year old early years places. However, the Council has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient accessible and affordable places for children across a range of provision types and provides support and guidance as necessary.

## **Admission Arrangements 2025/2026**

13. The Council is required to set arrangements for admission to community schools. Community schools are maintained schools for which the Council employs the school's staff, is responsible for the school's admissions and owns the school's estate. This represents 21

of the 118 mainstream schools in Doncaster. The arrangements are determined in relation to the Code and relevant regulations published by the Department for Education. The only changes proposed relate to changes to admission numbers for schools as a result of building modifications.

14. Whilst the Council is not responsible for setting the arrangements for academies, voluntary aided or free schools it undertakes an important role to ensure that they are as compliant with any changes required of them and that they adhere to the guidance set within the Code. The Council holds those schools to account and robustly challenges non-compliance, initially through the school's governance structure and when necessary, by requesting support from the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Secretary of State.

### **Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements 2025/2026**

15. The Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements for the normal year of entry remain unchanged; parents will continue to apply to their home local authority from which they will receive their decisions.
16. Applications at each phase of education; nursery, primary and secondary are all available digitally through the Council's website. For the initial round of year of entry school applications, the Council continues to receive a high percentage of online applications. For September 2023, the online rates for all applications have been sustained at 99%. The benefit to parent/carers is the ability for them to receive their decisions by email on national offer day (3 March 2025 for secondary schools and 16 April 2025 for primary schools). Paper applications are available for parents on the Council's website and this will remain the case until the Council is satisfied that all parents will have equal access to the admission process.
17. Co-ordination remains an important arrangement between schools and local authorities in terms of safeguarding and good working relations. A key component of this is the identification of potential applicants from data held by Health and schools through appropriate data sharing agreements which contribute significantly to the success of the process.
18. The success of the arrangements can be seen in increases in each of the last three years where a consistently high rate of pupil preference has been met. Most recently, where parents have applied by the national closing dates for September 2023, offer rates for any preference made by parents stood at 96% (secondary) and 98% (primary). This success is replicated for first preferences which were consistently high 87% (secondary) and 96% (primary). In three of these areas our outcomes exceed national outcomes and are equal to national in the fourth.

### **Publication of Information for Parents**

19. The Council is required to publish information for parents detailing the arrangements for admission to schools and local University Technology Colleges by 12 September each year. In addition, the Council is required to write to parents of prospective pupils of Technology Colleges directly to explain the appropriate admission arrangements and makes reference to the Doncaster University Technology College.
20. The admissions and co-ordination arrangements are included as part of a wider Learning Provision Organisation Strategy, integrating education settings place planning, admissions arrangements/co-ordination and capital developments into one area.

## OPTIONS CONSIDERED

### Admission Arrangements

21. The Council is required to set arrangements for admission to community schools. It must include in its arrangements, information on the order in which places will be offered when a year group is oversubscribed. These are usually referred to as the admission criteria.
22. In Doncaster, each school serves a local community, usually referred to as the 'catchment area'. This reflects the philosophy that 'efficient education' is particularly fostered by closely associating a secondary school and a group of linked primary schools, in a pyramid. In this way, each school becomes part of the provision for a community and the education of the community's children benefits greatly from the association of its schools.
23. The admission criteria for admission to community schools and community school nurseries reflect the requirement to give first priority to children in care. The next criterion gives priority to those who live within a particular catchment area. The remaining school admission criteria also recognise the importance of children attending the same school as siblings and a school which is linked to their present school in the pyramid structure. In circumstances where a place is only available in any of the criterion for one child from a multiple birth i.e., twins, the Council has undertaken to offer each child a place together.

### Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

24. The Council is required to determine arrangements which co-ordinate the admission process to all schools and academies for the year of entry. They must allow for parents to express up to three preferences and require them to apply to their own local authority. These must be considered equally and the eligibility for places will be determined using each school's admission criteria.
25. A pupil will be offered a single place which is the highest ranked school for which they are eligible. Where no place is available the child will be offered an alternative place.
26. The volume of year of entry applications continues to rise. The last two years were as follows:

Year of Entry Admissions		Number of Appeals	Appeals Allowed
2022/23	10780	145	15%
2023/24	11124	167	28%

27. Although the mandatory requirement to co-ordinate in year was removed from September 2013 it is proposed that the Council reaffirms its commitment to continue to co-ordinate the admission arrangements during the school year and to seek the agreement of other admission authorities to continue to do so. This is best illustrated when we consider the volume of in-year applications which have continued to increase year on year. The last two full years being as follows:

In Year Transfer Requests		Number of Appeals	Appeals Allowed
2021/22	5370	109	28%
2022/23	6390	214	30%



28. The Council's co-ordination includes the appeal process. As the volume of applications has increased so have the number of appeals. The last two full years below show a 29% increase in the number of appeals heard and this is projected to continue to increase in 2023/24.

<b>Number of Admission Appeals Heard</b>	
2021/22	252
2022/23	353

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION**

### **Community School and Nursery Admission Arrangements**






29. The Council must ensure that its arrangements take into account the relevant regulations and comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. They include guidelines in setting oversubscription criteria which ensure that the arrangements are fair to all children and their families and promote social equity. They must also be consistent with the co-ordinated arrangements for the area.
30. The proposed arrangements are based upon those currently in place and have been subjected to the required consultation. The admission criteria and the retention of Catchment areas, which gives the majority of children in the City priority though not a guarantee to an individual school, have been reaffirmed annually. To date, this principle has also been adopted by the majority of those schools which have become academies and so determine their own arrangements.
31. The admission arrangements contain details of the admission number for each school. These are reviewed annually and where necessary are revised to take into account changes in the net capacity assessment and variations in the number of pupils expected.




### **Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements - Primary and Secondary**

32. Minor changes have been made to the relevant dates currently in place. These dates are within statutory timescales and have been agreed with the majority of our neighbouring authorities.
33. The mandatory requirement to co-ordinate in-year applications was removed for admission from September 2013. However, the Council, in agreement with schools, has previously determined that this should continue and this position is reaffirmed in the proposed arrangements. Continuing to co-ordinate in-year admissions strengthens the Council's safeguarding role by continuing to monitor the movement of pupils and manage the Children Missing Education database. To do otherwise would rely on schools notifying the Council of applications it receives and their outcomes. It would also mean parents would have to contend with differing arrangements at each school.
34. The Council experiences a large number of in-year applications, the majority of which are due to changes of address, both into and around the City.

## **IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES**

35. The main impact of the proposals set out in this report on the Council's key priorities are set out below:

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 <b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	✓			
<p>Comments: The provision of a local place for every pupil through a co-ordinated admissions system with all schools working together minimises the need to extensive journeys across the City.</p>				
 <b>Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work</b>	✓			
<p>Comments: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school;</li> <li>• Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better;</li> <li>• Providing learning experiences which prepare young people for the world of work.</li> <li>• Raise the awareness of parents to diverse opportunities and provision including City wide access to provision at Doncaster University Technology College and XP Schools.</li> </ul>				
 <b>Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs</b>	✓			
<p>This report does not directly cover this area.</p>				
 <b>Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all</b>	✓			
<p>Comments: Learning outcomes and health outcomes are intrinsically linked. Evidence shows that education, training and employment are key socio-economic factors in determining health status (Marmot, 2010). The admission arrangements described should be mindful of the impact on ease of access to education and in particular for those families who suffer disadvantage. Programmes that aim to improve attendance and reduce the gap in educational attainment are likely to impact positively on reducing long-term health inequalities in Doncaster.</p>				
 <b>Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs</b>	✓			
<p>This report does not directly cover this area.</p>				

 <b>Nurturing a child and family-friendly City</b>	✓			
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The Arrangements, co-ordinated by the Council, encourage local schools to work together to support pupils by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting ease of access for all residents to school places;</li> <li>• Prioritising places for local pupils and their siblings;</li> <li>• Supporting pupils' attendance at school and reducing risk for students out of school;</li> <li>• Raising education standards and aspirations of young people;</li> <li>• Improving services for Children, Young People and their families.</li> </ul>				
 <b>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</b>	✓			
<p>This report does not directly cover this area.</p>				
 <b>Promoting the City and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</b>	✓			
<p>This report does not directly cover this area.</p>				
<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>	✓			
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The arrangements are designed to not discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person and the decisions taken as to who is offered admission as a pupil. In accordance with the Code, the arrangements and admission criteria are reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation. The Council ensures that the arrangements do not disadvantage unfairly, either directly or indirectly, a child from a particular social or racial group, or a child with a disability or special educational needs.</p> <p>Special provision has also been made within the In Year Fair Access protocol to prioritise applications for service personnel and crown servants in the line with the requirements of the Code and the Service Forces Covenant. The arrangements also include provision for applications from service personnel and crown servants moving to Doncaster will be considered one term in advance of a change of address in accordance with the guidance from the Department for Education providing that the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address.</p> <p>In addition to the ability to allocate school places through In year Fair Access protocol as above, this would also apply to children of families, or who are, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees, and asylum seekers where they have been unable to secure a place through the normal in year admission process.</p>				

