



Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 12th February, 2019 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 14th February, 2019

With the exception of Decisions 1,3,4,5 and 6, which are all subject to Full Council approval on the 4th March, 2019, the end of the call in period is 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 25th February, 2019 and therefore, the decision can be implemented on Tuesday 26th February, 2019.

Present:

Vice-Chair - Councillor Glyn Jones (Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities) (In the Chair)

Cabinet Member for:

Councillor Nigel Ball	Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Leisure and Culture
Councillor Joe Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services
Councillor Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care
Councillor Nuala Fennelly	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Councillor Chris McGuinness	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment
Councillor Bill Mordue	Portfolio Holder for Business, Skills and Economic Development
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Corporate Services.

Apologies:-

An apology for absence was received from the Chair, Mayor Ros Jones.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

Whilst there were no public questions or statements received from the members of the public, the Chair, Deputy Mayor Councillor Glyn Jones invited Councillor Kevin Rodgers, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to speak in relation to the Budget proposals being considered at the meeting.

Councillor Kevin Rodgers reported that following the receipt of the Budget proposals, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had reviewed the details at meetings held on the 1st and 7th February 2019. He stated that Overview and Scrutiny recognise the difficulties in setting a balanced budget that delivers considerable savings, value for money and seeks to protect services delivered to the most vulnerable in the Borough. In respect of the proposed 4.99% Council Tax, he stated that there should be greater publicity to acknowledge that this included the 2% social care precept which can only be used to fund Adult Social care. He stated that he was pleased to confirm that OSMC Members were supportive of the proposals and thanked Cabinet for the discussion to date.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones thanked Cllr Rodgers and Scrutiny Members for taking the proposals through the scrutiny process.

Decision Records dated 29th January, 2019, be noted.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Corporate Plan 2019-2020

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the report and recommended it for Full Council approval on the 4th March, 2019.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones presented the Corporate Plan to Cabinet which had been updated to provide clear direction for the work of the Council for 2019/20 and was presented alongside the budget proposals.

Councillor Jones reported that the Council had continued to modernise and integrate services and deliver significant budget savings which had been combined with place shaping and working with partners to improve the borough as a place to live, work, invest and visit.

He pointed out that the Council had seen the completion of phase 2 of the Great Yorkshire Way, record levels of investment, house building and employment, agreement for a new University Technical College and events like the Tour de Yorkshire and Museum of the Moon.

Councillor Jones reported that the updated plan was framed around the same 5 themes as the current plan:

- The 4 Doncaster Growing Together priority themes; and the
- Cross-cutting 'Connected Council' theme.

This will sharpen the focus on inclusive growth and the 'Areas for Action' for the 'Working' Theme had been updated to reflect the new Inclusive Growth Strategy.

Councillor Jones advised Cabinet that the Council continues to face further budgetary challenges and the updated plan highlights a number of “must dos” across all themes including:-

1. Community Level work to harness local strengths
2. Early intervention and prevention
3. Targeting services to the residents and communities that need them most.

He stated that despite the budget challenges and Brexit uncertainty, there was much to look forward to, for example:

- The UTC strengthens Doncaster’s case to become a University City
- ‘Doncaster Creates 2020-22’ and the proposed investment at High Melton.
- Further delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan.
- The Tour de Yorkshire returns and Doncaster will host the Cycling World Championships.

He commented that he was grateful to Overview and Scrutiny for considering the updated Plan and providing feedback and support and any changes as a result of this would be agreed by the Mayor and reported to Full Council on the 4th March 2019.

He recommended the report to Cabinet and urged colleagues to agree the updated Corporate Plan for submission to Full Council.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Three main options were considered for the updated Corporate Plan:-

- a. A plan which focuses on the internal ‘Connected Council’ components – service standards and capacity to deliver DGT.
- b. A detailed Plan which reflects the breadth and depth of the Council PMF/Quarterly Monitoring report.
- c. A high level Plan which reflects the breadth of the Council PMF, picking out key milestones/achievements for 2019-20 – but which signposts to further detail. (Recommended option).

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Lee Tillman, Assistant Director, Strategy and Performance Unit.

