

# Public Document Pack



## Doncaster Council

### EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 29th September, 2020 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Friday, 2nd October, 2020

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 13th October, 2020. These 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 Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care
Councillor Nuala Fennelly	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools.
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Corporate Services.

Apologies:-

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Joe Blackham, Councillor Chris McGuinness and Councillor Bill Mordue

### PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

#### Public Questions and Statements

No public questions or statements were made at the meeting.

Decision Records dated 15th September, 2020, be noted

## DECISION 1.

### 1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Doncaster Town Centre Public Spaces Protection Order Review.

### 2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) considered the outcome from the public consultation exercise on the future of the town centre PSPO; and
- (2) approved the revised Public Spaces Protection Order as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

### 3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received a report, introduced by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, seeking Cabinet approval to the amended PSPO for the maximum period allowable of 3 years. This will enable the Council to continue the comprehensive plan of activity to address anti-social behaviour, and to support people with complex lives.

This includes preventing and tackling homelessness and rough sleeping, drug and alcohol misuse, mental ill-health, offending and anti-social behaviour and begging.

He advised that consultation on this issue has shown a very strong level of public and business support for all of the prohibitions we consulted on. In addition, the evidence set out in the report demonstrated the need for a PSPO containing all those prohibitions.

Councillor Jones stated that members can therefore be confident that issues included in the proposed PSPO were having a detrimental impact on quality of life in the Town Centre, and that this is likely to continue without action to manage it. This is the basic legal test the Council must be able to satisfy in approving a PSPO.

He commented that the responses to the consultation have been considered Carefully, and, as a result, a revised set of PSPO prohibitions are proposed in the report that Cabinet are considering today.

He advised that it is known that in the current policy and funding climate across the UK, the challenges remain of homelessness and rough sleeping and the issues that surround it, like problematic drug use. The Council can expect that the impact of the pandemic will mean that across Britain, conditions were set to get even tougher for many people.

Therefore, Councillor Jones stressed it was important that the Council maintain a balanced approach to ensure the viability of the town centre by addressing Behaviours, and ensuring those who require it receive the necessary support and rehabilitation.

He wished to point out and make it clear that the Council is fully committed to supporting people who are in this unfortunate position, and much of the focus of the way this PSPO will be managed will be geared towards connecting people to accommodation and support services. In order to do this, he stated that barriers needed to be removed. It is not the Council's aim to criminalise misfortune, and it will keep that under close review.

He also stated that the Council were also clear that some of the people who are causing these issues are not so needy, and are preying on people's good will and damaging the prospects of the town centre and people's enjoyment of it. The management of the PSPO will also take account of this.

Councillor Jones reported that the management of the PSPO will be a multi-agency effort, involving Police, teams across the Council, St Leger Homes, drug and alcohol and mental health services, and others, to ensure we can support people to break the cycle they are locked into.

The Council also need businesses and town centre users to play a part in supporting what it is trying to achieve, as this is in everybody's best interests

The Council are also alert to the potential for displacement of these issues to other areas, and the management plans will closely monitor that and deal with it proactively. This will include a close watch on areas around the town centre that some people would have liked to include within the PSPO boundary.

In conclusion, Councillor Jones stated that he realised that it would be better if the Council were not in a position where it has to consider this action, but members can be assured that it is necessary, and that it has been carefully thought through as part of a wider plan.

Councillor Rachel Blake welcomed the report stating that it was important to emphasise the support that is available. She remarked that the consultation showed that the public also recognised the need for the PSPO. She commented that it can be frustrating at times for the public if they don't see what is happening with regard to support, and sought officers explanation on what support is available.

Pat Hagan, Head of Localities and Town Centre, provided members with a brief description of the support provided to individuals. He stated that it was a wrap around service starting at street level outreach and engagement. For those individuals that are unwilling to engage, there are a variety of reasons for that, which are complex in nature, and that have resulted in them being in the position they find themselves. He advised Cabinet that in terms of engaging with people who don't necessarily want to engage, it is a case of not giving up and keep trying, and the team now have that track record where officers can see that where people have been deeply entrenched, that constant perpetual positive presentation is effective. Pat went on to say that through working with the Complex Lives Team around the town centre, there has been nobody that he has met that enjoys the position they find themselves in, but it can be extremely difficult to break away from. Through the support offered by the team, the Council can get those people into treatment and accommodation, which stabilises them and enables them to move on.

Councillor Nigel Ball echoed the comments made and is fully aware of how hard the Complex Lives Team works, which is a 24-7 job. He stated that Doncaster Council should be proud that throughout each winter, accommodation has been made available to deal with rough sleepers, as it is difficult for these clients by the very nature that they live complex lives and the Council needs to focus on that. He went on to say that he was proud to say that Doncaster and certainly DMBC have focused most of their efforts on providing help and support and moving people forward, rather than simply just enforcement.

**4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Option 1 – Extend the PSPO as it stands, changing only the parts required to change by law/guidance.

Option 3 – Let the current PSPO expire without renewal.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were no declarations.

**6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION**

Appendices 5 and 6 of the report are NOT for publication as they contain exempt information by virtue of paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended), information relating to any individual.

**7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Phil Holmes, Director of Adults, Health and Well-being

**DECISION 2.**

**1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

7. Doncaster Flood Recovery.

**2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet:-

- (1) noted the Flood Recovery actions that have been undertaken to date and are planned for the next period;
- (2) approved the attached Section 19 report on the causes of the November 2019 floods and necessary mitigations; and
- (3) noted the community engagement scheduled in October intended to help Doncaster residents and businesses:-

- Understand the cause of last year's flooding following the

investigation carried out

- Are aware of actions undertaken by the Council and partners since November 2019 both to support affected communities and to increase protection against flood risk in time for winter 2020
- Are aware of work undertaken by the Council and partners to ensure that the Borough receives the necessary national investment for major longer-term works that will renew and update flood defences in light of the increasing impact of climate change

### **3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Cabinet received a report, introduced by Mayor Ros Jones, on the Doncaster Flood Recovery. She stated that even in the midst of the COVID emergency, the Council has worked hard with individuals and families badly affected by the November 2019 floods, and has worked alongside Doncaster's communities and a range of local, regional and national partners to help them recover. The trauma that communities went through is unimaginable. She commented that she was in awe of the way local families and businesses have rallied to help each other, and was proud of the role that the Council played.

Mayor Jones reported that a detailed investigation of the causes of the floods has been carried out, in line with the Council's legal responsibilities. This has been consulted upon with the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards and water companies. She recommended that Cabinet approves this investigation, attached as Appendix 5 of the report. It is both thorough and clear. The document provided a strong foundation for the future work the Council needs to do with partners, both within the Borough and across the catchment, to fully mitigate against future floods.

Cabinet were advised that the investigation had taken time to conclude, but the report sets out a great breadth of work that the Council and key partners have been doing in the meantime to make the Borough as safe as possible against adverse weather that might occur this winter. Most importantly Appendices 1-4 list all the flood protection works that have already taken place since November, and further works that are being completed this winter by the Council and partners such as the Environment Agency, Drainage Boards and water companies. Should the worst come to the worst, there have been a large number of measures to enhance response to potential future flooding including:

- extra sandbags, with clear plans to deploy them quickly where needed
- more community flood wardens with refreshed training
- an advance plan to keep key roads open and keep traffic moving
- investment in the Council's specialist flood team, both to quickly respond to issues and to keep on top of the programme of investment in improved defences

In conclusion, Mayor Jones wanted to end by emphasising that Doncaster is at the forefront of the climate emergency, and is particularly vulnerable to longer term flooding that links to changing impacts over time from rainfall, river levels and tides.

She advised that this was not an excuse for being unprepared, but it is a huge challenge to which the Council must rise, and above all it is a clarion call to attract as much support and investment as possible to this Borough from a Government that has declared its commitment to levelling up the north.

Addressing these issues sustainably will require significant resources, not just in the Borough, but across the whole River Don catchment, from source to sea. There needs to be joined up investment across all of this in order to protect Doncaster residents, both from heavy rainfall upstream, and from the increasing impact of rising tidal flow. This is why the Council is working hard with partners to make the case to national government for the investment to support the improvements that the Council will need in the years to come.

Cabinet welcomed the report and made a number of comments as follows:-

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, stated that there was a need for a regional strategy to combat flooding particularly for Doncaster, and in fairness, it affects most places upstream and downstream from Doncaster, with Doncaster being in the middle. He stated that it was a significant amount of money that the Council will need to mitigate, remedy, redirect and improve all defences. He commented that all were aware of how much it cost the Council from its budget for the flooding in November 2019. Councillor Jones pointed out that it was clear from the report that the funding required was significant and around £50m had been earmarked for the Humber and Yorkshire. He commented that it would take more than that to remedy this situation. He advised that with climate change, this will exacerbate the situation further, as sea levels rise and colleagues and neighbours further down stream will be further disrupted by water. In conclusion, he stated that the area needs the funding to come forward, and that case would be made to government.

Councillor Nigel Ball commented that the government funding regime has been wholly inadequate for Doncaster and the South Yorkshire region. He stated that the majority of the funding was going to Sheffield, and, once again, Doncaster has been left out of the equation. He went on to say that it was time that the government showed commitment to levelling up the North as at the moment, the government are not doing anything for the Doncaster region or South Yorkshire as a whole.

Councillor Rachel Blake welcomed the local engagement with residents. However, she sought clarification on whether this was just the Council engaging with residents. She felt that residents required an understanding on who was responsible for what. She also welcomed the engagement with local Ward Members, and congratulated communities' involvement and innovative ways in which to meet and engage with all concerned parties, particularly in light of the current Covid pandemic and the need to exercise social distancing rules.

Phil Holmes, Director of Adults, Health and Well-being, reassured Cabinet that the Council had been in contact with community teams about the nature of engagement that best suits different communities. He stated that officers will make sure that engagement is made with local ward members, as well as Town and Parish Councillors. He advised that focus in the first instance will be made on the 7 areas identified within the Section 19 report before moving borough wide.

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, wished to highlight the humanitarian efforts and generous support provided by people and organisations across the borough during the November floods. He felt it appropriate to give praise to those organisations and individuals that had helped during that time.

Phil Holmes also advised that the Council were responding to a government consultation around insurance of flood affected properties and advocating for local people on that.

**4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Options considered were detailed within paragraphs 6 and 7 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**

Phil Holmes, Director of Adults, Health and Well-being

**DECISION 3.**

**1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE**

8. Updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021/22 to 2023/24.

**2. DECISION TAKEN**

Cabinet noted the updated Medium-term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24 Revenue Budget as set out in the report.

**3. REASON FOR DECISION**

Cabinet received a report introduced by Mayor Ros Jones on the updated Medium-term Financial Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24. She advised that the report brings together all the current information and presents a financial position statement for 2021/22 to 2023/24, to enable the Council to plan effectively.

Mayor Jones reported that over the last ten years, Councils have faced the position of significantly reduced government funding and increasing costs. Doncaster Council has seen its government funding more than halved during this period, and has faced a total budget gap of over £260m. Despite the significant financial challenges, the Council has continued to set a balanced budget whilst continuing to invest in the borough and protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

In March 2020, the Council approved a financial plan for 2020/21 and future years. However, since then, the Council has seen the significant and ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council has incurred new and additional costs to support services during the pandemic at the same time as losing income through reduced trading activity, pausing services and a reduction in council tax and business rates payments. Due to the unforeseen circumstances, there has also been a delay in delivery of savings, and the Council is set to continue facing increasing costs and reduced income due to physical distancing measures and changing behaviours. Although the position remains uncertain, it is anticipated that the 2020/21 in-year position can be managed through the application of government funding and service underspends.

Based on the information currently available, the estimate of the budget gap facing the Council, and the most likely position for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24 is circa. £13m. The range of projections identifies the best case estimate of £7m over the period and worst case £23m. These figures underline the uncertainties about trying to plan and manage fluctuating budgets during these unprecedented times.

It must be acknowledged that it is still a volatile situation with coronavirus, therefore the financial impact and how the Council bridges that budget gap beyond March 2021 are among the top priorities in the months ahead as it moves through this unprecedented time. Mayor Jones indicated that there was one thing for certain in these uncertain times in that the Council will continue to support Doncaster people, communities and businesses and will be calling on the government to adequately fund councils during these unprecedented times. The Council is not alone, as hundreds of local authorities are facing their own financial challenges.

She commented that once again the council is taking a robust approach to identifying the scale of the financial challenge, and, over the next few months, will be looking at how to bridge the gap. This will be in line with our Restart, Recovery and Renewal Plan which is helping to support local people, local businesses and local voluntary groups, and to mitigate the impact that COVID-19 has had on the borough's local economy. Although the recovery period is up to March 2021, many of the actions will extend beyond then and will be taken forward within a new longer term Borough Strategy and Corporate Plan for 2021-22.

Councillor Rachel Blake echoed the comments around not being alone in this, the funding gap is true for all councils, and any rational person is aware of the need for support from the Government. Her own portfolio of Adult Social Care still awaits long term funding proposals from Government, and remains under pressure without that funding. In conclusion, she commented that until there is an agreement and adequate funding, however good staff are at innovative ways of working, there will always be a need to spend Council resources, which will impact upon the Council's available budget.

Councillor Nigel Ball thought it worth noting formally again that since 2010, Doncaster has had its budget cut by 51%, by successive Governments, which had adversely affected Doncaster people and communities.

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, made reference to reserves outlined in the report and had noticed that there was £14.5m of uncommitted reserves for the



Council. He asked officers if they could say whether this amount was sufficient or insufficient to manage in times of distress or alarm.

In response, Faye Tyas, Assistant Director Finance, reported that the reserves outlined would only run the Council for an 11 day period She explained that the uncommitted reserves are there for unexpected cost such as floods that may arise. She stated that there had been worked carried out in the aim of increasing the level of reserves, which at the time was significant to cover any risk, and this work will be repeated as part of the March 2021 budget.

Mayor Ros Jones pointed out that even though Government monies are available to deal with emergencies, such as the November flooding event, that the Council had been required to make a substantial contribution before any government money could be claimed through the Bellwin scheme.

**4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

A range of senarios have been produced for the projected MTFs, savings options will be developed as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22.

**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

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker

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