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (Author HMP Date 26/9/23)**

36. Section 88C of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended, requires, before the beginning of each school year, the admission authority for a maintained school in England to determine the admission arrangements which are to apply for that year.
37. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, state that every admission authority must determine their admission arrangements on or before 28 February in the determination year. The Statutory Guidance contained in the School Admissions Code (September 2021) at paragraph 1.45 provides consultation is only need if changes are proposed subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.
38. The Regulations also require a local authority to formulate, in relation to each academic year, a qualifying scheme in relation to each primary and secondary school in their area. The local authority must formulate a qualifying scheme by 1 January in the relevant determination year and must inform the Secretary of State on or before 28 February in the relevant determination year whether they have secured the adoption of a qualifying scheme or not. The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 require that local authorities publish a composite prospectus for parents by 12 September each year which contains the admissions arrangements. An amendment has been published to the regulations which came into force on 14 February 2017. This requires local authorities to include details of local University Technology Colleges (UTCs) in the prospectus and to write to parents of prospective pupils to confirm the appropriate admission arrangements to UTCs.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (Author Initials JO Date 27/09/2023)**

39. This report refers to the schemes for admission arrangements to schools but has no effect on either the total number of pupils admitted or on the resources required to administer these admissions.
40. As such there are no financial implications rising directly from this report.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (JC Date 25/09/2023)**

41. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS (Author Initials PW Date 26/09/23)**

42. There are no specific technology implications arising from this report. The Synergy Schools Admissions Management solution supports the admission arrangements outlined in this report, with parents encouraged to make their applications online via the Parent Portal.

## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

43. If the arrangements fail to comply with the regulations and the Code, they may be subject to challenge from parents through objections to Schools Adjudicator or the Local Government Ombudsman. This may have a detrimental impact on other pupils in a school or a financial impact on the Council or schools.
44. If schools do not wish to take part in the in-year co-ordination process the Council will put in place appropriate processes and safeguards to monitor the movement of pupils.

## CONSULTATION

45. The following stakeholders were consulted in accordance with the appropriate regulations and have been informed that the draft arrangements have been placed on the Council's website: -

Community schools  
Public and interested parties  
Free Schools

Voluntary Aided Schools  
Neighbouring local authorities  
Academies

46. Following approval of the determined admission arrangements the Council will publish a copy of those arrangements on its website. An appropriate person or parents may object to the arrangements by writing to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May 2024.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

47. The following background papers are available: -

- Draft Community Schools Admission Policy 2025/26 - [www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/admission-arrangements](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/admission-arrangements)
- Draft Community Schools Nursery Admission Policy 2025/26 - [www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/admission-arrangements](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/admission-arrangements)
- Draft Qualifying Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary Schools in Doncaster 2025/26 - [www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/admission-arrangements](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/admission-arrangements)
- Draft Qualifying Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools in Doncaster 2025/26 - [www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/admission-arrangements](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/admission-arrangements)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Due Regard Statement (Appendix 1)
- Department for Education - School Admissions Code - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2)
- Department for Education - School Admissions Appeal Code - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-appeals-code)
- The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 – [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/8/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/8/made)
- The School Admissions (Admissions Appeals Arrangements) Regulations 2012 - [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/9/pdfs/uksi\\_20120009\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/9/pdfs/uksi_20120009_en.pdf)
- The School Admissions (Infant Class Size) England Regulations 2012 - [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/10/pdfs/uksi\\_20120010\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/10/pdfs/uksi_20120010_en.pdf)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 - [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/3093/pdfs/uksi\\_20083093\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/3093/pdfs/uksi_20083093_en.pdf)
- Cabinet Report 10 December 2008 - Discretionary Transport Efficiency Savings
- The Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/125/contents/made>

## GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

“The Code”	The School Admissions Code
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## REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Neil McAllister, Learning Provision Organisation Service Manager  
Email: [neil.mcallister@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:neil.mcallister@doncaster.gov.uk)

**LEAD OFFICER**

Riana Nelson

Director of Children, Young People and Families



**City of  
Doncaster  
Council**

# **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

## **CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL**

### **Due Regard Statement**

### **School Admission Arrangements**

### **2025/26 Academic Year**

## **Due Regard Statement**

A **Due Regard Statement** (DRS) is the tool for capturing the evidence to demonstrate that due regard has been shown when the council plans and delivers its functions. A Due Regard Statement must be completed for all programmes, projects and changes to service delivery.

- A DRS should be initiated at the beginning of the programme, project or change to inform project planning
- The DRS runs adjacent to the programme, project or change and is reviewed and completed at the relevant points
- Any reports produced needs to reference “Due Regard” in the main body of the report and the DRS should be attached as an appendix
- The DRS cannot be fully completed until the programme, project or change is delivered.



1	<p><b>Name of the 'policy' and briefly describe the activity being considered including aims and expected outcomes. This will help to determine how relevant the 'policy' is to equality.</b></p>	<p>The document relates to the annual determination of the following statutory school admission arrangements for the 2025/2026 school year:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary School Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements;</li> <li>• Secondary School Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements;</li> <li>• Community School Admission Arrangements;</li> <li>• Community School Nursery Admission Arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>The above arrangements cover two areas; the Council's duty to co-ordinate the application processes for all pupils resident within the area i.e. the mechanism by which parents may apply for a school place and the Community School Admission arrangements for both school and school nurseries i.e. the mechanism by which priority for places is determined for admission to community schools.</p>
2	<p><b>Service area responsible for completing this statement.</b></p>	<p>Learning Provision Organisation Service - Children, Young People and Families:</p>
3	<p><b>Summary of the information considered across the protected groups.</b></p> <p><b>Service users/residents</b></p> <p><b>Doncaster Workforce</b></p>	<p>In addition to the requirements of the Equalities Act, the School Admissions Code published by the Department for Education make it clear that all admission authorities, including Doncaster Council must not discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.</p> <p><b>The Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements</b></p> <p>The co-ordinated admission arrangements allow a parent or carer to make an application for a school place. The status of the applicant is not a factor in the application process.</p> <p>The application process is available predominantly through the internet in line with the Council's Digital Strategy and the movement of online access to services. Parents make applications</p>

through the Synergy Online software which is used by a large number of councils. The software has an accessible version for parents to use.

Due regard is given to those residents who do not wish to access services online and continue to require more traditional access methods. These access channels will remain for customers wishing to contact the Council in this way. Direct assistance is available in person or over the telephone through the Customer Contact Centre or School Admission Officers.

Where necessary, paper applications are available through other channels i.e. by requesting one in person, by telephone or email through the Customer Contact Centre. Assistance is also available in person or over the telephone through the Customer Contact Centre or School Admission Officers. In addition, the majority of applicants will already have their child in a school or nursery. In these cases further assistance is available directly from the school which will be familiar with their individual communities and the support which they require.

#### **Community School Admission Arrangements**

The Community School Admission Arrangements contain the oversubscription criteria. The status of the applicant is not a factor in determining eligibility for a school place. The Code requires that the oversubscription criteria must be reasonable, clear, objective, procedurally fair, and comply with all relevant legislation, including equalities legislation.

The School Admission Code sets out permissible criteria as well as those which must not be used. The criteria set by the Local Authority i.e. Catchment areas, Siblings, Feeder School Link and distance are all permissible criteria within the Code and so are compliant with the Equalities Act.

In cases where an application is unsuccessful, parents are offered the right to an independent appeal and language support is provided as necessary for the family.

#### **Equalities Act Protected Characteristics**

Age – These arrangements will have no negative impact on this protected group.

		<p>Disability – These arrangements will have no negative impact on this protected group. (Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, applications are considered under separate provisions.)</p> <p>Race – These arrangements will have no negative impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Sex – These arrangements will have no negative impact on this protected group</p> <p>Sexual Orientation – These arrangements will have no negative impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Religion or Belief – These arrangements will have no negative impact on this protected group. Whilst parents may apply for a school on the basis of their faith or religion, the relevant schools adhere to strict arrangements in compliance with the School Admissions Code. The Council does not determine admission to these schools.</p> <p>Maternity and Pregnancy - These arrangements will have no negative impact on this protected group.</p> <p>Gender Reassignment – These arrangements will have no negative impact on this protected group.</p> <p><b>Service Personnel and Crown Servants</b></p> <p>Special provision has also been made within the In Year Fair Access protocol to prioritise applications in the line with the requirements of the Code and the Service Forces Covenant. The admission policies include provision for applications to be considered one term in advance of a change of address in accordance with the guidance from the DfE.</p>
4	<b>Summary of the consultation/engagement activities</b>	<p>The consultation undertaken is determined by regulation. This includes consultation with all schools and neighbouring local authorities. Governing Bodies, which include parent representatives, are consulted during the autumn term and the arrangements are placed on the Council's website. A feedback form is also provided within the various admission to school booklets which are also available on the website.</p>
5	<b>Real Consideration: Summary of what the evidence shows and how has it been used</b>	<p><b>Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements - Admission Process</b></p> <p>In accordance with the Council's Digital Strategy and the movement of online access for service provision, significant changes were to the mechanism for parents to apply for school places from 2015 and the application process is now available predominantly online. Applications through this method have risen significantly since being introduced fully in 2015 demonstrated by the following table:-</p>

<b>% of Parents Making On-line Applications</b>										
<b>Year</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Secondary</b>	34	85	86	89	93	93	98	98	100	100
<b>Primary</b>	15	81	89	89	88	93	98	99	99	99

**Admission Arrangements – Community School Admission Criteria**

A consistently high proportion of applicants have been offered a place at a preferred school. These rates compares favourably with local and national outcomes.

	<b>Secondary % (Year of Entry 2023/24)</b>		<b>Primary % (Year of Entry 2023/24)</b>	
	<b>Doncaster</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Doncaster</b>	<b>National</b>
<b>Parents First Preference</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>One of 3 Preferences</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Online Applications</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>96</b>

\*Those pupils not offered a school place at one of their preferred schools were allocated a local alternative school.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Making</b>	<p>This Due Regard Statement will be specifically referred to and deliberated within the agenda item at Cabinet meeting on 17 January 2024.</p> <p>The Mayor and Portfolio holder will be provided with the statement in advance of the Cabinet meeting.</p>
<b>7</b>	<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	<p>The arrangements are determined on an annual basis in line with statutory requirements and guidance from the Department for Education. Progress at a more operational level is covered under the council's standard performance management framework; and is monitored on an on-going basis.</p>

<b>8</b>	<b>Sign off and approval for publication</b>	Learning Provision Organisation Service Manager Learning and Opportunities: Children and Young People
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## Doncaster Council

### Report

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Date: 17 January 2024

To: To the Chair and Members of the Cabinet

Report Title: Calculation and Approval of the Council Tax Base for 2024/2025

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Mayor Ros Jones	All	Yes

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report seeks approval of the Council Tax Base for Doncaster for 2024/2025.
2. The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 make arrangements for the setting of the Council Tax. These arrangements include the determination of the Council Tax Base and the regulations prescribe how this calculation should be carried out.
3. The Council Tax Base is used to determine the level of Council Tax for individual properties. It represents the number of properties that will be subject to Council Tax, and which are expressed in terms of their Band D equivalents using a prescribed formula after allowing for the effect of exemptions, discounts, premiums and reliefs.
4. The agreed Tax Base for the City of Doncaster Council for 2024/2025 will be used in the 2024/2025 Budget and Council Tax setting calculation. The Tax Base is also used by the major precepting bodies (South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and South Yorkshire Police) and the local parish councils to determine their precept requirements and must be set before the end of January in order to meet their requirements.
5. The proposed Council Tax Base for the City of Doncaster for 2024/2025 is **86,730** band D equivalent dwellings. This represents an increase of 751 band D equivalent dwellings compared to the current year's Tax Base of 85,979.

#### EXEMPT REPORT

6. The report is not exempt.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

7. It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - i. Approve the City of Doncaster Council's Tax Base for the 2024/2025 year as **86,730** band D equivalent dwellings as detailed at **Appendix 1** of this report; and
  - ii. Approve 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.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

8. The Council Tax Base is used to determine the level of Council Tax payable by all citizens who are liable to pay Council Tax for the forthcoming year. Council Tax helps to meet the cost of the services provided by the City of Doncaster Council to all its citizens, as well as contributing towards the cost of fire and police services.

## BACKGROUND

9. The Council Tax Base is an annual statutory calculation which is used to determine the level of Council Tax for individual properties.

### Summary basis of the calculation

10. The Council Tax Base calculation is based on the number of properties in the area falling within each Council Tax property valuation band shown in the Valuation List which is compiled by the Valuation Office Agency. These property totals are then adjusted for the following:-

A reduction for the full year equivalent of:-

- the estimated number of properties that are exempt from Council Tax
- an adjustment for the number of properties which will effectively change band because they have been adapted for a severely disabled person
- an adjustment for possible banding appeals
- the estimated number of discounts multiplied by the appropriate discount percentage
- the estimated amount of Council Tax Support to be awarded
- the estimated number of properties that will be deleted and removed from the Valuation List

An addition for the full year equivalent of:-

- the empty property premiums
- the estimated number of new properties that will be added to the Valuation List.

11. The resulting figure for each band is then multiplied by its proportion relative to Band D (from 6/9 for Band A to 18/9 for Band H) using formulae laid down in The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, and the total across all eight bands is calculated.



12. A final adjustment is required to allow for the estimated loss on collection due to non-collection.
13. The following paragraphs provide more detail of the Tax Base calculation and the actual figures used to determine the proposed Council Tax Base for the City of Doncaster for 2024/2025 for the various elements of the calculation.

**Chargeable Dwellings**

14. Properties in England are put into one of eight bands (A-H), depending on the price they would have sold for in April 1991 when Council Tax proposals were first issued by the Government. At that time, the average property value in England was around £80,000 and such a property would be in Band D. For this reason, many of the calculations for the Tax Base are carried out by reference to Band D.
15. The following table shows the number and percentage of dwellings in each Council Tax Band shown in the Valuation List for the City of Doncaster as at 29th November 2023. The charges for the different Council Tax bands have fixed ratios to each other expressed as fractions of the charge for Band D. The table also shows the ratio to Band D as set out in the legislation.

<b>Council Tax Band</b>	<b>Ratio to Band D</b>	<b>Number of properties</b>	<b>Percentage of properties</b>
Band A Adaptations Reduction	5/9 (55.6%)		
Band A	6/9 (66.7%)	82,376	57.44%
Band B	7/9 (77.8%)	26,874	18.74%
Band C	8/9 (88.9%)	15,973	11.14%
Band D	9/9 (100%)	10,006	6.98%
Band E	11/9 (122.2%)	4,826	3.36%
Band F	13/9 (144.4%)	2,257	1.57%
Band G	15/9 (166.7%)	969	0.68%
Band H	18/9 (200%)	134	0.09%
TOTAL		143,415	100.00%

16. Because such a high percentage of dwellings in Doncaster are in the lower bands (87.32% are banded below the average Band of D), this has the effect of considerably reducing the Council's Tax Base.

**Exemptions**

17. Some properties are exempt from Council Tax because they meet qualifying criteria for prescribed classes of exemption. Taking into account the likely increase in the overall number of properties, it is estimated that there will be a full-year equivalent of **2,338** dwellings exempt from Council Tax next year.

### **Reductions for adapted properties**

18. Where a property has certain specific facilities, which are required to meet the needs of a person who is disabled, Council Tax will be charged at one band lower than the actual valuation band of the property. Properties in Band A that meet the qualifying criteria will receive a reduction equivalent to 1/9<sup>th</sup> of Band D. It is estimated that there will be **712** properties in Doncaster that qualify for a reduction.

### **Banding Appeals**

19. There is no information currently available from the Valuation Office Agency for outstanding banding appeals. From past year information, the number of banding appeals is very low and has no material impact on the Tax Base.

### **Discounts**

20. A discount of 25% is granted if there is only one adult living in a property. Two discounts (i.e. 50%) are granted where all the residents are 'disregarded' persons due to their circumstances and not taken into account for Council Tax purposes. There are 50,715 properties which are likely to receive one discount next year and a further 582 properties where two discounts will be granted. This equates to **12,970** properties for Tax Base purposes.

### **Locally Defined Discounts**

21. There are 131 properties that qualify for a locally defined discount for either having a family annexe or being a care leaver. In total, their discount relief equates to **111** properties for the Tax Base calculation.

### **Empty Homes Premium**

22. The Tax Base calculation for 2024/2025 takes into account those properties subject to the empty homes premium. It is estimated that there will be 410 properties that have been empty for more than 2 years but less than 5 years subject to a 100% premium; 130 properties that have been empty for more than 5 years but less than 10 years subject to a 200% premium and lastly 72 properties empty for more than 10 years subject to a 300% premium. These actual 612 premium properties provide an additional 881 net properties benefit to the Tax Base estimate.

### **Reductions and Additions to the Property Totals**

23. The effective number of properties must be adjusted to take into account any properties that may be removed or added to the Valuation List. An analysis of properties expected to be removed or built in the next 15 months to 31 March 2025 has been carried out, having regard to the estimated date of removal or completion and property band. The analysis includes information from Planning, Building Control, street naming and numbering departments and site visits. It is estimated that there will be a net increase of **1,178** additional properties in 2024/2025.

## Local Council Tax Support

24. Since the localisation of Council Tax Support in 2013, Council Tax Support has taken the form of a reduction within the Council Tax system. Making reductions part of the Council Tax system reduces a billing authority's Council Tax Base.
25. An estimate of the effect of the City of Doncaster's Local Council Tax Support Scheme on the Council Tax Base has been determined. It is estimated that the Council Tax Support Scheme will reduce the Council Tax Base by **19,266** actual properties, which equates to **13,283** band D equivalent properties.
26. The 2024/2025 Council Tax Base proposals set out within this report assume there are no changes to the City of Doncaster Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/2025.

## Collection Rate

27. For the financial year 2024/2025 the Council has assumed 98.6% of council Tax will eventually be collected.


## Proposed Tax Base for 2024/2025







28. Based on the assumptions detailed in the preceding paragraphs of this report, the proposed Council Tax Base for 2024/2025 is **86,730**. This represents an increase of 751 from the 2023/2024 tax base. The detailed Council Tax Base calculation for the City of Doncaster for 2024/2025 is shown at **Appendix 1** to this report.
29. Similar calculations are required for each parish in order to calculate the proportion of the tax base which relates to its area. A schedule of the proposed tax base for each Parish is set out in **Appendix 2**.


## **OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION**

30. The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 prescribe how the calculation of the Council Tax Base must be carried out. There are no other options.

## **IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES**

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 <b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	✓			

Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives.				
 <b>Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work</b>	✓			
Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives				
 <b>Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs</b>	✓			
Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives				
 <b>Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all</b>	✓			
Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives				
 <b>Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs</b>	✓			
Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives				
 <b>Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough</b>	✓			
Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives				
 <b>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</b>	✓			
Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives				

 <b>Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</b>	✓			
Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives				
<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>	✓			
Comments: The calculation of the Council Tax Base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve all the Council's corporate objectives				

### RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

31. Failure to set the Council Tax Base would result in the Council being unable to meet the statutory requirement to notify precepting authorities of the Council Tax Base by 31 January 2024. It may also delay the calculation of the Council Tax charge and the billing and collection processes for 2024/2025.
32. Over estimation of the council tax base would result in a deficit in the tax collected which would need to be recovered from the council tax in subsequent years. Under estimation would result in a council tax higher than necessary.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS Officer Initials: SRF Date: 15/12/2023

33. Each financial year the Council must calculate a Council Tax Base by strictly following the formula specified by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. The Council Tax Base is required by law to be set by the Council before the end of January each year. A Council Tax base is required for a local authority to calculate its basic amount of tax under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS Officer Initials: CC Date: 14/12/2023

34. The Council Tax Base is used as part of the Council Tax setting process in order to calculate the level of Council Tax once the budgetary requirements of the Authority have been determined for the forthcoming financial year.

The difference between the collection rate assumed/estimated in these figures and the collection rate actually achieved will determine any surplus or deficit generated on the collection fund and therefore impacts on the amount available to be distributed to the precepting authorities in future years, including to the Council's General Fund.

### HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS Officer Initials: SH Date: 15/12/2023

35. There are no HR implications associated with this report.

### TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS Officer Initials: PW Date: 14/12/2023

36. There are no technology implications associated with this report.

## **CONSULTATION**

37. N/A

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

38. There are no background papers to this report.

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

39. There are no acronyms or abbreviations in this report.

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

Alan Stoves  
Head of Revenues and Benefits  
01302 735585  
[Alan.Stoves@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Alan.Stoves@doncaster.gov.uk)

Mark West  
Senior Revenues and Benefits Officer  
01302 735419  
[Mark.West@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.West@doncaster.gov.uk)

**Debbie Hogg**  
**Director of Corporate Services**

**Calculation of City of Doncaster`s Council Tax Base 2024/2025**

**Band Summary**

Band	No. of Dwellings	Less Exemptions	Less Disablement Reductions	Less Appeals	Less Discounts	Less Locally Defined Discounts	Plus Empty Property Premium	Plus Adjustment for Net property Additions/Reductions	Less Local Council Tax Support	Total Effective Number of Dwellings	Total Number of Band D equivalent dwellings	Tax Base after Adjustment for Loss on collection @ 98.6%
A(-)			-278		23.50				67.82	186.7	103.7	102.3
A	82,376	1,466.75	160	0	8,535.50	105.88	659	267	16,673.91	56,360.0	37,573.3	37,047.3
B	26,874	426.55	21	0	2,283.88	3.50	87	355	1,611.03	22,970.0	17,865.6	17,615.5
C	15,973	255.92	0	0	1,184.61	1.25	48	191	633.16	14,137.1	12,566.3	12,390.3
D	10,006	124.65	41	0	546.70	0.50	42	164	170.88	9,328.3	9,328.3	9,197.7
E	4,826	35.11	37	0	236.14	0.00	23	111	74.14	4,577.6	5,594.9	5,516.5
F	2,257	13.59	-1	0	93.01	0.00	6	58	27.62	2,187.8	3,160.1	3,115.9
G	969	10.30	-7	0	53.42	0.00	9	30	7.24	944.0	1,573.4	1,551.4
H	134	5.02	27	0	12.93	0.00	7	2	0.00	98.1	196.1	193.4
Total	143,415	2,337.89	0	0	12,969.69	111.13	881	1178	19,265.80	110789.6	87,961.6	86,730.2

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**Calculation of Doncaster Council Tax Base 2024/2025**

<b><u>Part of the Council's Area</u></b>	<b><u>No. of Dwellings</u></b>	<b><u>Tax Base</u></b>
Adwick Le Street	8,577	4,543
Adwick On Dearne	142	115
Armthorpe	6,622	4,173
Askern	3,012	1,475
Auckley	2,139	1,673
Austerfield	260	215
Barnburgh & Harlington	875	698
Barnby Dun & Kirk Sandall	4,032	2,736
Bawtry	1,745	1,368
Bentley	10,210	5,361
Blaxton	589	467
Braithwell	511	445
Brodsworth	1,407	781
Burghwallis	149	150
Cadeby	90	85
Cantley with Branton	1,755	1,615
Clayton with Frickley	101	97
Conisbrough Parks	133	126
Conisbrough	7,300	3,666
Denaby	141	135
Doncaster	40,416	23,724
Edenthorpe	2,216	1,502
Edlington	3,889	1,953
Finningley	805	789

<b><u>Part of the Council`s area</u></b>	<b><u>No. of Dwellings</u></b>	<b><u>Tax Base</u></b>
Fishlake	298	258
Hampole with Skelbrooke	87	86
Hatfield	7,252	4,683
Hickleton	116	116
High Melton	130	124
Hooton Pagnell	92	95
Loversall	58	57
Marr	68	69
Mexborough	7,668	3,972
Moss and District	358	332
Norton	2,047	1,389
Owston	70	65
Rossington	6,338	3,817
Sprotbrough & Cusworth	5,250	3,952
Stainforth	2,964	1,334
Stainton	116	118
Sykehouse	207	196
Thorne	8,243	4,446
Thorpe In Balne	70	73
Tickhill	2,555	2,102
Wadworth	553	394
Warmsworth	1,759	1,160
Authority Totals	143,415	86,730



## Cabinet Report

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**Date: 17 January 2024**

**To: Cabinet**

**Report Title: Furnished Tenancy Scheme**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Cllr Glyn Jones	ALL	Yes

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. 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.

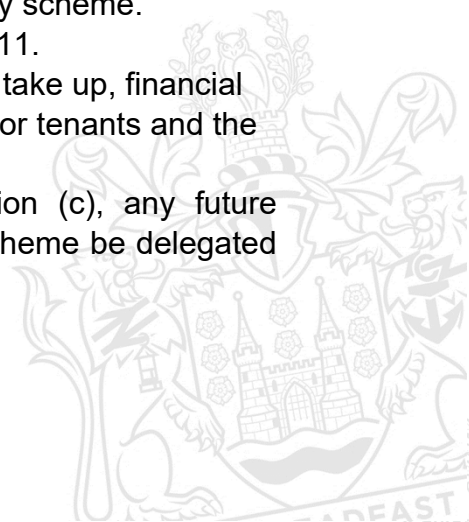
This report proposes a Furnished Tenancy scheme for City of Doncaster Council tenants to be managed by St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD). The proposal has been based on a scheme with Your Homes Newcastle (YHN), although other providers will be considered in the future.

### EXEMPT REPORT

2. This report is not exempt.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Cabinet are asked to;
  - a. Approve the proposal to introduce a furnished tenancy scheme.
  - b. Approve the service charges as set out in paragraph 11.
  - c. To evaluate the Scheme after 12 months to establish take up, financial viability, opportunities for expansion to a wider group or tenants and the delivery model/providers.
  - d. Following the evaluation set out in recommendation (c), 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.

#### **4. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

Those tenants taking up new tenancies with SLHD from the Council's Platinum band (the highest priority banding for rehousing) will be able to take up a furniture package as part of their Tenancy Agreement if their circumstances meet the required eligibility and affordability criteria. This will help new tenants feel more settled and invested in their home and community.

Currently some tenants who have limited access to affordable credit, furnish their new homes using high-cost or in some cases, illegal lending options. This often adds to their financial pressures and unmanageable debts, resulting in failed tenancies and homelessness. For others, they are never able to furnish their home even to a basic standard.

Tenants who have access to furnished tenancy schemes are less likely to need to access other funds such as Doncaster's Local Assistance Scheme or other crisis payments, enabling these funds to have a greater reach.

#### **BACKGROUND**

5. Many social housing providers already offer furnished tenancies to their tenants and SLHD are keen to explore this as an option for new tenants. Many new tenants especially those in Platinum Banding, start a tenancy with very little or no furniture or white goods. Many rely on grants or charities and second-hand items which may not be in good or even safe working order, while others may be tempted into high interest loans or turn to illegal and unregulated money lending.
6. Charitable grants and other financial support such as Local Assistance Schemes (LAS) are under pressure due to financial constraints and increasing demand. A furnished tenancies scheme would help to alleviate this, allowing the LAS and other grants to help other financially vulnerable tenants.
  - 6.1 A Furnished Tenancy 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 tenants 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 will never own the items - 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 will offer maintenance and a 5-year replacement programme on all items. The tenant can 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 are moving to another SLHD tenancy.

- 6.2 Housing Benefit and DWP departments have been consulted regarding the proposed scheme and have confirmed that it adheres to the regulations and that the estimated charges are reasonable.

There are 7 Furniture packages available which provides a basic level of white goods and essential items. Details of the packs and service charges can be found in section 11 and at Appendix A.

- 6.3 As part of the research into furnished tenancies, SLHD carried out consultation with existing tenants as well as a group of potential tenants and received 181 responses. The results showed that 139 people (76%) would take or consider taking a furnished tenancy if one was offered. When surveyed on the items they most needed, the main demand was for white goods and larger furniture items, such as beds, sofas, wardrobes.

Research and consultation with tenants also considered who should be offered the scheme. In Doncaster, evidence shows that tenants in Platinum band are the cohort most financially challenged and routinely require additional help and support as well as being the group most at risk of failing in their tenancies, with a large proportion coming from homelessness or temporary accommodation. When SLHD carried out consultation, they were also the group most interested in a furnished tenancy.

- 6.4 The proposed scheme will be offered initially to new tenants from the Platinum band with some flexibility for exceptional circumstances such as those fleeing domestic abuse or affected by fire or flooding. The scheme would be evaluated after 12 months with a view to extending the scheme to a wider group of new and existing tenants.

Assessments would be essential for all tenants requesting a furnished tenancy. Checks would be completed to ensure suitability and affordability and to ensure tenants understand their commitment and how the scheme works. Tenants with higher disposable income may have other more suitable options that can be supported, such as purchasing items through a Credit Union loan or using a new partnership between St Leger Homes, Community First Credit Union and AO for the discounted purchasing of white goods.

Any assessment would incorporate an exit plan for tenants to work towards reducing or ending their furnished tenancy package i.e. if they started work, if their benefits reduced or to eventually own their own furniture and white goods. A furnished tenancy scheme should not discourage tenants from finding work or cause them financial hardship and so costs need to be kept to a minimum.

## **7. OPTIONS AND POSSIBLE PROVIDERS**

Following research and consultation, three options were considered, with Option 3 being the recommended option.

- 7.1 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.

**7.2 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 requires 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 requires 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.

**7.3 Option 3 (recommended option)** - The third option is for SLHD to use an established third-party company to lease the items to the tenant and provide delivery, installation, maintenance and replacement. The agreement would be between SLHD and the company and would form part of the Tenancy Agreement (as Benefit regulations stipulate) but neither SLHD nor the tenant would ever own the items.

SLHD would be required to place an order based on the customer choices and the provider would arrange to deliver and install the items. SLHD would ensure the tenant's payments are set up and/or benefits in place – for UC claimants a Managed Payment direct to the landlord would be made. Staff resource consisting of a 0.5 FTE officer would be required to coordinate and administrate the scheme.

Rent for the furnished items would be collected in the same way that rent payments are collected. SLHD would pay a monthly invoiced payment to the furniture provider. A Service Level Agreement would be in place to ensure high levels of service to tenants as well as timescales around delivery to minimise any impacts on void relet times. This option does not require up-front set up costs and is entirely demand led.

## **RECOMMENDED OPTION**

**8.** Option 3 is the recommended option. This preferred option means that SLHD can set up a furnished tenancy scheme quickly and which complies with benefits regulations without heavy upfront investment. The model requires recruitment for a part-time post initially, which will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as demand increases. This option involves minimal impact on existing resources and performance.

Option 3 will deliver a better customer experience for tenants as the supplier is a well-established company, resulting in fast deliveries and reducing the requirement to use multiple suppliers for different items.

9. Research was conducted into other potential providers, but only a handful of companies offer the choice, scale and responsiveness in terms of delivery, maintenance and replacement that we require in order to ensure Doncaster tenants get a first-rate service and there are no adverse impacts on void relet times etc.

Discussions have taken place with Furniture Resource Centre (FRC), Your Homes Newcastle (YHN), Refurnish Doncaster and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC).

FRC were less cost effective and did not provide an operating model to fit. Refurnish Doncaster have advised that they may be interested in being involved in such a scheme in the future, but not at the current time.

Rotherham Council were also consulted as they operate a scheme for their tenants, although they do not currently provide to any third parties. St Leger Homes have made a number of approaches over the last year and whilst they have expressed an interest in the concept, they have not been in a position to provide details of costs and service provision, nor are they able to indicate any timescale on when they will be.

Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) provide services to deliver the proposed model. They are well-established at providing services to third parties and are used widely across the country by many other social housing providers, including Northumberland County Council, Berneslai Homes, Gentoo Housing Association (Sunderland Council), Gateshead Council, Darlington BC, Middlesbrough MBC, and Lancaster Council. When consulted, a number of these provided SLHD with very positive feedback.

10. The proposals contained in this report are based on a partnership with YHN delivering the scheme as they are in a position to proceed, costings are reasonable and have been approved by the Department for Work and Pensions.

11. The proposed charges will be;






	Weekly Cost YHN £	Weekly SLHD Admin Charge £	Total Weekly Charge £
Pack A (up to 64 points)	13.44	2.06	15.50
Pack B (between 60 and 94 points)	19.74	2.06	21.80
Pack C (between 95 and 105 points)	22.05	2.06	24.11
Pack D (between 106 and 116 points)	24.36	2.06	26.42
Pack E (between 117 and 127 points)	26.67	2.06	28.73
Pack F (between 128 and 164 points)	34.44	2.06	36.50
Pack G (between 165 and 214 points)	44.94	2.06	47.00

Further details of what is included in each pack are shown in Appendix A.




12. The first element of the charge is the amount that will be paid to YHN by SLHD. The weekly administration charge is based on the estimated staff time to manage this scheme.

**IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES**

13.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 <b>Tackling Climate Change</b>		✓		
<p>Comments: Your Homes Newcastle have a 100% Reduce, Recycle and Reuse model, with the aim to have as little impact on the environment as possible. There is an environmental impact in terms of carbon footprint due to items being delivered from Newcastle weekly but can be reduced by pairing our delivery days with those of Berneslai Homes.</p>				
 <b>Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work</b>	✓			
<p>Comments: Furnished Tenancies will mean vulnerable tenants are well set up in their tenancies, reducing the risk of them falling into debt and their tenancies failing. Tenants will be more settled and better able to engage with training, employment, support services and their communities.</p>				
 <b>Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs</b>				✓
<p>Comments:</p>				
 <b>Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all</b>	✓			
<p>Comments: Furnished tenancies will provide vulnerable tenants and their families with a more sustainable tenancy and avoid problematic debt, which in turn will have an impact on the physical and mental health of the vulnerable people of Doncaster and their wider communities.</p>				
 <b>Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner</b>	✓			



<b>communities where everyone belongs</b>				
Comments: Tenants are more likely to remain in their home and become more involved in their communities. New items are all delivered in one delivery so lower carbon emissions from multiple deliveries.				
 <b>Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough</b>	✓			
Comments: Vulnerable families would be able to access all basic items required to set up a home, ensuring children have a good start in a healthier and more comfortable environment.				
 <b>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</b>				✓
Comments:				
 <b>Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</b>				✓
Comments:				
<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>	✓			
Comments: Furnished tenancies are open to those who need one and who are eligible. New tenants will be able to apply but furnished tenancies are not always the best option for tenants and alternative arrangements would be considered, where appropriate. In line with the corporate process for evidence and due regards, an initial Due Regard Statement has been completed for this activity. On this occasion, following assessment and the absence of negative impact, a full Due Regard Statement was not required. As this activity is a 12 month trial, when the process is reviewed, if it's going to be adopted for a further period, it will be subject to a further initial Due Regard Statement to reflect any proposed changes/impacts.				

#### 14. Legal Implications [Officer Initials: NC/ND 22/11/23]

Section 10 of the Housing Act 1985 permits local authorities to provide furniture for any social housing let by them. On the introduction of a furnished tenancy

scheme, any new tenancies granted subject to the scheme would need to be created by a tenancy agreement that includes clear reference to specific terms and conditions that relate to the charges and use of the furniture. Legal Services have drafted a suitable addendum to the standard tenancy agreement to cover these issues.

The supplier of the furniture must be procured in accordance with St Leger Homes' contract standing orders.

#### **15. Financial Implications [Officer Initials: PM/JCr 22.11.23 ]**

Whilst predicted demand for the scheme is not certain, estimates based on tenant consultation, numbers of platinum band allocations and consultation with other similar size organisations have been made, up to 150 tenancies could be taken on in the 12 months and similar numbers in subsequent years.

The direct costs for the furniture will be passported in total to YHN and will be entirely dependent on the mix and number of furnished tenancies.

Based on 150 properties per year the admin charge generated will be £16k per year (based on £2.04 per week for 52 weeks for 150 properties) and will be paid to SLHD to cover the costs of 0.5FTE post.

Both elements of these charges are eligible for Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit under the different legislation, for HB claimants these payments would be made directly to the tenants' rent account and for tenants on UC it is the intention that these tenants will be on managed payments direct to the landlord (CDC).

Both elements of the charge will be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process, to be eligible for benefits the charges cannot exceed the costs.

#### **16. Human Resources Implications [Officer Initials: AA 22.11.23]**

There are no direct HR Implications in relation to the report.

#### **17. Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW 22/11/23]**

There are no anticipated technology implications in relation to this report.

#### **18. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

There are potential risks around arrears and impact on void relet times, although these are felt to be mitigated by the proposed scheme arrangements.

With regards to arrears, a service charge will mean increased rent for anyone on a furnished tenancy scheme and therefore a risk that they could fall into additional arrears if their charge is not met by benefits.

The suggested scheme would endeavour to offset this risk by implementing a robust assessment of tenant circumstances and affordability before a furnished tenancy is offered as well as regular monitoring of any arrears and recovery of items if arrears persist.

Tenants in receipt of benefits, who are likely to be the majority or all of the tenants taking up the scheme, would be assisted to update their claim to ensure that the service charge is covered from the outset, and this would be followed by continued tenancy support to ensure a furnished tenancy continues to meet the needs of tenants.

With regards to impact on void relet times, tenants currently sign their Tenancy Agreement and move in with little or no personal effects. Under the proposed scheme, deliveries to Doncaster would take place at least weekly and so would not delay tenants signing their tenancy agreement and being able to move in.

There is a financial risk to SLHD regarding the number of furnished tenancies that are taken up. If the amount of tenancies in the scheme were lower than expected, then the amount collected in the administration element of the service charge may not fully cover the staffing cost for the scheme.

There is a perception that rented goods may be sold on or damaged but a recent report by Furniture Resource Centre (FRC) Group showed that this happened in only 3% of furnished tenancies. YHN insure all of their goods and repair and replacement costs are included in their charges. In the unlikely event the goods were stolen a crime reference number would be required for YHN, but no recharges would be imposed on SLHD or tenants.

The national campaign group 'End Furniture Poverty' are in the process of lobbying the government to implement a standardised framework for furnished tenancies. This is still in the early stages but may result in changes to furnished tenancy schemes in the future.

## **19. CONSULTATION**

Research was carried out with 10 councils and housing organisations who provide a furnished tenancies scheme or offer furniture to tenants through other schemes. In addition, consultation also took place with SLHD tenants and potential tenants on the housing register. These were selected around groups of interest, such as those housed with SLHD in the last 6 months and those living in temporary accommodation, both of which would be the likely target groups for furnished tenancies. Details of this is set out in section **6.3**.

Tenants were also involved in site visits to potential providers. The scheme proposals have also been presented to the Tenants and Residents Independent Panel and the St Leger Homes One Voice Forum, where it was received positively.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **20. End Furniture Poverty: The Extent of Furniture Poverty in the UK.**

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

- 21.** SLHD – St Leger Homes  
YHN – Your Homes Newcastle  
HB – Housing Benefit  
UC – Universal Credit  
FRC – Furniture Resource Centre  
LAS – Local Assistance Scheme

## **APPENDIX**

- 22.** A – Furniture Packs and Service Charges

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

Jennie Daly  
Tenancy Sustainability Manager  
St Leger Homes  
01302 862174  
[Jennie.daly@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:Jennie.daly@stlegerhomes.co.uk)

Dave Richmond  
Chief Executive Officer, St. Leger Homes of Doncaster  
01302 862700  
[Dave.Richmond@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:Dave.Richmond@stlegerhomes.co.uk)

**APPENDIX A**

<b>Typical Package examples for 23/24</b>					
<b>Pack Name</b>	<b>Typical item examples</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Weekly Charge</b>	<b>SLHD admin costs</b>	<b>Total weekly service charge</b>
A White Goods (WG) pack	<b>Pack A*</b>				
	Washing Machine	15	£3.15		
	Tumble Dryer	15	£3.15		
	Fridge/freezer	18	£3.78		
	Electric Cooker	16	£3.36		
		<b>64</b>	<b>£13.44</b>	<b>£2.06</b>	<b>£15.50</b>
B 1 bed + white goods	<b>Pack B*</b>				
	Washing Machine	15	£3.15		
	Tumble Dryer	15	£3.15		
	Fridge/freezer	18	£3.78		
	Electric Cooker	16	£3.36		
	Double bed/mattress	18	£3.78		
	Wardrobe	12	£2.52		
	<b>94</b>	<b>£19.74</b>	<b>£2.06</b>	<b>£21.80</b>	
C 2 bed + white goods	<b>Pack C*</b>				
	Washing Machine	15	£3.15		
	Fridge/freezer	18	£3.78		
	Electric Cooker	16	£3.36		
	Double bed/mattress	18	£3.78		
	Wardrobe x2	24	£5.04		
	Single bed/mattress	14	£2.94		
	<b>105</b>	<b>£22.05</b>	<b>£2.06</b>	<b>£24.11</b>	
D 1 bed + WG + living room	<b>Pack D*</b>				
	Washing Machine	15	£3.15		
	Tumble Dryer	15	£3.15		
	Fridge/freezer	18	£3.78		
	Electric Cooker	16	£3.36		
	Double bed/mattress	18	£3.78		
	Wardrobe	12	£2.52		
	Sofa	22	£4.62		
	<b>116</b>	<b>£24.36</b>	<b>£2.06</b>	<b>£26.42</b>	
E 2 bed + WG + living room	<b>Pack E*</b>				
	Washing Machine	15	£3.15		
	Fridge/freezer	18	£3.78		
	Electric Cooker	16	£3.36		
	Double bed/mattress	18	£3.78		
	Wardrobe x2	24	£5.04		
	Single bed/mattress	14	£2.94		
	Sofa	22	£4.62		
	<b>127</b>	<b>£26.67</b>	<b>£2.06</b>	<b>£28.73</b>	
F 3 bed + WG	<b>Pack F*</b>				
	Washing Machine	15	£3.15		
	Tumble Dryer	15	£3.15		
	Fridge/freezer	18	£3.78		
	Electric Cooker	16	£3.36		
	Double bed/mattress	18	£3.78		
	wardrobe x 3	36	£7.56		

G 3 bed + WG + living/dining	Single bed/mattress x 2	28	£5.88		
	Chest drawers x 2	18	£3.78		
		<b>164</b>	<b>£34.44</b>	<b>£2.06</b>	<b>£36.50</b>
	Pack G*				
	Washing Machine	15	£3.15		
	Tumble Dryer	15	£3.15		
	Fridge/freezer	18	£3.78		
	Electric Cooker	16	£3.36		
	Double bed/mattress	18	£3.78		
	Wardrobe x 3	36	£7.56		
	Single bed/mattress x 2	28	£5.88		
	Chest drawers x 2	18	£3.78		
	Sofa	22	£4.62		
	Chair	14	£2.94		
	Dining Set	14	£2.94		
		<b>214</b>	<b>£44.94</b>	<b>£2.06</b>	<b>£47.00</b>

\*23/24 costs based on 21p per point (each item has a fixed points value)

\*Minimum package of 60 points

\*Items interchangeable so tenants pay only for the items they need in their package



### Report

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17th January 2024

To: Members of Cabinet

Report Title: Biodiversity Net Gain and Red House Farm Habitat Bank  
Boundary – Revision to 19th July 2023 Cabinet Decision

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster	Wheatley Hills & Intake	No

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

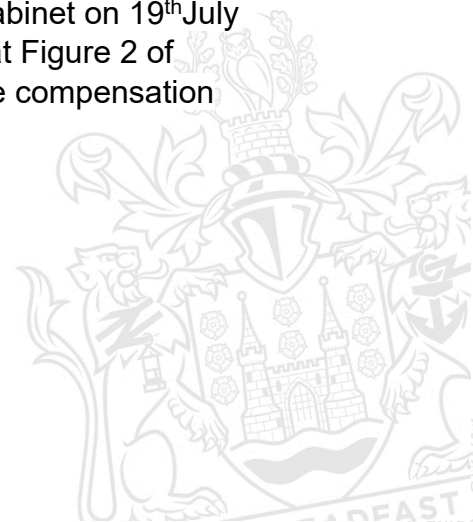
1. This report discusses amending a previous decision made by Cabinet on 19/07/2023 that approved the opening of a Habitat Bank at Red House Farm. It recommends that Cabinet approve the removal of an area of land from the Habitat Bank if planning permission is granted for the proposed Waterfront (East) Remediation Scheme. The removed area of land would then 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 are proposed to change as a result of this decision, but on the ground, post habitat creation, there would be no material difference in what is delivered as part of the Habitat Bank project.

#### EXEMPT REPORT

2. Not exempt

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

3. **OPTION 1 (RECOMMENDED)** That Cabinet approves, 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.



## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

3. This decision would have the same outcomes for the citizens of Doncaster as described in the Cabinet Report approved on 19/07/2023 (appended to this report and hereafter referred to as Background Paper 1).

## **BACKGROUND**

### **The Waterfront Planning Application**

4. The Council has submitted a planning application to remediate the Waterfront (East) mixed use site as a precursor to plans for its future redevelopment. This site is one of the largest brownfield regeneration opportunities of its size in the country, and the application builds on previous work and investment to date, such as land assembly and site access and wider remediation.
5. The Waterfront (East) remediation planning application, like the majority of other planning applications submitted of this type and scale, needs to be compliant with the adopted Local Plan 2015-2035, including with respect to Biodiversity Net Gain and Policy 30: Valuing Biodiversity & Geodiversity and its supporting Supplementary Planning Document. It therefore needs to demonstrate how it will deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity. To achieve policy compliance, the planning application for the Waterfront remediation scheme must secure 24.94 biodiversity units offsite.
6. Prior to mandatory legal net gain, the Council has been asking that developers provide details of a scheme where offsite Biodiversity units will be delivered or pay a Biodiversity Offsetting Contribution of £27,500 per biodiversity unit. These contributions are secured via a s106 agreement. The Council is not legally able to enter into a s106 agreement with the Local Planning Authority. Therefore, payment of a biodiversity offsetting contribution cannot be secured for the Waterfront (East) development and instead a scheme needs to be identified where the offsite units will be delivered.

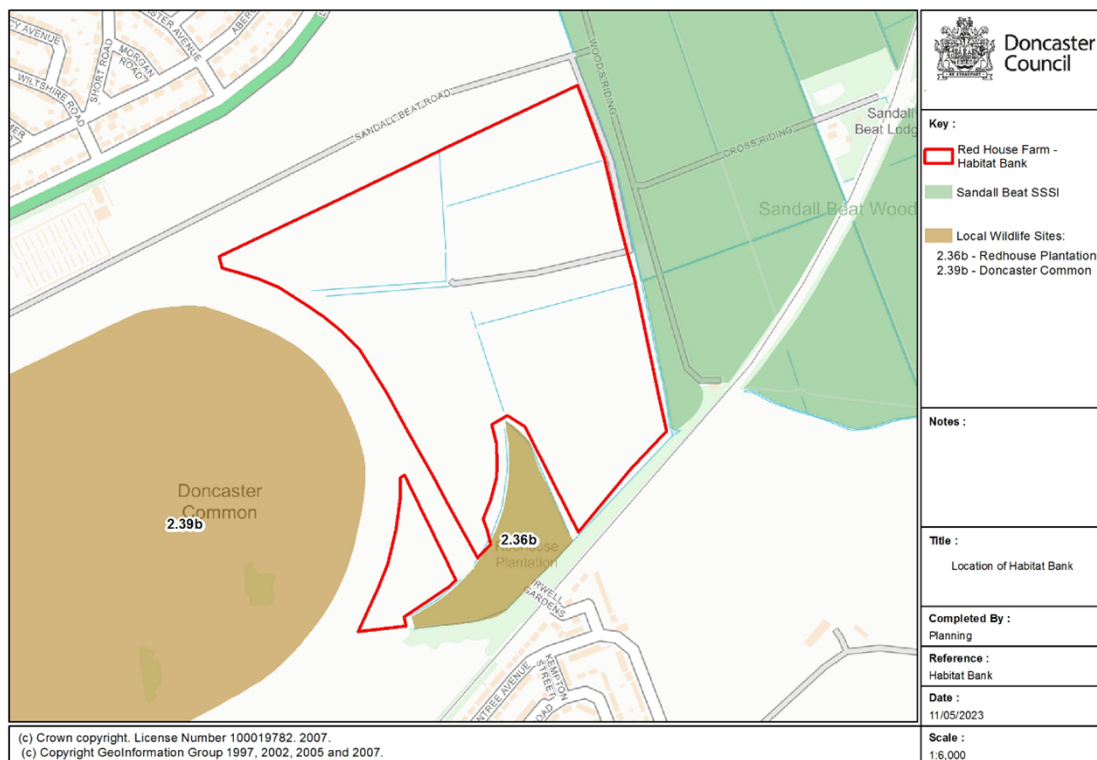
### **Proposal to offset impacts of the Waterfront development at Red House Farm**

7. Members will recall that a decision was made at the meeting of Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 which sought approval to set up a Habitat Bank on an area of Council owned land adjacent to Sandall Beat Wood, known as Red House Farm. The intention was for biodiversity units created on this site to be sold on the open market once biodiversity net gain becomes a legal requirement of all planning applications. This decision envisaged between 100 and 150 biodiversity units being created on the site.
8. The Habitat Bank at Red House Farm is 2.7 km from the proposed Waterfront (East) Development. As described in background paper 1, it is intended that a range of habitats including woodland, scrub, trees and neutral grassland will be delivered on the site. As the Waterfront development needs to deliver grassland, scrub and tree units offsite it has been identified that the Red House Farm site would be an appropriate location to deliver the necessary

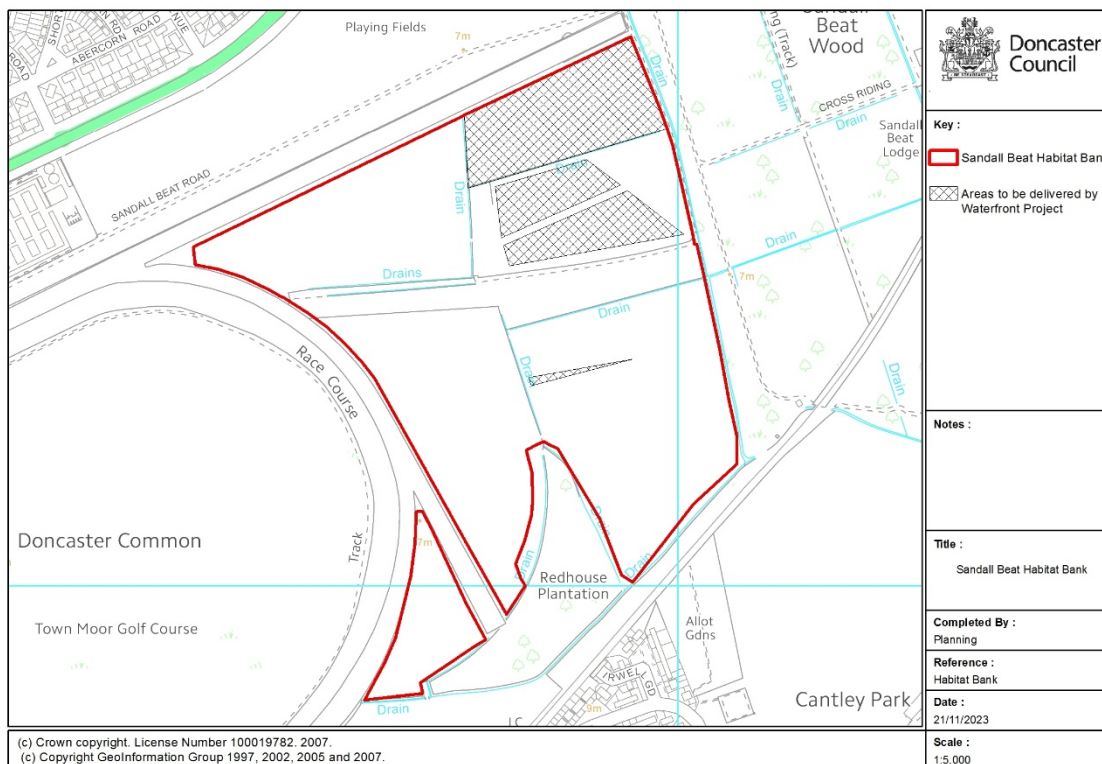


offsite biodiversity units as it is also within the main urban area and relatively close to the site.

- Figure 1 shows the extent of the Red House Farm Habitat Bank as was proposed in background paper 1. This report recommends, subject to planning approval being granted for the Waterfront application, altering the extent of the Red House Farm Habitat Bank to exclude the areas shown on Figure 2.



**Figure 1 (above): Extent of proposed Habitat Bank Approved by Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 as detailed in background paper 1.**



**Figure 2 (above): Extent of areas proposed to be removed from the Habitat Bank and delivered by the Waterfront Project.**

10. The excluded areas would deliver the same habitats as was previously envisaged but would instead be secured through an appropriate planning condition attached to the Waterfront planning application. This would mean that 24.94 fewer biodiversity units would subsequently be available for sale on the open market.

### Summary

11. If members of Cabinet were to agree with the recommendations in this report, then it would mean:
- The development at Waterfront would be facilitated by allowing offsite biodiversity units to be delivered on the Red House Farm site.
  - The areas identified in Figure 2 would be removed from the Red House Farm Habitat Bank.
  - Fewer biodiversity units would therefore be available for sale from the Red House Farm Habitat Bank once biodiversity net gain becomes mandatory.
  - The financial mechanism of paying for the habitat creation and ongoing management of parts of the site, shown in Figure 2, would change but on the ground, post habitat creation, there would be no material difference in what is delivered on the site to that which is described in background paper 1.

## OPTIONS CONSIDERED

12. Alternative options, all of which are NOT RECOMMENDED, are considered below.




**Option 2 (NOT RECOMMENDED)** Do 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.

13. Option 2 is not recommended because there is a risk that alternative offsite units would need to be procured from outside the Borough and 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.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

14. Option 1 is recommended because it will facilitate the delivery of planning application 23/02196/3FULM and facilitate bringing forward the Waterfront mixed use site as a precursor to plans for its future redevelopment. It will also ensure that biodiversity net gain is delivered within the Borough.

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 <b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	✓			
Comments: As well as helping to deliver biodiversity and better ecological networks, new habitats can also provide investment in other ecosystem services such as flood alleviation, carbon storage and improved air quality. These additional ecosystem services will help Doncaster to limit the negative impacts of and adapt to climate change.				
 <b>Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work</b>				✓
Comments: N/A				
 <b>Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs</b>	✓			

Comments: The remediation of the Waterfront site will have a positive benefit on business in Doncaster, unlocking an underused site near the town centre that will be well placed to attract future investment.



**Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all**



Comments: The loss of species and habitats poses as much a danger to life on Earth as climate change does. As well as underpinning the food we eat and the air we breathe, we depend on it for protection from other threats, like pollution, flooding and climate breakdown. The biggest driver of biodiversity loss is land-use change. The measures described in this report, will not only alleviate the impacts of biodiversity loss but provide a large additional green space for the people of Doncaster to enjoy.



**Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs**



Comments: Ensuring that there are biodiversity units for sale within Doncaster will help to bring wildlife closer to communities while at the same time delivering other benefits that will make communities safer by delivering ecosystem services such as flood alleviation, clean air and carbon storage all of which will be increasingly important in mitigating the negative impacts of climate change.



**Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough**



Comments: Access to nature and green spaces have proven benefits for people's mental health and personal well being. The delivery of Habitat Banks within Doncaster will mean the creation of new wildlife rich habitats that can help to connect children and families to nature.



**Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future**



Comments: N/A



**Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities**



Comments: N/A

<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>				✓
<p>Comments: In line with the corporate approach for compliance against the Equality Act 2011 due regard must be shown across all activity within the Council. The recommendations in this report represent high level strategic decisions, hence there are no detailed impacts on any people, groups or individuals on which to base a due regard statement. However as biodiversity net gain becomes further developed, and a clearer picture becomes available of how and where biodiversity net gain projects are being delivered, a due regard statement may need to be completed and reported.</p>				

**15. Legal Implications [Officer Initials: AH | Date: 28/11/2023]**

As a matter of law, a Council cannot enter into a legal agreement with itself. Where a Council owns land and seeks planning permission, instead of securing a BNG financial contribution in a S106 agreement, a planning condition is attached to any planning permission requiring a biodiversity net gain scheme to be agreed on land identified outside an application site.

**16. Financial Implications [Officer Initials: OB | Date:07/12/23]**

The costs per unit at the Red House Farm Habitat Bank have not yet been finalised and are subject to further approvals as per the original 19th July 2023 cabinet report. As units at this habitat bank scheme will need to be costed based upon a full cost recovery model, and the scheme aims to be cost neutral, it should not make any difference to the final financial position of the habitat bank if the proposal in the report goes ahead. Fewer units will be available to be sold on the open market than originally planned but also the costs of maintaining the Habitat Bank will be reduced if the area within the boundary is reduced. As per the original report, the price per unit, when agreed, needs to be set at a rate that will recover the estimated costs over the full thirty years commitment to the scheme, once sold.

This report focuses on the change to the original Habitat Bank proposal, which will allow the delivery of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) scheme offsetting the Waterfront (East) Remediation Scheme to also be delivered at this site, if required, if planning permission is granted for the Waterfront Scheme application 23/02196/3FULM.

The full costs of delivering this separate BNG scheme form part of the overall approved budget for the Waterfront scheme. Once the 30-year costs of delivering and maintaining the overall site have been established, an Officer Decision Record will be completed to approve the commitment to these costs, as per in the delegations in the 19th January 2022 cabinet report for the Levelling Up Fund (LUF1) Programme.

**17. Human Resources Implications [Officer Initials: DK | Date: 28/11/2023]**

There are no direct HR Imps in relation to this report, but if in future staff are affected or additional specialist resources are required then further consultation will need to take place with HR.

**18. Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW | Date: 01/12/23]**

There are no technology implications in relation to this report

**RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

19. There are no significant risks in relation to delivery of the Habitat Bank at Red House Farm in associated with OPTION 1. If the development at Waterfront is not delivered then the Habitat Bank units created on the site will instead be sold on the open market.

**CONSULTATION**

20. The decision to open a habitat bank at Red House Farm was subject to considerable consultation see background paper 1. The suggested amendments contained in this report were discussed with the Mayor on 20/11/2023 and both Portfolio Holders for: Sustainability and Waste; and, Finance, Traded Services and Planning on 19/12/2023 – both were supportive of the recommendation in this report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

21. Background Paper 1 - Report to Cabinet 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – [Biodiversity Net Gain & Habitat Banks](#)

**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

22. BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain

**REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

**Helen Markland, Principal Ecologist**

Phone Number: 01302 734 924 Email address: [Helen.Markland@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Markland@doncaster.gov.uk)

**Jonathan Clarke, Planning Policy & Environment Manager**

Phone Number: 01302 735 316 Email address: [Jonathan.Clarke1@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Clarke1@doncaster.gov.uk)

**Dan Swaine, Director of Place**

Phone Number: 01302 862 503 Email address: [Dan.Swaine@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:Dan.Swaine@doncaster.gov.uk)