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. School Admissions Arrangements for 2020/21 Academic Year

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved the following admission arrangements for the 2020/2021 school year:-

- Community School Admission Arrangements
- Community School Nursery Admission Arrangement (Sections 18-20 of the report)
- Primary Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements
- Secondary Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements (Sections 21-23 of the report)
- Notification of parents of the arrangements for admission including those to the proposed University Technology College (Section 16 of the report).

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools presented the report outlining the Council's duty to determine the arrangements for the admission of children to schools and nurseries across the Borough on an annual basis.

She reported that the Council had an important role in ensuring that parents were given every opportunity to apply for a place at a preferred school. This was best achieved through the Council co-ordinating and monitoring process.

Councillor Fennelly advised that the co-ordinated arrangements applied to all types of schools in the Borough including academies and the free school.

Cabinet were advised that co-ordinating year of entry admissions was a statutory function of the Council and it achieves this through an on-line application and paper based system. It was noted that 90% of applications were received on-line.

Councillor Fennelly stated that the current system was improving year on year; for example, for admissions in September 2018 over 90% of pupils were offered their first preferred school and 98% were offered one of their three preferences.

She also pointed out that in September 2013, the Government withdrew the requirement to co-ordinate in year applications. This raised concerns within the Authority regarding the safeguarding of children. Arrangements that were agreed by the previous Cabinet in March 2012 retained this practice and this report continued this commitment to co-ordinate in year admissions.

She commented that each admission authority in the Borough must set its own admission arrangements. In respect of Community Schools, the Local Authority acts as the admission authority and determines these arrangements.

These arrangements are applied in cases of oversubscription. Priority is given to children in care, followed by catchment area children and then recognise the importance of children attending the same school as elder siblings.

Cabinet noted that the arrangements were reviewed annually and updated as necessary to take into account relevant legislation, guidance and local changes.

Councillor Fennelly commented that support for parents throughout the admission process was crucial to minimise any disruption to a child's time in education. The support provided through the Admissions Service had been reviewed and a number of actions had already taken place to ensure smooth transition into and between schools.

The Council now have dedicated support staff for each phase of education, minimising complaints and allowing the processing of applications in a timely manner.

Councillor Fennelly sought Cabinet's approval to the content of the report and its recommendations.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Options considered were highlighted within paragraphs 18 to 23 of the report.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Damian Allen, Director of People (DCS/DASS)

DECISION 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Revenue Budget 2019/20 - 2020/21

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet recommend to Council to approve the 2019/20 to 2020/21 Revenue Budget, this includes:-

- (1) the revenue budget proposals for 2019/20 detailed at Appendix B (pressures £21.6m) and Appendix C (savings £18.2m);
- (2) Council Tax increasing by 4.99% to £1,351.43 for a Band D property

(£900.95 for a Band A) for 2019/20. This includes:-

- 2.99% Council tax increase equates to an increase of £38.49 for Band D per annum, 74p per week (£25.66 for Band A per annum, 49p per week);
- 2.00% Government's Social Care "precept" equates to an increase of £25.74 for Band D per annum, 49p per week (£17.16 for Band A per annum, 33p per week);

- (3) the 2019/20 Grants to 3rd Sector Organisations outlined in paragraph 26 and Appendix F;
- (4) the fees and charges proposed for 2019/20 at Appendix G;
- (5) the Medium Term Financial Forecast including all proposals in this report as set out in Appendix D;
- (6) a gross revenue expenditure budget of £488.0m and a net revenue expenditure budget of £213.6m, as detailed in Appendix D; and
- (7) note the Council's statutory Section 151 Officer's positive assurance statements (detailed in paragraphs 34 and 40).

3. REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones presented the report to Cabinet which set out the Mayor's draft Revenue Budget proposals for 2019/20 to 2020/21. He reported that through hard work, expertise and the use of one off funding, the proposals set out the plan to balance the budget for 2019/20.

He stated that Government grant cuts, rising demand for services and an increase in costs all contribute to an overall funding gap of £21m for 2019/20 and following the use of £3m one-off reserves, a further £13m gap for 2020/21. By 2021 this would take the total gap the Council has had to bridge to a staggering £272m, since Government austerity measures started in 2010/11.

Councillor Jones reported that as always the Council would protect jobs and frontline services where they can, help the vulnerable and wherever possible continue with services that matter most to residents but to do this the Council would have to work together, capitalising on the good work of local communities and the voluntary sector.

He advised Cabinet that the draft proposals would potentially see 76 full time equivalent post reductions over the next two years. The Council would initially look to delete vacant posts, then seek voluntary redundancy, then redeployment with compulsory redundancy being the absolute last resort.

He commented that the budget also included an increase in Council Tax of 4.99% in 2019/20, which would generate £5.3m to help meet the budget gap. This included a 2.99% council tax increase and a further 2% increase through the government's Social Care "precept" which contributes towards the pressures for Adults, Health and Wellbeing. The overall increase equates to an additional 82p per week for Band A and £1.23 per week for Band D.

Councillor Jones wished to point out that Doncaster would continue to have one of the lowest council taxes in Councils of its size in the country (7th lowest in 2018/19) and the lowest in South Yorkshire.

He reported that it was clear that focus on finance was never ending and further work was still required to meet the increasing budget gap for 2020/21. This would require delivering on-going savings to bridge the gap between funding available and rising costs. The use of one-off reserves was not a sustainable solution.

He asked that Cabinet recommend that Council approve the following:-

- the revenue budget proposals for 2019/20 detailed at Appendix B (pressures £21.6m) and Appendix C (savings £18.2m);
- Council Tax increasing by 4.99% to £1,351.43 for a Band D property (£900.95 for a Band A) for 2019/20. This includes:-
 - 2.99% Council tax increase equates to an increase of £38.49 for Band D per annum, 74p per week (£25.66 for Band A per annum, 49p per week);
 - 2.00% Government's Social Care "precept" equates to an increase of £25.74 for Band D per annum, 49p per week (£17.16 for Band A per annum, 33p per week).
- the 2019/20 Grants to 3rd Sector Organisations outlined in paragraph 26 and Appendix F;
- the fees and charges proposed for 2019/20 at Appendix G;
- the Medium Term Financial Forecast including all proposals in this report as set out in Appendix D;
- a gross revenue expenditure budget of £488.0m and a net revenue expenditure budget of £213.6m, as detailed in Appendix D; and
- note the Council's statutory Section 151 Officer's positive assurance statements (detailed in paragraphs 34 and 40).

Members were given the opportunity to comment on the report.

Councillor Nigel Ball stated that although the Council was now in its 9th year of Government cuts, it was pleasing to see that Doncaster maintains the lowest Council tax rate in South Yorkshire as well as seeking to protect the most vulnerable people in the Borough. He expressed concern that services cannot be maintained indefinitely whilst the Council are working against a back drop of ongoing cuts.

Councillor Bill Mordue echoed the comments made by Councillor Ball. He commented that the Social Care precept was welcome but should be funded directly by the Government as its inclusion within the Council Tax charge made it appear as a charge initiated by the Council.

Councillor Rachel Blake commented that on the issue of the Social Care precept, all councils were facing the same problems and the gap continues to remain. She highlighted the widespread concern that councils and others still await the publication of the social care green paper.

Councillor Joe Blackham reported that Doncaster had faced a difficult endeavour but wished to congratulate and compliment all those involved in the work carried out to enable the Council to reach a balanced budget proposal.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

A range of options have been considered over the preceding months to arrive at these budget proposals.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Steve Mawson, Assistant Director of Finance/Chief Financial Officer.

DECISION 9.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

9. Capital Strategy and Capital Budget 2019/20 to 2022/23

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet recommend to Council to approve:-

- (1) the Capital Strategy at paragraphs 37 to 72;
- (2) flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy at paragraph 32 to 36;
- (3) Capital Programme Budget for 2019/20 to 2022/23 at paragraphs 12 to 31; and
- (4) Directors in consultation with the portfolio holder take responsibility for agreeing any significant changes to the Schools Condition Programme and the Local Transport Plan funding and that they are agreed in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones introduced the report to Cabinet stating that the report set out the Capital Strategy and Capital Budget for the next four years 2019/20 to 2022/23.

He reported that the Capital Strategy was a new requirement from 2019/20 and this sets out the principles, decision making process for new bids and how the capital programme will be monitored. It was noted that a flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy was also contained in the report; this allows the Council to fund

expenditure, which meets the criteria to generate ongoing revenue savings, with capital receipts.

Councillor Jones commented that the Capital Programme includes £323m of capital investment over 2019/20 to 2022/23, which would continue to stimulate growth and prosperity, with £136m spend planned for 2019/20. The investment would further improve education, housing, infrastructure, retail, leisure and culture, as well as attracting investors and visitors to the borough.

He asked that Cabinet recommend that Council approve the following:

- The Capital Strategy at paragraph 37 to 72;
- Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy at paragraphs 32 to 36;
- Capital Programme Budget for 2019/20 to 2022/23 at paragraph 12 to 31; and
- Directors in consultation with the Portfolio Holder take responsibility for agreeing any significant changes to the Schools Condition Programme and the Local Transport Plan funding and that they are agreed in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Steve Mawson, Chief Financial Officer & Assistant Director of Finance wished to highlight for the benefit of the public why and how the Council can afford to invest in projects such as the New Library and Museum when cuts are being made to existing services. He stated that the funding for capital projects came from different sources such as capital grants and capital receipts and this funding could not be used to fund ongoing services.

Councillor Nigel Ball welcomed the explanation and the need to make the public aware of the difference and why the money cannot be used for existing services. He also commented that developing our assets would help the borough grow and develop.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – Do not support the Capital Strategy, Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy and proposal for the 2018/19 to 2021/22 Capital budget.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Steve Mawson, Assistant Director of Finance/Chief Financial Officer

DECISION 5.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

10. Housing Revenue Account Budget 2019/20

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the report and recommended to Full Council the approval of the Housing Revenue Account budget proposals as set out in the report including:-

1. Rents are reduced from 1st April 2019, by 1.0% as detailed in paragraphs 7 to 10 in line with Government policy. This will result in an average weekly rent decrease of £0.70, resulting in an average rent of approximately £69.40 per week. Rents will be charged every week of the year.
2. The budget proposals for the HRA for 2019/20, which are contained in Appendix A. These proposals set a balanced budget for the HRA and maintain a reserve of £4.0m; and
3. Fees and charges set out in paragraph 13.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones introduced a report setting out the Housing Revenue Account budget for the 2019/20 financial forecast for the next three years, the account had a budget to break even and was targeted to have a working balance of £4.0m over the next four years.

Councillor Jones stated that it was proposed that housing rents are decreased by 1% in 2019/20. This decrease was a statutory change which was included within the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. 2019/20 was the fourth of four years where there will be a 1% rent reduction. This decrease makes a small weekly difference for tenants but every little helps in the current economic climate.

He reported that average rent in Doncaster would be at the lowest of all South Yorkshire Councils at £69.40 per week. He highlighted that the other recommendations in the report were for inflationary increases in the charges for garages and enclosed gardens. There would also be inflationary increases for the heating charges at the town's two district heating schemes, this was the first increase in 5 years for the properties on the Ennerdale scheme and two years since the charges were increased for Balby Bridge.

He sought Cabinet comments with regard to the report and asked them to recommend to Full Council that they approve the HRA budget and rent decrease proposals.

The report was offered out for comment by Members.

Councillor Nigel Ball stated that from his perspective, Doncaster had the lowest Council Tax rents and rates and the Council were also building Council Houses, so

wished to state that he was fully supportive of the report and congratulated all those involved.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 defines how Local Authority rents will be set over the period 2016/17 to 2019/20. No other options were considered.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Steve Mawson, Assistant Director of Finance/Chief Financial Officer.

DECISION 6.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

11. Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/20 - 2022/23

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet recommended to Full Council:-

(1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/20 – 2022/23 and the Prudential Indicators included;

(2) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy as set out in paragraphs 27-28 (details in Appendix B); and

(3) the Treasury Management Annual review report for 2017/18 at Appendix F.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones introduced the report to Cabinet which set out the strategy for management of the council finances and provided a framework for the operation of the treasury management function within the Council. He stated that Treasury Management ensures that sufficient cash is available to meet service delivery in line with the approved Capital and Revenue Budgets.

He pointed out that the key prudential indicators relating to borrowing limits were detailed in the report.

He asked that Cabinet recommend that Council approve the following:-

- The treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/20 – 2022/23 and the Prudential Indicators included; and
- The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy as set out in paragraphs 27-28 (details in Appendix B).

Councillor Jones also asked that Cabinet note the Treasury Management Annual Review report for 2017/18, at Appendix F.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Other options considered were highlighted within paragraph 107 of the report.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Steve Mawson, Assistant Director of Finance/Chief Financial Officer.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker