



Doncaster  
Council

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Date: 2nd February 2018

Mayor Ros Jones  
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Dear Ros

### **Overview and Scrutiny's Response to the Mayor's Budget Proposals 2018/19 – 2020/21**

I am writing to confirm the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's (OSMC) response to your Budget Proposals 2017/18 and am pleased to confirm Members were supportive of the proposals.

Following publication of your budget proposals, OSMC Members initially reviewed the details at a meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 and invited Directors to a further meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 to discuss points relating to Adult Social Care Commissioning and Regeneration and Environment General overspends.

At these meetings the Committee used the following lines of enquiry to help develop its response:-

The four key areas for consideration are:

- i. To what extent are the Mayor's proposals in line with central government policy, pressures and directives?
- ii. To what extent will the Mayor's proposal ensure that the Council is able to contribute to the outcomes set out in the Borough Strategy, Corporate Plan bearing in mind the constraints detailed at i. above and Medium Term Financial Forecast?
- iii. To what extent do the Mayor's proposals demonstrate that the results of any consultation, research or other evidence have been taken into account?
- iv. To what extent are the challenges in delivering the savings within the timescales and the capacity to deliver services with reduced resources being addressed?

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The Committee's response is attached to this letter and I would welcome the opportunity to present this to your Cabinet meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> February. I would also be grateful if you could take account of OSMC's response when you present your final proposals to Council on the 5th March 2018.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the Directors and Assistant Directors for attending our budget review sessions, answering questions and providing clarification on issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Rodgers', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Councillor Kevin Rodgers**  
**Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

cc OSMC Members  
Cabinet Members  
Jo Miller, Directors and BAs.  
Steve Mawson  
Scott Fawcus

## **APPENDIX A OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUDGET REVIEW OUTCOMES**

### **In respect of the Mayor's budget proposals, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee:**

1. Recognised the difficulties in setting a balanced budget that delivers considerable savings and seeks to protect services delivered to the most vulnerable in the Borough. Additionally the delivery and implementation of the proposals, once agreed are crucial to delivering a balanced budget.
2. Welcomed its early involvement in the budget process and particularly the opportunity to review the proposals to meet the future funding gap. The Committee wish this early involvement to continue in future years and receive regular updates on the implementation of the key budget proposals and how any slippage or key risks are being addressed.
3. Recognised that following a long running deficit and repayment schedule the position with South Yorkshire Pensions had turned around into a surplus position with protections in place to ensure no further deficit.
4. Acknowledged that resources were already stretched and continued to tighten. It was recognised that the Council was not able to continue doing everything it already provides and realised that as it moves forward and transforms a debate was required about resource prioritisation.
5. Accepted there was a potential additional cost based on the local government pay offer, but pleased to note that the additional cost could be manageable from a mixture of New Homes Bonus additional funding and other funding. It was noted that the 2% pay increase over the next two years was currently out to consultation.
6. Express concern with regard to the Impact of Brexit, particularly with regard to the possible loss of care staff from Europe and local businesses taking opportunities due to uncertainty. Members were pleased to note that the Strategic Policy Unit was tracking the position but until there were more concrete proposals, recognised that it was difficult to plan.
7. When looking to reshape services, in particular, commissioning, contracting and subcontracting, that the Council has regard to recommendations from evidence formed as a result of the Communities and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny domestic abuse review. Evidence which demonstrates the importance of investing in local services and retaining quality staff on frontline services.
8. That when considering the commissioning of Adult Social Care services, that the Council use their General Powers of Competency to create a cooperative and mutual model for localised delivery with health partners. In addition, that the Committee encourages the uptake of personal budgets through any existing and new commissioning mechanisms.
9. Recognise the real shift in regeneration in the town centre and elsewhere, particularly the way in which this will support council revenue going forward with the increase in business rates.

10. Note the progress of the asset review and welcome the use of capital borrowing and receipts to drive forward our regeneration programme and other service changes. The Committee would be willing to receive any referral from the Executive in relation to Asset Disposal and Community Lettings Programme to potentially add value.
11. Recognises the hard work that has gone into creating the budget as part of the 3 year plan aligned to the Doncaster Growing Together programme. The Committee can see the clear challenges on the horizon with the review of Fairer Funding Review, removal of the Revenue Support Grant and reliance in large part on Council Tax and Business Rates.
12. Acknowledge the challenges of reviewing housing related support services, with a view to the transition of current service users to more appropriate forms of support relating to areas such as mental health, children, homelessness and learning disabilities.
13. Express concern with regard to the ongoing overspends by the Doncaster Children's Trust, and would recommend further robust financial and management oversight to resolve these issues.