



Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decision was taken on Tuesday, 1st October, 2019 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Wednesday, 2nd October, 2019

The end of the call in period is 5.00 p.m. on Friday, 11th October, 2019 and therefore, the decisions can be implemented on Monday, 14th October, 2019

Present:-

Chair - Mayor Ros Jones (Budget and Policy Framework)

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

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 Nuala Fennelly	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Councillor Chris McGuinness	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Corporate Services.

Apologies:-

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rachael Blake and Bill Mordue.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

There were no public statements made at the meeting.

The Decision records dated 3rd September, 2019 (previously circulated), were noted.

DECISION 1

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approve the Medium-term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020/21 to 2022/23, as detailed in this report, including:-

- (1) agree to progress the savings proposals detailed in Appendix D (approved by Council on 4th March, 2019) and Appendix E (new saving proposals) of the report; and
- (2) note that the budget assumptions will be updated for the Local Government Provisional Settlement expected in December 2019, and included in the budget report due to be considered by Council on 5th March, 2020.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Mayor Ros Jones, which outlined the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the three year period 2020/21 to 2022/23, and provided an update on the changes to Local Government Funding and, in particular, the forecast funding gap facing the Council for 2020/21 onwards, which was provided for in more detail in paragraphs 9 to 27 of the report. A summary of the headline assumptions, pressures facing the Council for 2020/21 to 2022/23, and savings proposals in preparation for the Council budget report on 5th March 2020, as approved in the 2019/20 budget, were provided in Appendices A, B, C and D of the report, respectively.

The Mayor reported that the budget plan had been prepared in uncertain times where the Council had seen Government funding cuts of circa. 50% since 2010, and significantly increased costs to deliver front line Council services. Members were informed that the financial challenge facing the Council was estimated at £7.5m for 2020/21, and £16.8m in total over the next 3 years,

The Mayor further reported that the Council awaited the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announcement, which was expected in December 2019, which would provide specific provisional funding allocations for Doncaster. She explained that this placed difficult pressures on the Council in preparing its future plans.

The Mayor explained that the MTFS for 2020/21 and future years, outlined how the Council was proposing to manage the financial challenges, whilst still providing essential services and protecting Doncaster's most vulnerable residents after nearly ten years of austerity. She emphasised that in relation to the budget proposals, the Council have had to make difficult choices about which frontline services were funded. As always, the Council would protect jobs and front line services, where possible. The Council would look to work with communities and its partners to build on each other's strengths and achieve its goals together for the Borough. However, she highlighted that Doncaster had much to be proud of and

wanted to continue to be ambitious for its people and places, despite the financial challenges.

The Mayor stated that the financial plan included a 1.99% increase in Council Tax from 2021/22, but pointed out that the proposed rate would continue to be one of the lowest in comparison to other Metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities, and in 2019/20, the rate in Doncaster had been the 11th lowest out of 91.

Based on the current proposals, the Mayor reported that this would result in a reduction of 95 posts; 80 for the Council and 15 for the Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST). She stated that to achieve the savings, the Council and the DCST would initially look to delete vacant posts, then seek volunteers, then redeployment, with compulsory redundancy being the last resort. It was noted that work to reduce post numbers had already started, with a senior management review currently underway. The Mayor explained that if the proposals were approved today, further work would then be undertaken over the next few months, including, consultations and equality impact assessments, to help provide assurance on the robustness of the budget proposals, and reviewing the impact of the local government settlement, prior to the budget being considered by full Council on 5th March 2020.

Councillor Nigel Ball pointed out that Doncaster was third in the league behind Barnsley and Liverpool in relation to budget cuts. However, he commended the Council for putting together the budget proposals to help deliver services.

In referring to the new service pressures for 2020/21 in relation to the Regeneration and Environment Directorate with regard to Fly Tipping, as identified in Appendix C of the report, Councillor Chris McGuinness clarified that the Council would be introducing two 'additional' dedicated Officers to enforce the Council's powers in relation to Fly Tipping.

To conclude, the Mayor stated that the Council would continue to mitigate the impact of cuts to Council services, in order to ensure that essential services continued to be delivered.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

A range of options had 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

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Services.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker