

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 5TH MARCH, 2020

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE on THURSDAY, 5TH MARCH, 2020, at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Linda Curran
Vice-Chair - Councillor Paul Wray
Mayor - Ros Jones
Deputy Mayor - Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Nick Allen, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Rachael Blake, Nigel Cannings, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, John Gilliver, Martin Greenhalgh, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Richard A Jones, Kenneth Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Tina Reid, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Derek Smith, Frank Tyas, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson and Jonathan Wood.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joe Blackham, Bev Chapman, John Cooke, Eva Hughes, Nikki McDonald, Andy Pickering and Cynthia Ransome.

65 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

66 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23rd January, 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Thursday, 23rd January, 2020, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

67 To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council, the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, made the following announcement:-

“The recent floods that devastated communities across Doncaster and up and down the country, highlight the urgency with which we need to address climate change. In Doncaster, the waters have receded, the cameras have gone, communities are starting to rebuild and repair, and Doncaster Council will continue to support our residents and communities. I recently hosted an event to thank communities, voluntary, faith and community sector groups. It is humbling to see how communities have come together at a time of such challenge. We will also continue to lobby

Government for adequate funding for both flood defences and flood mitigation to support our communities.

These flooding events, plus the recent fires that have taken place across Europe, Australia and parts of the United States, all make the actions that we take in response to the declaration of the Climate and Bio-diversity Emergency more critical. We really do need to think global and act locally. This Council's unanimous support for the declaration has helped to galvanise our collective efforts, bringing communities and organisations together. Whilst these are relatively small steps, we are starting to make some real progress.

As part of Borough-wide consultation Doncaster Talks, the number one priority from all parts of the Borough was the desire to see a Cleaner, Greener Doncaster. As part of the budget that we will discuss shortly, further resources have been proposed to support this priority, and Councillor Chris McGuinness will shortly be making an announcement about the Great Doncaster Spring Clean which will be bigger and better than ever in 2020.

Since declaring a climate and biodiversity emergency, this Council has approved investment in electric cars, charging infrastructure and is implementing energy efficiency schemes across Council buildings and housing stock, and major projects such as our new library and cinema development have solar panels. As a Council, we have already invested in LED street lights and insulating our Council housing stock. We will continue to work on initiatives that will reduce our emissions and ensure sustainable use of our resources. All of this will of course have to be within our financial and budget constraints.

Doncaster's Climate and Bio-Diversity Commission is in place and meets for the fifth time tomorrow. It has considered a range of topics including land use, energy production and storage, waste, and green business opportunities. The Commission will be publishing an interim statement by at the end of March.

A very successful Doncaster Nature Alliance Event was held on Tuesday night, which was well attended by a number of residents and community organisations including Doncaster Naturalists, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust and some of our own Council staff. The aim was a fantastic advert for the work that the many organisations do to support Doncaster's natural environment.

The recent 'Make Your Mark Survey', highlighted climate change as the biggest issue for young people and our fantastic young people are planning an event which will take place next month, hosted by Doncaster's members of the Youth Parliament, to generate more ideas about what we can do to tackle Climate Change. A Members seminar focused on Climate Change is scheduled to take place on 23rd March, which I hope as many Members as possible will attend.

This is just the start. We need to go further and faster, and that is why I am announcing today, my intention to make a number of pledges at May's Full Council meeting. These pledges will include ceasing the use of peat, glyphosate herbicides and single use plastics, and planting more trees across Doncaster. I have asked Officers to work up the plans and timescales by which we can achieve them."

Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Member for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment, made the following announcement:-

“The Great British Spring Clean will be here imminently and there will be a number of emails circulated shortly, outlining what is going on in your Wards. Last time, we had over 450 volunteers helping with this on over 100 events at various sites across the Borough, and it would be great if Members could get involved. At the last meeting, I told you over 3000 penalty notices had been issued, and I can now tell you that we are buying more covert cameras to enforce fly tipping and whilst we will always have those who insist on fly tipping, we may be able to catch more of the guilty offenders.”

Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Economic Development, made the following announcement:-

“This year was the eleventh Business Showcase that Doncaster has held at the Racecourse, and it is proving to be more successful year on year. It is the biggest event of this kind in Yorkshire, and the event is already over subscribed for 2021. This event showcases the positive work being done in Doncaster, and I would like to place on record, my thanks to the Business Doncaster Team for all their work in making this a success.”

68 Questions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13

(A) Question from Mr. Michael Swain to Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services:-

“When will works commence on installing 20mph speed restrictions on our estate in Athelstane Crescent, and in regards to new housing developments, can it be made a planning requirement for 20mph speed limits and/or adequate footpaths to be implemented as standard practice?”

In the absence of Councillor Joe Blackham, Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Member for Communities, Voluntary Sector and Environment, gave the following reply:-

“I am pleased to confirm that the legal Traffic Order process required for the 20mph Speed Limit on Athelstane Crescent is well underway. The Traffic Order requires legal documents, formal consultation with statutory bodies, and publishing the proposals on-site and in the press. This gives anyone the opportunity to object to the proposals. Only then, after considering any objections received, can an order be made, which involves yet a further statutory advertising period. This is not a local Doncaster Council procedure, but is laid out in national regulations and is a process that all Local Authorities must lawfully comply with. Subject to completion of the due legal process as described, it is anticipated that the works on site will be undertaken early in the next financial year.

In regards to 20mph speed limits and footpaths on new housing developments, the emerging Doncaster Local Plan Policy 45 supports proposals for new housing where access points, street design, parking and operational highway requirements are safe, and provide adequate footpaths, encourage vehicle design speeds of 10-20 mph or less, and complement the character of the existing street scene and highway functions.”

69 Appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

The Chair of the Chief Officers Appointments Committee, Councillor Glyn Jones, introduced the report which sought Council's approval for the appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, and appointed Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Elections.

It was reported that interim arrangements were established in June, 2019 as agreed at Full Council, to appoint a replacement Head of Paid Service, as this was a statutory role, for a period of up to 12 months, to allow for a full recruitment process to take place, subject to a permanent appointment being made within the timeframe by the Council's established and approved Chief Officer recruitment practice.

Members were informed that following an open recruitment process, final interviews were held on 19th February, 2020 by an established Panel from the Chief Officers Appointments Committee, with a recommended decision to Council that Damian Francis Allen be appointed as Doncaster Council's Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, and appointed Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Elections, with effect from 6th March, 2020.

RESOLVED that Damian Francis Allen be appointed as Doncaster Council's Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and appointed Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Elections, with effect from 6th March, 2020.

70 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019

The Council considered the 2019 Director of Public Health Annual Report, which was presented by Dr Rupert Suckling.

It was reported that this was the fifth annual report authored by Dr Suckling, which included an assessment of whether or not health was improving in Doncaster. The report identified that there was a slowdown in health improvement and also showed how averages masked inequalities between different groups of people in Doncaster. The report demonstrated how the public health grant was committed locally, how those commissioned services performed, and how the public health grant and the action of the Public Health Team and partners, combined to address the most pressing local health issues.

Members were informed that the comparison of the performance of public health commissioned services was included for the first time and that the ranking of tobacco control was based on the high rates of smoking in the adult population (19.6%), and smoking during pregnancy (15.9%). This national indicator did not include any data in the effectiveness of local specialist smoking cessation services. The annual report did include a 'Call to Action' on tobacco control as tobacco was still the leading cause of preventable ill health and premature deaths in the Borough. Despite high quality specialised smoking cessation services in Doncaster, as many people were starting to smoke each year as quitting, resulting in no overall reduction in smoking numbers.

Members noted that the best start in life indicator was made up of 2 process measures; the percentage of new birth visits within 14 days and the percentage of children receiving an 'Ages and Stages' assessment between 2 and 2 1/2 years old. It also included an assessment of School readiness that was improving and an assessment of breast-feeding at 6-8 weeks, which was 30%.

It was also reported that whilst alcohol and drug treatment indicators were good in this report, there would be changes as to how these indicators were calculated in future years, and it was likely that performance would deteriorate, as both indicators would include an assessment of unmet need.

In conclusion, the report provided a summary of progress on the recommendations from the Director of Public Health's previous reports and made the following three new recommendations for 2020:-

- Doncaster partners should continue to embed a population health approach focussed on four related activities addressing:-
 - The wider determinants of health
 - Our health behaviours
 - The places and communities we live in and with
 - Integrating health and care services into an integrated health and care system
- Doncaster Council should consider an LGA Prevention Peer Review; and
- Doncaster Council Public Health function should continue to take a sector led improvement approach to quality improvement

Following Members of the Council being afforded the opportunity to comment on the report, Councillor Rachel Hodson referred to the 'Walking to School Initiative' and childhood obesity, and from the perspective of the 'Clean Air Initiative', she enquired how the Council was going to measure and make sure they were replicated further, to allow others to benefit, and what could Public Health do to make sure that the air our children were breathing was clean, and what was Public Health doing to influence the SYPT, Private Bus Companies and the Environment Commission. In response, the Director of Public Health undertook to provide Councillor Hodson with a written response.

RESOLVED that Council note and publish the Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2019.

71 Corporate Plan 2020/21

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of an updated Corporate Plan for 2020/21, which provided a clear direction for the work of the Council and priorities, for the forthcoming year.

The Mayor reported that over the past year, the Council had continued to drive change to improve Doncaster for all its residents and had observed:-

- Record levels of employment and investment with an increase of average wage rates by 10% over two years;

- The agreement of a South Yorkshire Devolution Deal which would unlock investment for Doncaster, whilst the Council pursued its ambition for a wider Yorkshire Devolution Deal;
- The continued integration of health and care services, and a co-commissioning agreement with the Council's health partners;
- Improvement to early years education and GCSE results; and
- The Council undertook 'Doncaster Talks' which was a Borough wide consultation to understand the issues that mattered most to residents

The Mayor stressed that there were still many challenges to face as a Borough, none of which were as important as the need to tackle the Climate and Biodiversity crisis, which was why she was pleased that the Council had declared an emergency and set up a commission to help shape its work going forward.

It was reported that the Council had seen first-hand this year, the devastating impact the climate could have on its communities, and she was proud of the collective efforts of the Borough's communities, staff and partners, to help those in need during the response and continued recovery.

Members noted that the updated Plan was still framed around:-

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

The Mayor emphasised that there was a clearer alignment between the work the Council would prioritise and its 6 Imperatives, which were the outcomes and ways of working that must shape the Council's work going forward which included:-

- Embedding sustainability into all that the Council did for a cleaner and greener Borough;
- Advance inclusive growth to achieve good economic growth for all of Doncaster;
- Focus on early intervention and prevention, including supporting families and communities across the Borough;
- Develop lifelong learning and skills to ensure all residents had access to opportunities to advance their lives and careers;
- Ensure the Council was 'Keeping it Real' to understand its people and places, and building this into decision making; and
- Being intelligence led to work smarter and more efficiently.

Members noted that the upcoming year would also see a new Borough Strategy being developed to help drive Doncaster in the 2020's. The Council was still delivering on its priorities with the significant budgetary challenges it faced and the uncertainty around funding following 2020/21, but despite this, it was an exciting time for

Doncaster, and with the challenges that faced the Borough, came exciting opportunities.

The Mayor concluded by stating that the Council would continue to work with its partners to improve the Borough as a place to live, work, invest and visit, and she was grateful to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for considering the plan and providing their feedback and support.

RESOLVED that the 2020/21 Corporate Plan, be approved.

72 Capital Strategy and Capital Budget 2020/21 to 2023/24

Prior to Council's consideration of the report, the Chair of Council, Councillor Linda Curran, reminded Members of the legal requirement to include in the minutes, details of how each Elected Member had voted on decisions relating to the budget and level of Council Tax. Therefore, items 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 would all be subject to a recorded vote and voting preferences would be documented in the minutes of this meeting.

Subsequently, the Council considered a report which was presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which outlined the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme Budget proposals for the next four years, 2020/21 to 2023/24.

The Mayor stated that the Council continued to invest in the future of the Borough despite the tough economic climate with over £300 million capital spend planned over the next four years. Through this investment, residents across the Borough would benefit from projects to further improve education, housing, infrastructure, retail, leisure and culture, as well as attracting investors and visitors to the Borough.

It was reported that 2020 would see the completion of the new Central Library and Museum, and delivery of the new Cinema with six screens and five family restaurants. The Cinema alone would provide 102 new jobs, adding to local employment opportunities for Doncaster and enhance the Civic and Cultural Quarter leisure offer.

Members were informed that £135 million would be invested in the Councils social housing stock over the next four years. This would include maintenance, adaptations and the start of a 10 year new build programme which would see an estimated 560 new homes built over 10 years, with an overall budget of £100 million. This investment would be the largest council house investment in Doncaster for many years.

The Mayor also reported that she would be bringing forward further capital schemes to invest in community facilities across Doncaster, which she would share once further details and funding had been agreed.

The Mayor hoped that the Prime Minister would stand by his words and level up the North because Doncaster was ready and waiting for the investment, and had schemes at the ready. Doncaster had benefited over the years from the European Regional Development Fund, and the Council now awaited the detail around the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which it was hoped would favour Northern areas of the country.

Following the presentation of the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme Budget proposals, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 42

The Chair of Council, Councillor Linda Curran, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Rachael Blake, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, John Gilliver, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Majid Khan, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Tina Reid, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Derek Smith, Frank Tyas, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against - 3

Councillors Nick Allen, Steve Cox and Jonathan Wood.

Abstain - 4

Councillors Nigel Cannings, Jane Cox, Martin Greenhalgh and R. Allan Jones.

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Capital Strategy, as detailed within paragraphs 38 to 76 of the report, be approved;
- (2) the Capital Programme Budget for 2020/21 to 2023/24, as detailed within paragraphs 15 to 37 of the report, be approved;
- (3) 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 be agreed in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder; and
- (4) it be noted that capital bids will be approved as in year additions to the Capital Programme in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

73 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21 to 2023/24

The Council Considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21 to 2023/24, which provided details of the Strategy for the management of the Council's finances, and provided a framework for the operation of the Treasury Management Strategy function within the Council.

The Mayor stated that the Council must ensure that it had access to money to pay its bills, and it was vital that the Council managed its finances effectively, in the best interests of local residents.

Members noted that Treasury Management sought to optimise the Council's cash flow and secure the most effective arrangements to support the long term funding requirements, and that the key Prudential Indicators relating to borrowing limits, were detailed in the report.

Following the presentation of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement proposals, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 42

The Chair of Council, Councillor Linda Curran, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Rachael Blake, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, John Gilliver, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, R. Allan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Majid Khan, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Tina Reid, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Derek Smith, Frank Tyas, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against - 5

Councillors Nick Allen, Steve Cox, Nigel Cannings, Martin Greenhalgh and Jonathan Wood.

Abstain - 1

Councillor Jane Cox.

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21 to 2023/24 and the Prudential Indicators included, be approved; and
- (2) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, as detailed within paragraphs 27 to 28 and in Appendix B of the report, be approved.

74 Revenue Budget 2020/21 to 2022/23

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the Revenue Budget proposals for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

The Mayor stated that hard work, expertise and £7 million of unexpected one-off funding from Central Government for Social Care, had contributed towards addressing the budget gap for 2020/21. Despite the improved financial position in the short term, the proposals indicated that the journey ahead was still a challenging one with ambitious savings that needed to be achieved to meet an overall budget gap of £17.7 million over a three year period.

The Mayor highlighted the enormity of the challenge that the Council has had to face over the past 10 years. Since 2010, Government funding to Doncaster Council had been cut by 51% or £119 million per year, and that 64% of Council spending for 2020/21, was on Adult & Children's Services. Last year, 'Centre for Cities' classed Doncaster as the third hardest hit Council in the country from Austerity. The Mayor pointed out that the 1% increase in Council Tax would bring in £1.1 million in Doncaster, which was considerably less than 1% would be in more affluent areas, and that that local taxpayers should not have 'to foot the bill' for the lack of Central Government Funding.

The Mayor emphasised that the Council would protect jobs and frontline services where it could, it would help the vulnerable and wherever possible, continue with the services that mattered most to its residents. The Council's recent community engagement exercise, through Doncaster Talks, identified that being a cleaner and greener Borough was a key priority for the people of Doncaster. Therefore, as part of the budget for 2020/21, the Mayor had allocated further financial resources to cleansing, grounds maintenance and enforcement services, which would include investment in equipment, additional resources and improved methods of operation within services.

It was reported that the budget included an increase in Council Tax of 1.99% in 2020/21, and a further 2% increase through the Government's Social Care Precept. The overall increase equated to an additional 69p per week for Band A and £1.04 per week for Band D. Doncaster would therefore continue to have one of the lowest Council Taxes in Local Authorities of its size in the country. The Council was 11th lowest in 2019/20 and for 2020/21, and it would continue to be the lowest in South Yorkshire.

The Mayor stressed that the focus on finance was never ending and further work was still needed to meet the increasing budget gap for 2022/23. This would require delivering on-going savings to bridge the gap between funding available and rising costs, as the use of one-off reserves was not a sustainable solution.

The Mayor pointed out that "Austerity is supposed to be over" and had put this statement to the Prime Minister and for the new Chancellor to prove it. She asked that Local Government be given the financial resources to deliver the level of services that people needed and deserved, not just one-off allocations of money which made long term planning impossible.

The Mayor concluded by stating that when the Council responded to the Government's Fair Funding Review, it shared the views of the LGA, SIGOMA and many others, in pointing out that unless there was an adequate level of funding available for the services that Local Authorities provided, then the Fair Funding Review and by extension, Local Authorities, would be doomed to failure.

Following the presentation of the Revenue Budget for 2020/21 to 2022/23 proposals, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 42

The Chair of Council, Councillor Linda Curran, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Rachael Blake, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, John Gilliver, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Majid Khan, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Tina Reid, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Derek Smith, Frank Tyas, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against - 7

Councillors Nick Allen, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Nigel Cannings, Martin Greenhalgh, R Allan Jones and Jonathan Wood.

Abstain - 0

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Revenue Budget proposals for 2020/21 to 2022/23, as detailed within the report, be approved including:-

- (1) the Revenue Budget proposals for 2020/21, as detailed in Appendices B and C (pressures £14.0 million) and Appendices D and E (savings £7.0 million) of the report;
- (2) Council Tax increasing by 3.99% to £1,405.35 for a Band D property (£936.90 for a Band A) for 2020/21. This includes:-
 - (i) 1.99% Council Tax increase equating to an increase of £26.89 for Band D per annum, 52p per week (£17.93 for Band A per annum, 34p per week); and
 - (ii) 2.00% Government's Social Care Precept equating to an increase of £27.03 for Band D per annum, 52p per week (£18.02 for Band A per annum, 35p per week).
- (3) the 2020/21 Grants to Third Sector Organisations, as detailed within paragraph 37 and Appendix G of the report;
- (4) the fees and charges proposed for 2020/21, as detailed within Appendix H of the report;

- (5) the Medium Term Financial Strategy including all proposals in the report, as detailed within Appendix A of the report;
- (6) a gross Revenue Expenditure Budget of £490.1 million and a net Revenue Expenditure Budget of £223.9 million, as detailed within Appendix A of the report; and
- (7) the Chief Financial Officer's positive assurance statements be noted, as detailed within paragraphs 45 and 50 of the report.

75 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21

The Council considered a report, presented by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities, which detailed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget proposals for the 2020/21 financial year, and the medium term financial forecast for the following three years, which had a budget to break even.

The Deputy Mayor reported that it was proposed that housing rents would be increased by 2.7% in 2020/21, which was in line with Government policy and followed four years of rent reductions. He pointed out that the average rent in Doncaster would be the lowest of all South Yorkshire Councils at £71.63 per week.

The Deputy Mayor stated that he was proud of the low rents in Doncaster which made good quality homes affordable for over 20,000 households in the Borough, but pointed out that the Council needed to increase rents this year and future years, to enable the Council to continue to deliver excellent day to day services for tenants, to continue to collect more rent as the changes to universal credit continued to be rolled out, and to invest in properties to maintain them at the Doncaster Decency Standard. The Council also wanted to invest over and above all of this, following the tragic fire at Grenfell, as there was an increased focus on health, safety and compliance, and the Council needed to invest to ensure that its properties were safe for its tenants. In addition, the Council also wanted to ensure that all its properties were as energy efficient as possible, to reduce fuel bills for tenants and also the carbon footprint of its homes.

It was reported that the increase in the charges for garage sites was above inflation; an increase of 6p per week from 94p to £1 per week, but these charges would be frozen for three years, and that there would be increases for the heating charges at two district heating schemes which was an increase is 6.6%. It was noted that the Council had seen significant increases in its gas bills and an increase in its biomass charges, but investment in these schemes and other efficiencies, had enabled the Council to keep these proposed increases at 6.6% and these schemes continued to provide excellent value for money to the tenants that used them.

The Deputy Mayor also stated that the HRA continued to fund in excess of £30 million of investment a year into the Council stock each year over the next four years; the main areas of investment being energy efficiency improvements including replacement boilers, and other thermal efficiency works for hard to treat, non-traditional properties and external works such as new roofs including fascias, gutters and soffits. He pointed out that the Council would complete the house new build programme which included properties in Toll Bar, Thorne, Blaxton, Edenthorpe and Intake, and that changes to the borrowing rules for the HRA and additional match funding which had

been identified, gave the Council a real opportunity to accelerate its new build programme in future years.

In concluding his presentation, the Deputy Mayor referred to the proposal within the Capital Budget report being considered at this meeting today, to approve £80 million of prudential borrowing to enable the delivery of an ambitious and exciting medium term plan for future new build Council housing.

Following the presentation of the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020/21 proposals, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 44

The Chair of Council, Councillor Linda Curran, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Rachael Blake, Nigel Cannings, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, John Gilliver, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, R. Allan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Majid Khan, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Tina Reid, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Derek Smith, Frank Tyas, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against - 4

Councillors Nick Allen, Steve Cox, Martin Greenhalgh and Jonathan Wood.

Abstain – 1

Councillor Jane Cox.

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget proposals, as detailed in the report, be approved including:-

- (1) rents be increased from 6th April 2020, by 2.7%, as detailed within paragraphs 7 to 10 of the report, in line with Government policy; this will result in an average weekly rent increase of £1.88, resulting in an average rent of approximately £71.63 per week. Rents will be charged every week of the year;
- (2) the budget proposals for the HRA for 2020/21, as detailed within Appendix A of the report; these proposals set a balanced budget for the HRA and maintain a reserve of £4 million; and
- (3) fees and charges, as detailed in paragraph 14 of the report.

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which set out how the Council Tax was calculated and sought approval regarding Doncaster Council's Council Tax requirement for 2020/21.

It was proposed that Doncaster Council's element of the Band D Council Tax charge be increased by 3.99% for 2020/21 to £1,405.35. The proposals included an increase in the core Council Tax of 1.99%, as detailed within the 2020/21 Revenue Budget report, and an increase in the Adult Social Care Precept of 2%.

The Mayor reported that just under 88% of domestic properties in Doncaster fell into Bands A, B and C, with 58% falling in Band A. The proposals equated to a charge of £936.90 for a Band A property, which was an increase of 69p per week.

Members noted that the report included an increase in Council Taxes of the Joint Authorities (South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire), which represented an overall increase of 3.66% for Doncaster residents.

Following the presentation of the report, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations contained within the report, which was declared as follows:-

For - 39

The Chair of Council, Councillor Linda Curran, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Rachael Blake, Phil Cole, Mick Cooper, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, John Gilliver, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, David Hughes, Jane Kidd, Tosh McDonald, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Ian Pearson, Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Dave Shaw, Derek Smith, Frank Tyas, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against - 6

Councillors Nick Allen, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Nigel Cannings, Martin Greenhalgh and R Allan Jones.

Abstain - 0

On being put to the meeting, the recommendations contained within the report were declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that Council approved a Band D Council Tax for 2020/21 of £1,405.35 for Doncaster Council services and passed the appropriate Statutory Resolutions, as detailed within Appendix B of the report, which incorporated the Council Taxes of the Joint Authorities and which, taken together with Doncaster's 3.99% increase, represented a 3.66% increase from the 2019/20 Council Tax for Doncaster residents.

77 Implementing the South Yorkshire Devolution Deal

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which outlined the current progress with regard to the implementation of the South Yorkshire Devolution Deal.

The Mayor stated that in 2017, Doncaster residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of a wider Yorkshire Devolution Deal. Pursuing a Yorkshire wide deal was still the Council's intention, but it was recognised that the South Yorkshire Devolution Deal was the necessary next step on its journey to a wider Devolution Deal. The consultation on the South Yorkshire Deal was still open, and the Mayor encouraged all Councillors and residents of Doncaster, and South Yorkshire, to have their say.

It was reported that the current timetable for implementation would allow Doncaster and South Yorkshire, to gain access to the benefits of the Devolution Deal by the summer. The gain share amounted to £30 million per year, which would be for the four South Yorkshire Authorities rather than the original nine, and would continue until the wider Devolution arrangements were agreed.

Members noted that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, recently confirmed that subject to the positive conclusion of this deal, the Government had agreed to progress discussions on the role and functions of a Committee of Leaders from across Yorkshire, based on the existing Yorkshire Leaders Board, which was the compromise that Doncaster and Barnsley Councils had been pushing for since 2015. This would unlock significant opportunities and investment for Doncaster and South Yorkshire, whilst enabling the Council to join a Yorkshire-Wide deal at a later date.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the progress on the 2015 South Yorkshire Devolution Deal, be noted;
- (2) the timetable for consultation on the Deal be acknowledged; and
- (3) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, be given delegated authority to take forward and conclude the legal steps necessary to implement the Devolution Agreement, including consenting on behalf of the Authority, to the Enabling Powers Order, provided that the Order corresponds to the proposals contained in the Governance Review and Scheme.

78 Questions by Elected Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 15.2 and 15.3

A. Questions on Notice

Q. The following Question on Notice, had been received from Councillor Nick Allen:-

“How many Officers from DMBC contributed to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's technical consultation on the assessment of Local Authorities' relative needs and resources? Do you

support the contributions of those Officers and to what extent did they ensure the Fair Funding Review: 'considers the type of adjustment that will be made to an authority's relative needs assessment to take account of the relative resources available to them to fund local services'? These are significant issues which have recently been misrepresented, for political gain, despite some clear economic benefits for Doncaster."

A. The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, gave the following response:-

"The Council provided a full response to the Government consultation, 'A review of local authorities' relative needs and resources', and also the 'Business Rates Retention Reform' consultation that ran alongside it. I am happy to share the full response if needed. Our response to the Adult Social Care section indicated that though we felt the proposed cost drivers were not unreasonable, there were changes that we would like to see. We also said we would need to see a more detailed technical paper that the Government committed to publishing, which has yet to be published. The full impact of the Government's Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Reforms, will not be known until the results are published in full. At that point, we will assess the impact on Doncaster Council.

It was the Conservative led LGA that leaked the initial figures in regards to the 'Fair Funding Review' which identified that Doncaster could lose £5 million per year through the Adult Social Care Element of the review. It is also worth bearing in mind that in 2019, 'Centre for Cities' reported that Doncaster was the third hardest hit area in the country from austerity.

I do support the contributions of Officers. We share the views of the LGA, SIGOMA and many others that, unless there is an adequate level of funding available for the services that Local Authorities provide, then the Fair Funding Review and by extension, Local Authorities, will be doomed to failure."

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Nick Allen asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. "With regard to the last paragraph in your response, did Officers make it clear at the time that they were contributing to the review, because their evidence became the whole library used in the review. If they had made that point, then surely, it would have been taken in to account?"

A. The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, gave the following response:-

"I will read out the first general comment that went back to the Government; 'We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation and include some general comments in addition to responses to the specific questions asked in the consultation. The most critical element to the success of the review of Local Authorities relative to the needs and resources, is not mentioned in the consultation at all, namely, the overall quantum of funding available. We share the view of the LGA, SIGOMA and many others, that unless there is an adequate level of funding available for the services that Local Authorities provide, then this review and by extension, Local Authorities, will be doomed'. If you want a full copy of our response, I would be happy to provide it to you."

Q. The following Question on Notice, had been received from Councillor Jane Cox:-

“Doncaster Council correctly declared a climate emergency in September, 2019. Does the Mayor feel that the current Tree Policy is robust and sufficient to move the Borough forward given the recent environmental damage in and around Doncaster. The planting of trees is vital and with historic issues around the Town such as Mill Lane in Warmsworth and Middlefield Road in Bessacarr, are very much in the headlines. As was the failure to plant trees properly in Finningley Ward. Is our declaration of a climate emergency consistent with the Town’s Tree Policy and what issues do you feel should be addressed in the near future?”

A. The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, gave the following response:-

“You are right to make the connection between our declaration of a climate emergency and the Town’s Tree Policy.

While Doncaster’s Tree Policy makes reference to the value of trees in relation to climate mitigation and adaptation, this is not the primary aim of the policy. The policy’s principle aim is to promote the health of the Council’s existing tree and woodland assets, increasing tree cover within existing resource constraints.

The policy was indeed drawn up before Doncaster’s declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency. Since that declaration, Doncaster’s Climate Commission is examining strategies towards net zero greenhouse gases at least within the Government’s 2050 target, if not before. The Government’s advisors, the Committee on Climate Change, are advocating an increase woodland cover in the UK from 13% to a minimum of 17% by 2050, and ideally, to 19% to ensure the country achieves net zero carbon emissions. This would equate to roughly 1.5 million hectares of additional woodland across the UK.

Surveying completed in 2019, indicated that Doncaster has 12.62% tree canopy cover, and in carbon accounting terms, our trees are storing over 1,900 kilo tonnes of CO₂ and a further 77 kilo tonnes annually.

If further woodland was created to lift Doncaster to 17% canopy cover, this could require nearly 2,500 additional hectares. This is a scale well beyond the intention and capacity of the existing Tree Policy, as it is not deliverable within Doncaster Council’s current land holdings or arboriculture workforce. It would involve multiple public, community and private landowners with a variety of funding mechanisms such as the Woodland Carbon Fund, other carbon offsetting arrangements or community funding schemes. Doncaster Council would of course be looking to maximise its contribution and is currently reviewing its land holdings for appropriate tree planting and habitat recovery which includes the protection of our nationally important peatlands, where tree planting should not take place.

The Climate Commission is considering a number of topics and will report its recommendations in the coming months. These recommendations associated with trees, will be factored into the 'Woodland, Trees and Open Space' element of the Environment Strategy. The strategy will be a partnership strategy which will have the backing and contributions of not just the Council, but a range of partners across the Borough.

In addition, the Council's strategic role as a 'place shaper', means that we will take a lead in promoting best practices amongst other partners and businesses in tree planting, and habitat recovery for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Council will have a significant lever with the introduction of the biodiversity net gain provisions within the Government's Environment Bill. In the long run, the introduction of Environmental Land Management Schemes via the Agriculture Bill, will also create opportunities."

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Cox asked the following supplementary question:-

Q. "The trees I alluded to in my question in Finningley Ward, were the new ones on Great Yorkshire Way. Many of them have either died or are in very bad condition. Will they be replaced?"

A. The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, gave the following response:-

"They will be removed and we will look at this and ensure they are replaced. Many different partners fund them and we have asked for a review of the Tree Policy. The review will consider the Tree Policy against the context of our climate and biodiversity emergency. This group will include residents and tree specialists, to ensure the approach is in line with best practice. The findings of this work will feed into the Climate Commission."

B. Questions Without Notice

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.2, the Chair of Council sought questions from Elected Members during Question Time.

A. Questions to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones

There were no questions put to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones.

B. Questions to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities

Q Councillor Tosh McDonald asked the following question:-

"I speak for all my Town Ward Councillors and would like to talk about the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower. When I was working in London at that point, I visited the tower and it really was a terrible tragedy. A number of promises were made by the Government that all other buildings across the country, would be made safe in relation to the cladding, and I would like to congratulate you on the work done in Doncaster, in ensuring that the cladding was safe, and sprinklers installed. We have led by example in

Doncaster and took the initiative and done it, and ensured that everyone was safe. Recently, at Hatfield House on Balby Bridge, there was a fire, but as a result of the sprinklers installed, everyone was ok. However, many places in the country would have fallen short, and have not learnt their lessons. Should we in Doncaster, not hold ourselves up as a beacon to other Authorities as to what they should be doing?”

- A. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities, gave the following response:-

“Definitely. You are right in what have said. All nine high-rise blocks of flats in Doncaster have had safety works carried out and we are consistently reviewing what has been done, and what still needs to be done. This has been funded through our Capital Programme and we have gone out there and got it done, regardless of the consequences. These are people’s lives. The cost of this work was £5.3 million with funding received from South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, but the contribution from the Government for anything other than the removal of the cladding was nil. The safety of our tenants is our primary concern. Recently, an article in the Fire Safety Matters Magazine outlined the work we have done. As a result of this work, the fire in Hatfield House was not another tragedy like Grenfell. You can not put a price on that.”

- C. Questions to Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure and Culture

- Q. Councillor Tina Reid asked the following question:-

“I would like to ask a question regarding the air quality in Edlington and wondered, as it is now a major HGV route, if there are any noticeable differences in levels of people suffering with asthma or COPD?”

- A. Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure and Culture, gave the following response:-

“As you are aware, we have a number of air quality monitoring systems across the Borough and there is one in Warmsworth. I do not have this data to hand, but I will ask Dr. Rupert Suckling to forward the information to you.”

- D. Questions to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services

In the absence of Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Streetscene and Trading Services, the Chair of Council informed Members that any questions for Councillor Blackham should be submitted to the Executive Office after the meeting, and a response would be provided.

- E. Questions to Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

There were no questions put to Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

F. Questions to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools

There were no questions put to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools.

G. Questions to Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Member for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment

Q. Councillor Lani-Mae Ball asked the following question:-

“Do you think that following on from the floods of the 7th and 8th November, that it is imperative that the Government thank the communities, Officers, volunteers and emergency services involved in the recovery? We were promised that a review would be undertaken in the New Year, but still there is no clear direction.”

A. Councillor Chris McGuinness gave the following response:-

“There has been an incredible amount of work done by all agencies; the Council, Police, Environment Agency, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and St Leger Homes, which still continues now. The Environment Agency remains on high alert and 120 staff remain on standby. This week is the first time that there has been no significant amount of rain in a long time. I would like to recognise the efforts of all the communities and acknowledge all the work that has been done in working towards getting people back into their homes. We were promised a Summit by the end of January, but there will not be one until at least the end of March. If you look, you can see the vast difference between the money spent on flood defences in the North as opposed to the South. We have a very complex system of water drainage. There is a tidal river, two water companies owning assets, the EA, Coal Authority, three Drainage Boards and the Council which also has responsibilities. There are 130 pumps in Doncaster and they are connected by countless drains and dykes all across the Borough, which is miles of banks which need maintaining. All this has been sitting there for hundreds of years and needs to be maintained, and the Government needs to review how they fund it and to do so quickly. I will contact the three Doncaster MPs and ask why nothing still has not been done about this issue. The Government needs to carry out a review as soon as possible.”

Q. Councillor Ian Pearson asked the following question:-

“At the last Planning Committee, the arborist Officer informed us that a tree had been taken down as it was planted on a water table, but that it was not within his remit to explain why there was too much water in this area for tree planting. Should we not have an expert on this area, especially when you take into account that most of the area around Doncaster would be under water if the ditches introduced by the Dutch, had not been built? We need a better understanding of water table management.”

A. Councillor Chris McGuinness gave the following response:-

“This is part of the reason why we need a Yorkshire Flood Summit. Areas have been given Regional Flood Levy Money to address some issues, but it needs a review to look at this properly.”

H. Questions to Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Economic Development

There were no questions put to Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Economic Development.

I. Questions to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services

In the absence of Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services, the Chair of Council informed Members that any questions for Councillor Nightingale should be submitted to the Executive Office after the meeting, and a response would be provided.

J. Questions to Councillor Austen White, Chair of the Audit Committee

There were no questions put to Councillor Austen White, Chair of the Audit Committee.

K. Questions to Councillor Phil Cole, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee

There were no questions put to Councillor Phil Cole, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee.

L. Questions to Councillor Rachael Blake, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board

There were no questions put to Councillor Blake, Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

M. Questions to Councillor Jane Kidd, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

There were no questions put to Councillor Jane Kidd, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

79 Annual Report on Executive Decisions taken under Special Urgency Provisions

The Council considered a report which informed Members of Key Decisions which had been taken by the Executive between the period 4th March, 2019 and 25th February, 2020, which were not included on the Forward Plan, under Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules. It was stated within the Council's Constitution that all decisions taken under Special Urgency provisions, be reported to Council on an annual basis, to ensure that the public be kept informed of all aspects of the democratic process.

There were three decisions taken in this period, as detailed below:-

- Payment of Community Recovery and Business Recovery Grants taken by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones on 13th November, 2019;
- Council Tax and Business Rates Discounts for households and businesses affected by the Floods, taken by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, on 20th November, 2019; and
- Payment of Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme, taken by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, on 17th January, 2020.

RESOLVED that the actions taken in accordance with Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, be noted.

80 To receive the minutes of the following Joint Authorities

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following Joint Authorities be noted:-

- A. Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority Board held on 27th January, 2020.
- B. Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Board held on 16th January, 2020.
- C. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 13th January, 2020
- D. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority Local Pension Board held on 11th December, 2019.
- E. Team Doncaster Strategic Partnership held on 26th November, 2019.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____