



Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 15th September, 2020 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 17th September, 2020

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 28th September, 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 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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joe Blackham, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services and Chris McGuinness Portfolio Holder for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment.

Prior to consideration of formal business, the Mayor made the following statement:-

“We continue to see a rise in Covid infection rates, both locally and nationally. In Doncaster up to the end of August, we were averaging 3.2 cases per hundred thousand population per week. This has now jumped to 16 cases per hundred thousand and is expected to increase when the latest figures are released this week. I do not want to scare people, but I do want to emphasise the importance of following the new guidelines that came in to force yesterday and to ensure that social distancing is followed. We have been doing so well in Doncaster, but the risk of a local and national lockdown is real. We must do all we can to protect ourselves and others.”

Public Questions and Statements

No public questions or statements were submitted for the meeting.

Decision Records dated 1st September 2020, be noted.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Green Homes Grant - Local Authority Delivery Scheme

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet gave approval:-

- (1) For the Council to lead a bid for funding of £690k from the Government's first phase of the LAD scheme, working with Barnsley Council and South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA);
- (2) For the Council to agree to accept funds from Government, to deliver home energy saving improvements in the homes of Doncaster and South Yorkshire residents, should the bid be successful;
- (3) To appoint a provider through a framework to deliver the works permitted by the funding, as well as other Council and externally funded energy efficiency works projects; and
- (4) For the Section 151 Officer to approve the receipt of funds being awarded and allocation of that award.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report proposing that the Council lead a bid for funding from the Government's Phase 1, Green Homes Grant, Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme to deliver home energy saving improvements to Doncaster and South Yorkshire residents.

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities introduced the report informing Cabinet that Government funds have been made available to improve the energy efficiency of homes across England, through a new Green Homes Grant, with a focus on reducing fuel poverty, reducing carbon emissions and supporting a green recovery.

He highlighted that the Government have presented a competitive bidding opportunity which comes with a very tight delivery deadline, which requires the Council to produce a bid, seek partnership opportunities, procure a contract of works, identify grant recipients from across the Borough, deliver the works in the most challenging delivery period of the year and also evaluate the performance.

Furthermore, Officers have considered all options to reduce the risk of under-delivery. Some risks still remained and were out of the Council's control, such as

the weather and the response from residents. However, in order to take all appropriate opportunities for inward investment, we have sought to work with our South Yorkshire colleagues to share those risks.

It was proposed that Doncaster will lead a consortium bid for the Government's Green Homes Grant, Local Authority Delivery scheme Phase 1, with Barnsley Council and South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA) joining us.

The Deputy Mayor confirmed that Doncaster and Barnsley Councils proposed to take an equal share of £250k each to make up the £500k minimum bid threshold, with SYHA seeking an additional £100k for which they have secured £161,000 of match funding for their works.

He stated that with grants of up to £5,000 and £10,000 available for tenants and homeowners, the Council expects to fund works in around 80 homes across South Yorkshire, with 30 of those being in Doncaster.

Members were informed that in order to give greater confidence in delivery and not overburden existing contracts, it was proposed to select a new contractor from a procurement framework which meets all of the Council's needs, including, EU compliance, and the government funding conditions.

The Deputy Mayor went on to explain that the Council's approach would aim to support a range of qualifying households across the Borough, and that the Council would look to support many others with the general Green Homes Grant to enable a more inclusive scheme, as well as maximise the funding opportunities for Doncaster residents while they were available.

The Deputy Mayor concluded by highlighting that with an award notification of the 28th September and the scheme start date from the 1st October, timescales do not allow for a key decision process. This decision was therefore being sought ahead of the funding bid outcome to allow delivery to commence immediately after award.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Rachel Blake, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care acknowledged the efforts and praised Officers involved who had worked within challenging timescales and had reacted quickly to set up the scheme.

In response to a question from Councillor Blake as to how the Council would identify those 30 homes who would receive a package of energy efficiency measures, whether they would be advertised, or whether people will be asked to put themselves forward in view of the Council working to a strict criteria, Richard Smith, Energy Manager, reported that the Council would target those homes that require solid wall insulation. He explained that the Grants that the Council want to make available to households were those that qualified for the £10,000 funding in order to obtain the most money from the scheme, and to prepare those homes by insulating them, ready to accept future low carbon heating technologies. However, he advised that focusing on external wall insulation limited those homes that could be targeted. He highlighted that the Council was trying to be as inclusive as possible by targeting every part of the Borough. The

Council would firstly create a long list and then a short list of beneficiaries. Running parallel to the main scheme, the Council would also be promoting the Green Homes Grant offer. The Council would be promoting the scheme to maximise the funding opportunity in order to get Doncaster's share of £500m (made up of £200m in Phase 1 and £300m in Phase 2), as well as promoting the wider grant. He further explained that by targeting low income communities and qualifying households, the Council would look to get as many households benefiting from the works as possible. Some of the works would be controlled by the Council and support and guidance would be given to households to maximise the opportunities available by working with the Council or with an appointed contractor.

Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member, Business, Skills and Economic Development welcomed the scheme, but highlighted the need for the Council to do more work in promoting measures to reduce carbon emissions, for example, people turning off lights and turning down thermostat on heating which were easy for everyone to do, which would also help with fuel poverty. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones also pointed out that such issues had been raised as part of Doncaster's Climate Commission. The Energy Manager agreed with the importance of such change and further advised that the Council has a team working on such changes.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – No bid is submitted for Phase 1

- a. Of the £2 billion being made available, £200m is being made available via local authorities to spend by 31st March 2021, as the Government understand we have an opportunity to direct this funding in a more effective and strategic way.
- b. Excluding the Council from this funding opportunity limits the potential for the Council to take its fair share for Doncaster residents.
- c. Although the wider GHG scheme of £1.5 billion gives opportunity to access funds for all Doncaster residents, it does not allow for a customer journey to be supported all the way from engagement through to works completed as residents will be made to choose a contractor themselves. This is a process many vulnerable households will struggle to navigate and take decisions on, and gives greater reason for Council involvement, and support in the LAD.

Option 2 – Plan for bidding in Phase 2

- a. Phase 2 will allow delivery of the same type of works and qualifying homes from April 2021, with an end date of 31st March 2022, with £300m being available for competitive bids.
- b. Although this gives a greater lead in time to prepare and to deliver the funding, bids will be led by each of the 5 Energy Hubs, for which Doncaster is part of the NEYH.
- c. The NEYH Energy Hub services 6 City Regions and the 25 or more Councils within them, for which there are some large Councils, including Leeds, Newcastle, Sheffield and Hull.

- d. Phase 2 will certainly be a bidding opportunity that the Council want to take part in, but so will every energy hub and city region, and there can be no guarantee on the scale of resources the Council can secure.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Peter Dale, Director of Economy and Environment.

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. Disposal of the former Truman Street depot and Cooke Street office site for the development of affordable housing for older people.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved:

- (1) The freehold disposal of land to Hsg21 at £5,000 per plot for the development of older people's affordable housing; and
- (2) The contribution of £350,000 affordable housing commuted sums Section 106 monies to aid scheme viability, and to include this provision within the Council's capital programme.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet received a report which sought approval to dispose of the former depot and offices at Cooke and Truman Street, Bentley to Housing21 (Hsg21), to facilitate the development of 20 units of new purpose built affordable housing designed specifically for older people. The disposal will be on a freehold basis, with Hsg21 paying £5,000 per plot, resulting in a capital receipt to the Council of £100,000.

In presenting the report, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, outlined that evidence from the recent Housing Needs Study indicated an Affordable Housing Need within Bentley. This evidence is backed up not only by the internal modelling work recently undertaken by Adults Commissioning looking at specialist older person's accommodation, but also bidding data from St. Leger Homes which indicated a strong demand for apartments and bungalows.

Cabinet was informed that the scheme would deliver a number of socio-economic benefits, not only to the locality of Bentley, but would benefit the wider Doncaster Borough, such as:-

- Circa £3.2m investment into the locality/borough;
- Delivery of an 100% affordable rented housing development;
- 20 units of affordable housing of which 8 Bungalows and 12 apartments;
- New housing designed specifically and purpose built for older people;
- Contributing to improving Doncaster's housing offer for the older generation, and;
- The Council would receive 100% nominations, which would help towards reducing waiting list numbers.

In conclusion, the scheme would provide good quality, modern accommodation designed to meet the needs and aspirations of our residents.

In response to a question from Mayor Ros Jones seeking clarity as to whether the Council were able to approve the freehold disposal of land to Housing21 at £5k per plot on completion of the scheme, rather than prior to the commencement of the scheme, Adam Goldsmith, Head of Service for Strategic Housing advised that there is a condition of the Homes England Grant that the freehold needs to be offered at the start of the programme. It was proposed to put in specific backstops dates, whereby if the development hadn't commenced or completed by a particular timescale, then the Council would be given the opportunity for the land to be transferred back to the Council. He further indicated that there would be safeguards within the Legal Agreement for the disposal of land.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 2 - Sell the land for a capital receipt.

If the Council were to sell the land with a view of using the capital receipt to fund additional new homes, the estimated value received of £195,000 would provide fewer new homes than the proposed scheme.

Option 3 - Alternative use.

If the site is not transferred to Hsg21, it will remain within the Corporate Asset Disposal Programme and options for its future use / or an alternative disposal route will be determined via the Assets Board. One option could be the site is taken forward as part of the future Council House Build Programme, however the site comes forward it would still have the same abnormal development costs.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Peter Dale, Director of Economy and Environment.

DECISION 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT) Covid-19 Support September 2020 – March 2021.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet agreed:-

- (1) A revenue package of up to £1.72m to support the Trust through to March 31st, 2021, while also mapping out and monitoring additional long-term support that may be required post March 2021 by DCLT for Cabinet's consideration; and
- (2) To delegate to the Director of Corporate Resources to undertake a monthly review of DCLT's cash flow forecast and profit and Loss Accounts to determine the value and timing of payments within this overall sum.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure and Culture proposing financial support to Doncaster Leisure Trust (DCLT) as a consequence of Covid-19 to help deliver the 'Get Doncaster Moving', one of the Borough's key strategies designed to support the health and wellbeing of the public. In addition, DCLT leads on Doncaster Create, Right Up Our Street and the Doncaster Social Isolation Alliance.

Members were informed that the Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust consists of a group of companies including Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT), Doncaster Conferencing Catering and Events (DCCE) and Doncaster Performance Venue (DPV), otherwise known as Cast Theatre.

It was outlined that pre Covid, the Trust had a combined turnover of £15.4m, including grants, was largely self-financing, attracted 2.6m attendances per year through its facilities and supported Doncaster residents to live healthier lives. The emergence of COVID-19 has had a significant and rapid impact across the group, resulting in closure of facilities and loss of income initially and phased Covid approach to opening once restrictions were relaxed.

However, Councillor Ball reported that the ability to operate is significantly and quite rightly heavily curtailed to ensure a safe covid environment with significant reduction in numbers of public able to access facilities at any one time.

He explained that this way of operation for DCLT has a significant impact on its ability to generate income and maintain itself as a viable entity.

Councillor Ball highlighted that recent Sport England research had identified that every £1 invested in community sport and leisure facilities, would generate benefits of almost £4 in return across stronger communities, health and economy.

Therefore, through work undertaken by Doncaster Council officers with DCLT senior management, he was recommending that a revenue package of up to £1.72m be provided in order to support the Trust through to March 31st 2021 and that this would be reviewed monthly, whilst also mapping out and monitoring additional long-term support that may be required post March 2021 by DCLT.

He pointed out that Leisure Trusts are struggling up and down the country and stated that on behalf of Doncaster residents, he would be writing to Government ministers, requesting that they provide urgent support to Leisure Centres and Trusts like Doncaster, in order to ensure a long-term future for the vital services they provide in our communities.

Councillor Ball believed that it would be wrong for the Council not to provide this assistance package and that not supporting DCLT through these unprecedented times could potentially lead to a further reduction in services, increased costs for users or potentially the closure of some sites, which he felt was not an option. He emphasised the desire for a healthier and more active Borough and therefore commended the report to Cabinet to support the decision.

In commenting on the recent history of DCLT, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones gave thanks and praise to the staff and leadership of DCLT who have helped immensely in staffing the community hubs at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was welcomed. He added that this had contributed significantly towards helping Doncaster residents and had offered them a greater resilience in such dark, strange times.

Councillor Rachel Blake echoed Councillor Jones's comments and spoke of how across the Borough, communities really valued such wonderful assets that DCLT bring, which were at the heart of the communities. With leisure facilities being closed due to Covid-19, this had brought it to the fore in relation to how much people do value them. In terms of a preventive point of view in respect of Adult Social Care, Councillor Blake highlighted that they have offered a fantastic package and service for older residents, which has kept many of them active and meant that they didn't come into Adult Social Care as early, or at all, because they are living the life they want to. She also spoke of the amazing work undertaken by the staff, for example, the Social Isolation Alliance, which was led and managed by DCLT, and without this would be a lot lonelier place. She pointed out that all leisure trusts up and down the country were facing problems and stated that she would not like us to be in a position that some Councils might be, where they would lose their leisure services, at such an important time, and gave her full support to the recommendations.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 2 - Not to provide supportive measures for DCLT would result in bankruptcy of the company. This could potentially lead to loss of workforce and closure of all facilities resulting in non-payment of staff and suppliers and potential claw back from funding bodies. For certain, it would mean the transfer of the majority of services and facilities back to DMBC. This would put significant strain on the Council due to the management requirements, TUPE'ing' of staff and associated costs of operating the services and facilities. If the staff were TUPE'd it is unlikely that the Council would be able to claim salary costs back from HMRC.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

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

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources.
Rupert Suckling, Director of Public Health.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker