



Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 16th June, 2020 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 18th June, 2020

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Monday 29th June, 2020. The decisions will not be implemented until after this date and time.

Present:

Chair - Mayor Ros Jones (Mayor of Doncaster with responsibility for Budget and Policy 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 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.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

No public questions or statements were made at the meeting.

Decision records dated 10th March, 2020 be noted.

Prior to the commencement of formal business of the meeting, Mayor Ros Jones personally thanked the staff of Doncaster Council, partners and key workers for keeping the country going through these unprecedented times.

She also thanked residents and communities for following the national advice, for supporting vulnerable residents and the acts of kindness, which have been seen across the borough of Doncaster. She commented that it is humbling to see, and Doncaster residents should be proud of the part they have played in combatting this global pandemic at a local level.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Big Picture Learning - Update.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) noted the progress of the work through the Behaviour Transformation Programme and how it has contributed to a shift in the functioning of the overall system and provision landscape in Doncaster;
- (2) approved changes to the financial model, including a 2 month pause on the Social Impact Bond and a rest of the Payment by Result (PBR) contract;
- (3) approved funding for July and August to support intermediate running costs. This will be for £65,000 per month; and
- (4) approved the delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People to take all strategic decisions pertinent to the delivery of this model via the Special Purpose Vehicle, including those related to the development of the new model, with a follow up report delivered within 3 months.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received a report introduced by Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools updating members on the Big Picture Learning programme. She reported that Doncaster Council, are the commissioner and have developed the Big Picture School. This is a new mode of educational delivery and is part of a unique and innovative project funded through the Life Chances fund and a social impact bond.

It was, advised that since the school opened in May 2019, the Council have supported the provider to overcoming challenges around leadership and quality of provision. The provider found it difficult to align its unique approach to delivery within the OFSTED framework.

Councillor Fennelly stated that Doncaster's inclusion programme has overseen a huge shift in how local partnerships work, and the landscape around behaviour provision. The Covid 19 crisis has seen the development of a need for a more 'blended' approach to learning, with physical input accompanying online learning.

She advised that as with any innovation, it has been vital to review the role-played by Big Picture Learning in this new world. Part of this review will consider the huge opportunities for this project to connect into a new flexible landscape around employability and skills.

This can then be extended to young people who are missing education through mobility, absence, exclusion or elective home education.

Councillor Fennelly commented that a future option would be to re-purpose the current arrangements to deliver an extended model with far greater reach and volume, along with support for young people in accessing the workplace

She explained that the current crisis has afforded a genuine opportunity to reflect and consider the needs of Doncaster's children and families. The Council is confident that the new Big Picture model has the potential to make a huge difference in engaging young people with both learning and employment.

Cabinet welcome the report recognising the importance of providing the best education it can for children within the borough.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – Continuing with the current provider and contract

Staying with the current arrangements would necessitate large amounts of officer and exterior time in order to support the provider. There is evidence that the provider does not have the required levels of experience to expedite effective delivery within such a timeframe as to make the project cost effective. Efforts to bring about effective governance or executive leadership capacity have not been successful. Retaining the current arrangements may threaten the financial stability of the SPV as the school will struggle to meet expected outcomes for the foreseeable future and cohort growth will not be possible at the expected volume. There is insufficient confidence that the current provider would have the capacity, as a school, be able to satisfy the immediate demands of OFSTED timescales and will not be to deliver solely on the ambitions set out above.

Option 2 – Opening an alternative provision with the current provider

Many of the issues mentioned in option 1 would still present a barrier. Current governance and leadership restrictions would constrain attempts to redesign the school for September 2019 and time would be lost in ensuring that this can be, built effectively. Financial challenges brought about by the existing contract would mean that the school would need significant growth in its cohort. Uncertainties about the ability to improve the school at pace would be augmented by the possibility that any new cohort would be affected by trauma and fragmentation of school experiences. This would mean that any significant increase in the pupil roll would be a major risk of not learning from our lessons so far and maximising the role and influence of other local partners.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

The appendix to the report is not for publication because it contains exempt information by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as it contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Riana Nelson, Director Learning Opportunities, Skills and Culture

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. 2019-20 Quarter 4 Finance and Performance Improvement Report.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved and noted:-

- (1) the virements per the Financial Procedure Rules, detailed in the Financial profile attached at Appendix A;
- (2) the carry forwards approved by the Chief Financial Officer, detailed in the Finance profile attached as Appendix A; and
- (3) the Strategic Risk Register attached as Appendix B.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received a report introduced by Mayor Ros Jones on the 2019-20 Quarter 4 Finance and Performance Improvement. She advised that the report showed that at the end of the 2019/20 financial year the organisation was in a good position, with a positive financial outturn projection, and continued good performance.

In relation to Finance Headlines Mayor Jones stated that:-

- The quarter 4 and year-end financial position for the financial year 2019/20 is a £1.4 million underspend, this is due to the continued close management of budgets across the council.
- To achieve this position the Council continues to deliver savings in order to fund other cost pressures. In 2019-20 we had a savings plan of £18m, and despite responding to the flooding emergencies at the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, delivered the majority of these proposals. This is the testament to the hard work of staff and the performance culture which exists within Doncaster.
- The recent Coronavirus Pandemic has highlighted the need for financial prudence and the need to save for a rainy day, the financial diligence has

enabled the Council to have sufficient resources in order to support residents and communities through this difficult time.

- Significant financial challenges remain for the future including delivering savings targets for 2020/21 and providing funding to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council are reporting on the financial impact on a monthly basis and will be clearer on the ongoing impact as lockdown eases and the new normal working environment emerges. Doncaster Council stand with Local Government up and down the country, in the hope that government will support Local Councils and local economies in recovering from this crisis.

With regard to Performance headlines, Mayor Jones reported that:-

- The Council continues to deliver on its ambition to reduce reliance on residential care, supporting more people to stay in their own homes
- Supporting local businesses remains a priority and it was pleasing to see that 71% of Council spend in 2019/20 was with local suppliers.
- The Council continues to improve processing times for new Council Tax and Housing Benefits claims. Maintaining this performance and supporting those households impacted by COVID – 19 will be key area of attention over the next 9 months.

Cabinet welcomed the report acknowledging that looking at some of the impacts for Quarter 4 that the Covid Pandemic had presented there were challenging times ahead.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources.

DECISION 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Performance Challenge of Doncaster Children's Services Trust: Quarter 4, 2019/20.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet notes the progress of Doncaster Children's Services Trust performance outcomes and the contribution that the Trust makes to support the Council's strategic priorities.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, which covered the quarter 4 outturn 2019/20 for Doncaster Children's Services Trust, including the initial phases of the Covid-19 response.

Councillor Fennelly stated that despite lockdown commencing on the 24th of March the Trust was already implementing its business continuity activities, including the risk rating of all open cases, with visiting plans in place. The fuller impact will become apparent later.

She advised that of the 12 contractual KPIs, 11 are at or above contract expectation and 1 is outside contract range

It was noted that the outstanding measure related to the completion of pathway plans for children leaving care. However, it now stands at 91%, which is within contract range.

Councillor Fennelly stated that considering the initial impact of Covid 19, demand is down in 19/20 compared to previous years. Fewer referrals have been made but the Trust are forecasting and preparing for increases as schools reopen.

Cabinet noted that the Trust ended 19/20 reporting a £1.24M underspend, achieved largely due to lower looked after children numbers and placement costs. However, placement costs for out of authority settings remain high. There will be delays in delivering the Future Placement Strategy plan relating to Covid lockdown and this will mean a continued reliance on provision outside Doncaster.

It was reported that Officers in the Local Authority and Trust have reviewed the current KPI indicator set, in light of the current Covid emergency, it has reviewed target and tolerance figures to mitigate the specific challenges faced, for example courts being closed. The indicators have been agreed and are currently with DMBC legal services for review.

Cabinet welcomed the report and noted the progress made to date.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

James Thomas, Chief Executive Officer, Doncaster Children's Services Trust.

DECISION 4.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

9. St Leger Homes of Doncaster Ltd (SLHD) Performance & Delivery Update: 2019/20 Quarter Four (Q4) and year end outturn.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the progress of SLHD performance outcomes and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting Doncaster Council's strategic priorities.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Prior to introducing the report, Deputy Mayor Councillor Jones wished to thank all the staff of St Leger Homes for their contribution during what has been an extremely challenging year. With the floods in November and the current Coronavirus Pandemic, St Leger have had to adapt and respond quickly in order to support tenants and those in need of support and for that he expressed his thanks

He stated that the report covered Quarter 4 and year-end performance for 2019/20 In what has been a challenging year for us all but St Leger Homes have still performed strongly.

Councillor Jones advised that the Income Management Team with the support of the Tenancy Sustainment Team came in better than target, despite the impact of the 53 week year, where those on Universal Credit (UC) received no rent payment for that 53rd week, putting at risk £310k of rent. This performance also included an increase in over 2,000 tenants claiming UC by the year-end when compared to the previous year. The impact on the current crisis and rent payment holiday will have a significant impact on the current year's rent arrears figure and performance overall.

Cabinet were advised that void rent loss was above target. After performance had slipped at the start of the year, performance towards the end of Q2 and into Q3 was steadily improving prior to the floods in November, when the waiting list was suspended for a period of time and properties held for potential flood victims.

He commented that there was a similar impact on the standard void re-let time, which came in at an average of 22.88 days. This would have been 21.63 days when the impact of flooded properties was removed.

Councillor Jones went on to state that homelessness has had another challenging year with the use of Bed&Breakfast at the year-end increasing as a result of the government's rough sleeper's announcement that all rough sleepers had to be accommodated overnight.

This government decision will also have a severe impact on current year's performance as there are currently between 50-60 rough sleepers in Bed&Breakfast accommodation on any one night, although the plan is to move back to statutory service for new homeless presentations. On the plus side, homeless preventions has continued to increase.

Cabinet noted that repairs has generally continued to perform well. Performance against the new repairs performance target improved throughout the year and 100% gas servicing was achieved. However, as we move into the new financial year, we have seen an increase in the number of those refusing access for gas servicing.

In conclusion, Councillor Jones stated that sickness out turn is at 8.22 days which is an improvement on last year's performance down from 8.9 days to 8.22 days.

Councillor Bill Mordue expressed some concern with regard to gas safety checks and stated that St Leger should be hitting the target on 100% as safety is critical. In response, Paul Tanney, Chief Executive, St Leger Homes, thanked Councillor Mordue for his support on this and advised Cabinet that the process had been changed, to emphasise that people could move to another room or the garden during the gas safety check as a Covid-19 precaution.

The Mayor and Cabinet welcomed the report and wished to express their thanks to everyone at St Leger Homes who had stepped up to support and helped the borough's vulnerable people during the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Paul Tanney, Chief Executive Officer, St Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker