

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

3RD MARCH, 2015

A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL was held at the CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER, on TUESDAY, 3RD MARCH, 2015, at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Pat Haith
Vice-Chair - Councillor Paul Wray
Mayor - Ros Jones
Deputy Mayor - Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Iris Beech, Paul Bissett, Joe Blackham, Susan Bolton, Elsie Butler, Paul Coddington, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Richard Cooper-Holmes, Tony Corden, Linda Curran, Monty Cuthbert, Nuala Fennelly, Bob Ford, Fred Gee, James Hart, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Deborah Hutchinson, Frank Jackson, Mick Jameson, Bob Johnson, Alan Jones, R. Allan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Hilary McNamee, Christine Mills, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Susan Phillips, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Patricia Schofield, Dave Shaw, John Sheppard, Alan Smith, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson, Martin Williams, Jonathan Wood and Yvonne Woodcock.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Bosmans, Neil Gethin, Barbara Hedley and Barbara Hoyle.

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Joe Blackham, Paul Wray and R. Allan Jones declared a Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 9, 'Housing Revenue Account Budget 2015/16', by virtue of being members of the St. Leger Homes Board.

Councillor Jane Kidd declared a Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 7, 'Revenue Budget 2015/16', by virtue of working for a voluntary organisation; South Yorkshire Centre for Inclusive Living.

Councillor Kevin Rodgers declared a Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 7, 'Revenue Budget 2015/16', (Appendix E, Grants to third sector organisations), by virtue of being a trustee for Doncaster Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Dave Shaw declared a Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No.7, 'Revenue Budget 2015/16' (Appendix E, Grants to third sector organisations), by virtue of being the Chair of the Doncaster Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Mark Houlbrook declared a Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No.7, 'Revenue Budget 2015/16' (Appendix E, Grants to third sector organisations), by virtue of being a Member of the Doncaster Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillors Sue Phillips and Tracey Leyland-Jepson declared a Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 7, 'Revenue Budget 2015/16', by virtue of being members of Mexborough Citizens Advice Bureau.

82. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15TH JANUARY, 2015

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th January, 2015, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment to Minute No.79, 'H. Questions to Councillor Christine Mills, Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Waste', Councillor Joe Blackham's response to Councillor Fred Gee's question as follows:-

"You, as a Councillor, early in the process, were told about the introduction of the Selective Licensing Scheme. If you go on Google, there is no record of this South Yorkshire Landlords group you claim to be the Chair of. Therefore, how do we know that this organisation exists. You have got a Call-in meeting on 23rd January and we will respond at that time. I am 110% committed to the Selective Licensing Scheme which is a 'win' 'win' situation for landlords and for residents. It doesn't mean there will be a cost to the tenant. It's whether landlords want to pass the cost on to those paying the rent; the tenant."

83. TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL, THE MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICE

The Chair of Council, Councillor Pat Haith, made the following announcement:-

"I recently attended a Gala reunion dinner and dance for the crew of the HMS Andromeda Association, which was adopted by Doncaster Council in 1998. I was asked to pass on their thanks to the Council, for all their assistance in the tour of the Mansion House, which included memorabilia from HMS Andromeda, including the Ships Bell.

As some of you may be aware, this will be the last Council meeting that a number of Councillors will be attending as they have chosen not to stand again to represent their Ward at the Borough Council Elections in May.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to propose that Members place on record, our best wishes and acknowledge their contribution to the Borough and the manner in which they had fulfilled their duties as Ward Members, during their terms of office.

I would like to pass on my personal thanks to Councillors Bob Ford, Barbara Hedley, Barbara Hoyle, Deborah Hutchinson, Mick Jameson, Hilary McNamee, Christine Mills, Patricia Schofield, John Sheppard and Yvonne Woodcock.

I would particularly like to make reference to Councillors Mick Jameson and Yvonne Woodcock.

Councillor Mick Jameson is a member of the Balby Ward and was Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee from 1998/1999. Councillor Jameson was Chair of the Planning Committee up to 2008 and has been Vice-Chair of the Chief Officers Appeals Committee since 2013. Councillor Jameson was also Civic Mayor from 2003 to 2004. He was also the Chair of the South Yorkshire Transport Executive.

Councillor Yvonne Woodcock was the Chair of the Chief Officers' Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee from May, 2004 to May, 2006. She was Vice-Chair of this Committee in the 2007/2008 and the 2009/10 Municipal Years. Councillor Woodcock was Vice-Chair of the Development Control Committee in 2004/2005 and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee from May, 2005 to May, 2009. She was also Civic Mayor in 1998/1999.

I would like to place on record my best wishes for the manner in which they have carried out their duties."

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

"I would like to thank all Councillors for their contribution to the Chamber over the years and to the residents of the Borough. I would personally like to thank Councillor Christine Mills for her sterling work and contribution as a Cabinet Member."

Elected Members in the Council Chamber also paid individual tributes to those Members from their respective Political Groups, who were retiring or would not be seeking re-election on 7th May, 2015.

There were no announcements from the Deputy Mayor or Cabinet Members.

84. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13

- (a) Question from Mr. R. Morling, to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Neighbourhoods:-

“I refer to the Housing Act 2004 and the Provision of Services Regulations 2009, and the European Services Directive 206/123/EC Regulation 18(4), and ask why is the Council not keeping detailed accounts of the licensing schemes as required by law, and why costs are not being limited to the initial administration of the Licences as current costs are not reasonable and proportionate. I go as further to say that mis-leading information has been supplied. If the Council cannot be trusted on the HMO scheme, how can they be trusted on Selective Licensing?”

Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following reply:-

“Thank you for your question Mr. Morling.

I have raised this issue with Council Officers and sought reassurances about our scheme. They are satisfied that the Council is complying with the European Services Directive and that the fees we charge for the HMO licence scheme are reasonable and proportionate.

The fee which has been set is payable for a period of up to 5 years and the cost of the scheme is spread over this period.

The historical salary costs alone for the person employed to undertake the work exceed the income received from the scheme.

Our costs relate to the implementation of the licensing regime which includes verification visits, and not simply initial administration costs.

Licence fees are based on an average and it is not possible to have a licence fee unique to an individual property although we do take steps to distribute costs as fairly as possible for example, a larger property will attract a larger fee and as a consequence takes longer to administer and license.

A first application will attract a larger cost to reflect the initial administrative costs and a renewal fee is therefore £300 less than a first application. Our fees are therefore considered to be reasonable and proportionate and in accordance with Local Government Association guidance on these schemes.

I know Mr Morling and his UKIP colleagues have repeatedly raised the issue of Selective Licensing in Hexthorpe. UKIP may not agree with Selective Licensing in Hexthorpe. However, local residents who are affected by anti-social behaviour are in favour of the scheme, as are the Police, the Fire Service and the National Landlords Association.

We are working with landlords to introduce a co-regulated Selective Licensing Scheme, which will be a positive step forward for everyone in Hexthorpe.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.10, Mr. R. Morling asked Councillor Blackham, the following supplementary question:-

“How can the Selective Licensing Scheme that is more demanding time wise and covering a larger geographical area, albeit very similar to the HMO and Selective License schemes, be done at a cost of £63.27 in 2008, whereas the alleged cost of the HMO Scheme in the same year, cost nearly four times that at £206.65; a direct comparison shows that there is a massive discrepancy in the two schemes?”

In response, Councillor Blackham stated that:-

“Mr. Morling, you received a full response to the question you have asked. We have met all the requirements. There is nothing to add. It’s gone through the Overview and Scrutiny process and the decision has been made. The decision has been open, transparent, equitable and accountable.”

(b) Question from Mr. D. Wright, to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“Webcasting Council Meetings/and other meetings at Doncaster Council.

Many Local Authorities now regularly webcast Council/and other meetings to involve and engage people in local democracy. Webcasting could potentially strengthen the Council's democratic accountability to the local public both directly and via the local media; improve public participation in the political process as well as ensuring greater equality of access to Council information.

Will Mayor Jones agree to commission a report providing information on the potential benefits/costs and the experiences of other Authorities who already provide webcasts of meetings. A free trial of webcasting a Council meeting may be possible?”

In response, the Mayor stated that:-

“Thank you for your question Mr Wright.

As the Mayor of Doncaster, I am committed to delivering an open, transparent and accountable system of governance within the Council. I am also keen that the people of Doncaster are able to engage in and observe the political process.

I therefore agree that this is an important issue and I believe that recording Council meetings and making them publicly available, would be a good way of strengthening local democracy.

Council Officers have already begun to investigate the options available to us. They have made enquiries with webcasting providers and colleagues in other Authorities to take account of their experiences and expertise.

We will look at identifying cost effective solutions to bring this about and a report will be submitted to the next scheduled Council meeting on 22nd May, 2015.

Thank you again for your question.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.10, Mr. Wright asked the Mayor of Doncaster, the following supplementary question:-

“Thank you for your reply. Given that the cost may be high, would you consider at least Webcasting meetings of the Council, Planning Committee and Overview and Scrutiny meetings?”

In response, the Mayor stated that:-

“We will wait to see what costs will come forward. I am not promising anything until I know what the proposed costs are.”

85. REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16

Prior to Members’ consideration of the report, the Monitoring Officer, Roger Harvey, reminded Members that further to a change in the law last year, a recorded vote was required and was to be included in the minutes to show how each Elected Member had voted on the decisions the Council was to take relating to the budget and level of Council Tax.

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, presented the report which sought approval of the Revenue Budget proposals for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The Mayor stated that in February last year, she had proposed a three year budget strategy to deal with the unprecedented cuts in Council funding. She explained that over the last twelve months, the situation the Council had to face had not changed. During the course of this parliament, the Government grant had been cut from £270m per year to £148m per year. The Mayor highlighted that this was a massive reduction to the Council’s annual grant by £122m, which was 45% in just five years and at a time of increasing costs and demand for services. It was further explained that the Government cuts could not be managed without proper financial planning which was why the Council had set out a three year budget plan, which had proved to be a prudent financial strategy.

Members were informed that of the £109m the Council had to save over three years up to 2017, £93m had already been identified at last year’s budget meeting. The proposals presented in the report sought to address the remaining £16m that had not been identified in February, 2014. The Mayor explained that this would ensure that the Council met its statutory legal requirements to prepare a robust, balanced budget.

Furthermore, the Mayor emphasised that her key priorities were still jobs and growth, along with protecting the vulnerable. The Mayor reported that the work the Council was doing was starting to pay dividends, which included the Council being led out of Government Intervention, with better governance and sound financial management. Services were being modernised and improved, which made them run more efficiently and saved money. New jobs and economic growth were being brought to Doncaster which would benefit residents and generate new business rates, which would help to protect services from Government cuts. The remaining £16m had been found without having to slash frontline services, which had also meant that the Council had been able to reduce the number of projected job losses from 1200 to around 500. It was anticipated that most of these post reductions would be achieved through vacancies, voluntary redundancies and voluntary early retirement.

The Mayor referred to some examples of where money had been found through lower than expected interest and inflation rates, good financial management, delivering more efficient services, generating income to protect against Government cuts and investing in services.

In conclusion, the Mayor stated that she had promised to come back with proposals for the remaining £16m needed to balance the budget. She emphasised that the Government cuts had been deep and harsh and as a consequence, the Council had to make difficult decisions in February, 2014, but the action taken by the Council had meant that cuts had been minimised on frontline services. The improvements made so far had put the Council on a sound footing, which would make the Council more modern, efficient and cost effective, which had meant that the Council had also be able to invest in new services and facilities for residents an example of which was Extra Care. The Mayor pointed out that the Council's plans for creating jobs and growth were bringing benefits to local people and the Borough. She emphasised the need to continue along this path in order to capitalise on the success that the Council was starting to see.

Following the Mayor's presentation of the Revenue 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 – 43

The Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Susan Bolton, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, Richard Cooper-Holmes, Tony Corden, Linda Curran, Nuala Fennelly, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Deborah Hutchinson, Frank Jackson, Mick Jameson, Bob Johnson, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Chris McGuinness,

Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Hilary McNamee, Christine Mills, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Susan Phillips, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against – 3

Councillors John Cooke, Andy Pickering and Martin Williams.

Abstain – 12

Councillors Paul Bissett, Paul Coddington, Monty Cuthbert, Bob Ford, Fred Gee, James Hart, R. Allan Jones, Cynthia Ransome, Patricia Schofield, Alan Smith, Jonathan Wood and Yvonne Woodcock.

On being put to the meeting, the Mayor's Revenue Budget was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Revenue Budget proposals for 2015/16 and 2016/17, as detailed within the report, be approved, including:-

- (1) the current Revenue Budget proposals detailed at Appendix A, and the additional Revenue Budget proposals required to close the remaining £16.1m budget gap for 2015/16 & 2016/17, as detailed within the report and in Appendix Bi (budget savings £21.2m) and Appendix Bii (Growth Initiatives £5.1m);
- (2) Council Tax to be increased by 1.95% to £1,145.09 for a Band D property (£763.39 for a Band A) for 2015/16, and a subsequent increase of 1.95% for 2016/17;
- (3) the 2015/16 Grants to third Sector Organisations, as detailed within paragraph 19 and Appendix E;
- (4) the summary fees and charges analysis shown in Appendix F together with the detailed fees and charges proposed for 2015/16 at Appendix G;
- (5) allocating the one-off savings identified to the redundancy earmarked reserve, as detailed within paragraph 31 of the report;
- (6) the Medium Term Financial Plan including all proposals in the report, as detailed within Appendix I; and
- (7) a gross revenue expenditure budget of £486.7m and a net revenue expenditure budget of £222.0m, as detailed within Appendix I.

86. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 TO 2018/19

The Council considered a report which was presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which set out the Capital Programme for 2015/16 to 2018/19.

The Mayor advised that the budget would deliver jobs and growth, support residents and help create a bright future for the Borough. The Council would continue to invest in the Borough's future with an estimated £386m of Capital investment over 2015/16 to 2018/19. The investment would stimulate growth and prosperity despite the tough economic conditions, with £147m of spend estimated for 2015/16.

It was reported that the Council was investing in major projects to enhance the Borough's infrastructure and create the conditions for growth, examples of which were through FARRRS, improvements to School buildings and the creation of Primary School places, delivering more affordable housing and making improvements at Leisure Centres, Markets and the Mansion House. The report outlined some of these projects and the benefits that they would bring.

The Mayor reported that the Council would continue to work with partners so that Doncaster benefited from major investment which would create jobs and training opportunities. These included projects such as the National High Speed Rail College campus, investment at the Airport and further development of the Civic and Cultural Quarter. In addition, the Council had identified funding for all the proposals in the Capital Programme, subject to some funding bids being approved, which would mean that to keep the Capital Programme affordable and deliver the benefits highlighted in the report, some of the Council's assets would be sold, with £13m expected to be received over the four year programme.

The Mayor explained that the vast majority of Capital funding was allocated for specific projects and therefore could not be used to fund day to day expenditure. However, the Mayor reported that the Council would also look to use Capital projects to deliver more efficient ways of working, which improved the services provided in the Borough and reduced day to day running costs. An example of which was the Investment and Modernisation Fund. Through this, projects were proposed which improved the services provided and at the same time, made savings or increased income so the schemes were self-financing. This would see new street lighting, improved street cleansing and grass cutting equipment, and more accessible online services for local residents.

In summary, the Mayor emphasised that whilst Doncaster had been hit hard by the Government cuts in the Council's Revenue Budget, the proposed Capital Budget showed that the Council was committed to investing across the Borough, to facilitate and deliver the improvements that residents of Doncaster deserved.

Following the Mayor's presentation of the Capital Programme proposals, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

Councillor Martin Williams asked the Mayor, Ros Jones, what was the value of Prudential Borrowing in the report and how much this cost the Council in the Revenue Budget, and subsequently asked for this information to be provided in a written response.

In response, the Mayor drew Councillor Williams attention to Appendix 1a, 'Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2018/19 – Directorate Summary, (page 120 of the agenda papers), which identified that Prudential Borrowing to the Council was £60m. The Mayor undertook to provide Councillor Williams with a written response in relation to how much money was charged to the Revenue Account.

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 – 48

The Chair of Council, Councillor Pat Haith, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Susan Bolton, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Richard Cooper-Holmes, Tony Corden, Linda Curran, Nuala Fennelly, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Deborah Hutchinson, Frank Jackson, Mick Jameson, Bob Johnson, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Hilary McNamee, Christine Mills, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Susan Phillips, Andy Pickering, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, John Sheppard, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson and Martin Williams.

Against – 0

Abstain – 11

Councillors Paul Bissett, Paul Coddington, Monty Cuthbert, Fred Gee, James Hart, R. Allan Jones, Cynthia Ransome, Patricia Schofield, Alan Smith, Jonathan Wood and Yvonne Woodcock.

On being put to the meeting, the Mayor's Capital Programme, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Capital Budget proposals for 2015/16 to 2018/19, as detailed within the report, be approved, including:-

- (1) the Capital programme, noting the proposed investment over the next four years and what that will deliver, as detailed within paragraphs 15 to 35 of the report;
- (2) the allocation of receipts generated from the Asset Rationalisation Programme are determined by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services in consultation with the Mayor of Doncaster, as detailed within paragraphs 43 to 46 of the report; and

- (3) Cabinet take responsibility for agreeing the allocations for the Social Care Community Capacity Grant, as detailed within paragraph 16, any significant changes to the Schools Condition Programme, as detailed within paragraph 26, the balance of the Local Transport Plan funding, as detailed within paragraph 33 of the report, and are agreed in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

87. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2015/16

The Council considered a report which was presented by Councillor Christine Mills, Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Waste, which set out the Housing Revenue Account Budget proposals for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Members were informed that the Housing Revenue Account was an account which was separate to the Council's General Fund account. Over many years, the Account had functioned by Local Authorities collecting rents, sending them to Government and the Government then sending back subsidies such as the Management and Maintenance subsidy and Major Repairs subsidy. The Government had provided a complex formula which calculated the annual rise in rent charges, which was set out in paragraph 10 of the report. The formula intended to achieve the same rent for the same properties in the same area by 2019.

It was reported that recently, the rent collection/subsidy system had changed and the Housing Revenue Account had become self-financing. Now, no subsidies came from Central Government and rents collected were retained, and provided the finance from which the Housing Revenue Account funded day to day repairs and management costs, and major investment programmes such as thermal efficiency works. This change in funding mechanisms was incorporated into the 30 year business plan which was also dependent predominantly on rental income. It involved long term commitments, such as maintaining properties to a Decency Standard to ensure there was no backlog of repairs in the future.

Councillor Mills advised that when the Decency Programme first began in Doncaster in 2004, the standard was focused on the life expectancy and condition of elements within properties. Therefore, during the life of the business plan, the Decent Home Standard would need to be maintained across the 20,000 plus properties. Elements within the properties that did not contribute to the Decent Homes Standard would also need to be addressed, examples of which included fascias and soffits and communal areas in flats.

Furthermore, Government also expected financial depreciation on the properties to be covered by the Housing Revenue Account. To ensure the financial viability of the long term business plan, Central Government provided guidance on the levels of rent increases since this was the main income stream. It was also noted that Housing Revenue Account made contributions to the Housing Capital Programme

Members were informed that the guidance had now changed, but in Doncaster, the Council implemented the proposed change a year early. In the Housing Revenue Account Budget last year, the Government guidance would have made a 6.35% rise, but the agreed rent rise was 3.7% complying with the new guidance.

It was noted that new guidance from Central Government was that rent rises should be at the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the previous September plus 1%. The report detailed that for the coming year, this should be the CPI figure of 1.2 plus 1, making a rise of 2.2%.

Councillor Mills advised that this would still make rent levels in Doncaster the lowest in South Yorkshire and the lowest of all the Metropolitan Authorities that had advised the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy of their levels.

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 – 56

The Chair of Council, Councillor Pat Haith, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Iris Beech, Paul Bissett, Joe Blackham, Susan Bolton, Elsie Butler, Paul Coddington, Phil Cole, Richard Cooper-Holmes, Tony Corden, Linda Curran, Monty Cuthbert, Nuala Fennelly, Fred Gee, James Hart, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Deborah Hutchinson, Frank Jackson, Mick Jameson, Bob Johnson, Alan Jones, R. Allan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Hilary McNamee, Christine Mills, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Susan Phillips, Cynthia Ransome, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Patricia Schofield, Dave Shaw, John Sheppard, Alan Smith, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson, Jonathan Wood and Yvonne Woodcock.

Against – 0

Abstain – 1

Councillor Martin Williams.

On being put to the meeting, the Housing Revenue Account, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Housing Revenue Account budget proposals as detailed within the report, be approved, including:-

- (1) rents be increased from 6th April, 2015 by 2.2%, as detailed in paragraph 9 of the report, providing an average weekly rent increase of £1.53, resulting in an average rent of approximately £70.95 per week and that rents will be charged every week of the year;
- (2) the budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account for 2015/16, as detailed within Appendix A to the report, be approved, which would set a balanced budget for the Housing Revenue Account and maintain a working balance of £3.0m; and
- (3) the fees and charges, as detailed within paragraph 12 of the report, be approved.

88. THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2015/16 – 2018/19

The Council considered a report, which was presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 – 2018/19, and changes to the Council's Credit Risk Policy to incorporate non-UK based financial institutions.

The Mayor drew Members' attention to some of the key points in the report which included:-

- Investment interest rates remained at an all-time low. The Council was taking advantage of this to keep interest costs down and reduce the risk of losing cash on deposit.
- Forecast interest rates were due to rise over the term of this strategy however, the general consensus was that interest rates in the UK were now unlikely to increase during 2015.
- Against this background it was prudent to continue the existing strategy of being under borrowed, to save interest costs. Under the Council's existing strategy, it could also take advantage of the historically low interest rates available on long term debt for any new external borrowing.
- By applying this strategy, Treasury Management was expected to deliver £3m in savings in 2015/16 (£1.5m on-going and £1.5m one off).
- The Authority's investments were roughly a sixth of its borrowings. All the Council's investments, as at the end of December, were with UK Banks, other Local Authorities and Treasury Bills.
- The Council's investment priorities would be security first, liquidity second and then return.

- The Council had a deposit, made in 2008, of £3M with Landsbanki, an Icelandic Bank, which was now under receivership. However, the Council had sold its claim and recovered 93% of the deposit which was higher than the majority of UK Local Authorities who had investments in Iceland, and higher than the original estimated recovery rate of 80%.
- The Council was required to put aside an element of General Fund Capital spend in much the same way as people would pay Capital off their mortgage. This was called MRP.
- There was no requirement to apply MRP to the Housing Revenue Account.
- Regulations required Full Council to approve an MRP Statement in advance of each financial year to ensure that there was a prudent provision and this was detailed within Appendix B of the report.

In conclusion, the Mayor stated that the strategy represented a sensible, prudent approach to Treasury Management by the Authority.

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

Councillor Jonathan Wood referred to the list of financial institutions qualifying for Council investment, as set out at Appendix E, (*page 191 of the agenda papers*) and queried the reference to the Co-operative Bank whose credit rating did not meet the Council's minimum criteria. He noted that the Coop bank was only included because they were the Councils bankers. Councillor Wood therefore proposed an amendment to the report that the Co-operative Bank was only used as cash flow and no investments were placed with the Co-operative Bank, which he believed would minimise any potential risk to the Council.

The amendment to the Treasury Management Statement Strategy, was Seconded by Councillor Fred Gee.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the amendment to the Treasury Management Statement Strategy, proposed by Councillor Jonathan Wood, which was declared as follows:-

For – 10

Councillors Paul Bissett, Paul Coddington, Fred Gee, James Hart, R. Allan Jones, Cynthia Ransome, Patricia Schofield, Alan Smith, Jonathan Wood and Yvonne Woodcock.

Against – 45

The Chair of Council, Councillor Pat Haith, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Susan Bolton, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, Richard Cooper-Holmes, Tony Corden, Linda Curran, Nuala Fennelly, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Deborah Hutchinson, Frank Jackson, Mick Jameson, Bob Johnson, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Hilary McNamee, Christine Mills, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Susan Phillips, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, John Sheppard, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Abstain – 4

Councillors John Cooke, Monty Cuthbert, Andy Pickering and Martin Williams.

On being put to the meeting, the amendment to the Treasury Management Statement Strategy, proposed by Councillor Jonathan Wood was declared LOST.

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 – 49

The Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Susan Bolton, Elsie Butler, Paul Coddington, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Richard Cooper-Holmes, Tony Corden, Linda Curran, Monty Cuthbert, Nuala Fennelly, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Deborah Hutchinson, Frank Jackson, Mick Jameson, Bob Johnson, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Hilary McNamee, Christine Mills, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Susan Phillips, Andy Pickering, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, John Sheppard, Alan Smith, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against – 7

Councillors Fred Gee, James Hart, R. Allan Jones, Cynthia Ransome, Patricia Schofield, Jonathan Wood and Yvonne Woodcock.

Abstain – 1

Councillor Paul Bissett.

On being put to the meeting, the Mayor's Treasury Management Statement Strategy was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16 – 2018/19 and the Prudential Indicators included therein, be approved;
- (2) with regard to the Minimum Revenue Provision Annual Policy Statement, the policy on 2015/16 – 2018/19 expenditure, as detailed within Appendix B of the report, be approved:-
 - (i) that the “Capital Financing Requirement Method” is used for all expenditure that is supported through the formula grant system; and
 - (ii) that the “Asset Life Method”, based on “Equal Instalments” is used for all new assets being funded from Council resource.
- (3) the changes to the Council’s Credit Risk Policy to incorporate non-UK based financial institutions, as detailed within paragraph 70 of the report, be approved; and
- (4) the current position regarding the Icelandic deposit, be noted.

89. COUNCIL TAX SETTING AND STATUTORY RESOLUTIONS 2015/16

The Council considered a report which was presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the level of Council Tax for 2015/16 and the statutory resolutions, as detailed within Appendix B of the report.

Members were informed that the Council Tax was based on a 1.95% increase, as set out in the Revenue Budget 2015/16 report. The Mayor emphasised that the increase in Council Tax had not been taken lightly. However, this proportionate step would help to protect public services both now and in the future. She emphasised that Doncaster would still have a low Council Tax when compared to other areas. At this stage, it was expected that Doncaster would have the third lowest Council Tax in 2015/16 of the 91 Metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities and that most households, approximately 60%, would pay the lowest B and A rate. The Band D Council Tax for the Council's own services would be £1,145.09.

It was reported that the South Yorkshire Fire Authority had set an increase of 1.98%, which equated to £66.32 on a Band D property. The South Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner had set an increase of 1.95%, which was £148.16 on the Band D Council Tax. This made a total of £1,359.57 per annum, excluding any Parish precepts, which were set out at Appendix C of the report. This total was an overall increase of 1.95% from 2014/15, when Fire and Police increases were included.

Members noted that for most households which were Band A properties, the proposed Council Tax rise represented an increase of 28 pence per week (33 pence including Fire and Police), which was less than £15 a year. Given the scale of Government cuts facing Doncaster, the Mayor felt that this small rise whilst not ideal, was a reasonable approach to the financial situation the Council faced. It was further reported that the £1.7m raised from the Council Tax increase, would go some small way towards mitigating the effects of the financial cuts.

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 – 47

The Chair of Council, Councillor Pat Haith, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Susan Bolton, Elsie Butler, Paul Coddington, Phil Cole, Richard Cooper-Holmes, Tony Corden, Linda Curran, Monty Cuthbert, Nuala Fennelly, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Deborah Hutchinson, Frank Jackson, Mick Jameson, Bob Johnson, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Hilary McNamee, Christine Mills, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Susan Phillips, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, John Sheppard, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against – 11

Councillors Paul Bissett, John Cooke, Fred Gee, James Hart, R. Allan Jones, Cynthia Ransome, Patricia Schofield, Alan Smith, Martin Williams, Jonathan Wood and Yvonne Woodcock.

Abstain – 1

Councillor Andy Pickering.

On being put to the meeting, the Council Tax and statutory resolutions was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the Council Tax for 2015/16 and the appropriate statutory resolutions, as set out and recommended at Appendix B of the report, including the Council Tax requirement for 2015/16, be approved.

90. PROPOSED CHANGES TO DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEFS

The Council considered a report presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which informed Members of proposed changes to the existing Discretionary Reliefs to Business Rate Payers in the Borough from 1st April, 2015.

It was reported that on 6th March, 2014, the Council adopted a Discretionary Relief Scheme to award relief of up to £1,000 per year to qualifying, occupied, retail premises for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16. There were currently 744 properties benefiting from £659,000 of relief for 2014/15. The funding available to cover the cost of this relief had been increased to £1,500 for the financial year 2015/16. The report recommended that the Council take advantage of this additional grant funding by amending its scheme in line with the recommended increase.

In referring to the Business Rates Transitional Relief Scheme, the Mayor advised that funding had been made available to award relief to ratepayers with small to medium sized properties who were faced with large increases in their business rates liability, due to the ending of the statutory Transitional Relief Scheme. It was reported that the relief would apply for the next two financial years and it was estimated that 39 properties could be eligible for this relief in 2015/16, benefiting from £41,000 of relief.

Furthermore, the Mayor advised that Business Rates legislation was not being changed. Any relief awarded would be under a local discretionary scheme which must be introduced with effect from the 1st April, 2015. Although the relief was awarded under a discretionary scheme, Members were informed that detailed guidance had been issued on the circumstances under which relief should be awarded. Any relief awarded that followed the issued guidance was fully grant funded however, any relief awarded outside of the guidance must be funded by the Authority. These schemes would be managed effectively by the Council to maximise the benefit to ratepayers in the Borough without incurring additional costs to the Authority. By implementing the schemes in this way, they would help to support growth and jobs in the Borough.

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

RESOLVED that

- (1) the maximum level of relief from 1st April, 2015, available under the Business Rates Retail Relief Policy to £1,500 for the financial year 2015/16, be increased;
- (2) the Discretionary Retail Rate Relief Policy, as amended and detailed at Appendix 1 of the report, be adopted in line with the guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government;

- (3) a Discretionary Transitional Relief Policy, as detailed at Appendix 2 of the report, be adopted and that this policy be in line with the guidance issued from the Department of Communities and Local Government;
- (4) Discretionary Transitional Relief for the years 2015/16 and 2016/17 to qualifying properties, be awarded; and
- (5) ratepayers of qualifying properties be required to submit a state aid declaration prior to relief being awarded.

91. ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2015/16

The Council considered a report which was presented by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, which sought approval of the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16.

The Deputy Mayor reported that the Pay Policy Statement detailed the Council's policy for the pay of the workforce, particularly its senior staff, namely Chief Officers and detailed the relationship between the highest, lowest and average paid employees in the organisation. The Policy Statement was a public document which was published on the Council's website each year and clearly demonstrated a willingness to increase accountability, transparency and fairness in setting pay. It also included information about where more detailed salary information was published as part of the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts.

Members were informed that it was proposed that the same format was used this year, as was used last year, with the following observations:-

- There had once again been a positive reduction in the ratios this year, (the ratio being how many times greater a salary was) between the highest and lowest paid staff.
- The current ratio between the highest salary £149,000 (Chief Executive) and the lowest salary £15,145 (grade 3 spot point) had reduced from 12 to 1 last year to 9.8 to 1 this year, and compared favourably with other Local Authorities in the local area.
- This year had included staff getting a nationally agreed two year pay award of 2.2% and a 2% pay award for Chief Officers, not including Directors. There had also been an overall reduction again in the number of Chief Officer posts, from 21 down to 20.

Members noted that all these changes had showed a positive trend and reflected a continuing reduction in the difference between the highest and lowest paid, in line with the Council's commitment to reduce the pay difference and increase low pay. The Council had been able to achieve further improvement of its pay ratios as a result of adopting the national living wage.

The Deputy Mayor reported that it was anticipated that this Policy would not need to be amended during the period it covered (April 2015 to March 2016). However, if circumstances dictated that a change of Policy was considered to be appropriate during the year, any amendments would be included in the following year's statement presented to Full Council.

Members were asked to note the contents of the report and approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the contents of this report, be noted; and
- (2) the Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16, be approved.

92. RESPONDING TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) IN DONCASTER: ASSURANCE REPORT BY THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF DONCASTER SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Prior to Members' consideration of the report, the Chief Executive, Jo Miller made the following announcement:-

"It is important to report to Full Council that we have, with the Doncaster Children's Services Trust, conducted and concluded an independent inquiry into employment matters relating to a member of staff, who at the time of publication of the Jay report, worked for the Council. That staff member now works for Doncaster Children's Services Trust and has done so since 1st October when Children's social care functions transferred.

You would have been shocked liked me when reading the Jay report, I'm sure for all of us in this Chamber, was extremely challenging both personally and professionally as corporate parents.

The safety of children and young people is hugely important and the public must have confidence in public services that protect and support our communities.

It was in this context that immediately following the publication of the Jay report, an independent investigation was commissioned jointly by me and John Hilton, the Chair of the Children's Trust, to substantiate if there was any evidence to suggest that the staff member referred to me by the former Chief Executive of Rotherham following the Jay report and in national newspapers, had poor practice which would affect her working at the Council/Trust or in any way conducted herself inappropriately in the course of her duties.

This investigation report is effectively commenting on an individual's employment status and is not normally a matter I would comment upon in the public domain. However, given the level of public interest and the Local Government Association and the Commons Select Committee both

encouraging Councils to make further inquiries into staff who were mentioned in the Jay report, I am reporting today the outcome of the inquiry in the public domain at this Council meeting.

Firstly, I am satisfied that the staff member was recruited appropriately in accordance with the Council's policy. There is no evidence that the application was anything other than proper and truthful.

Secondly, during her time with us, we had no issues with this individual's performance or conduct. She performed her job well.

The Independent investigation undertaken by Wragge and Co., considered the Jay & Casey report, allegations in the media and took evidence from a number of sources. The staff member co-operated fully with that inquiry and indeed with Alexis Jay and Louise Casey's investigations. That investigation has found that there is no evidence to support allegations that this staff member was involved in a cover up of CSE, nor that she should be singled out as being uniquely culpable for the failings identified in the Jay report. That is not to say that multi-agency arrangements in place at that time to tackle CSE were working as well as they could or should have done in Rotherham. Clearly they were not.

You will appreciate I am sure that I have commented as much as I am able to on an individual's employment situation, though I will conclude in saying that the employee concerned has the full support of Doncaster Children's Services Trust in her role helping to transform children's social care. It is the job of this Council and the Trust and the wider Children's Safeguarding system to ensure that children's social care services are the best they can be for all of our children and families."

Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Lead Member for Children's Services, presented the assurance report from the Independent Chair of Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB), in respect of the progress made in responding to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Doncaster, as set out at Appendix A of the report.

Members noted that whilst there were a number of positive developments in the current arrangements, there remained a number of areas for improvement which had been incorporated into the CSE Plan coordinated by the DSCB. Appendix B of the report set out the DCSB's CSE Action Plan. The report had been presented to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel for comment and a copy of the Panel's response and the minutes of the Panel's meeting held on 9th December, 2014, were attached at Appendices C and D, respectively.

In line with the recent national findings by OFSTED in its thematic inspection of local responses to CSE, the Independent Chair's report presented a mixed picture of the way in which DSCB and partner agencies, were responding to CSE in Doncaster. The assurance report outlined the national policy context for responding to CSE, statutory roles and responsibilities of DCSB and local

partners, an evaluation of current progress in Doncaster based on ten key assurance questions and provided a framework for future scrutiny and challenge to the work in Doncaster, to ensure that children and young people were safeguarded from CSE.

Given Members interest in the inquiry and the serious nature of this issue Councillor Rachel Hodson, Chair of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel, provided feedback to Members regarding the Panels meeting with John Harris the Chair of the DSCB, South Yorkshire Police and Eleanor Brazil the Director of Learning and Opportunities: Children and Young People, who had responded to questions from the Panel with regard to how CSE was being tackled in Doncaster, what preventative work was being put in place, what was being done to help victims, how the service was working and how it had been transformed. Councillor Hodson reported that the Panel had been satisfied with the responses received. However, John Harris would be attending the Panel meeting in April, 2015 and Councillor Hodson urged all Members to attend this meeting.

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, welcomed the report and spoke of how she was determined that CSE was at the forefront of the Council's agenda. She stressed that the Council would remain vigilant about this issue and emphasised that everyone in the Chamber had a duty to protect children and young people, and to ensure that perpetrators were held to account. The Mayor reiterated that this issue was a key priority.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, spoke of the devastating effects of CSE. He felt that it was everyone's business to look for the signs of CSE. He pointed out that CSE was not just in the north of England, but it was happening everywhere across the Country. The Deputy Mayor stressed that the Council was committed to treating everyone fairly and that the Council was dedicated to work together and to deal with the perpetrators of these horrendous crimes.

Councillor John Mounsey, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, stated that all Members were Corporate Parents who had a duty to attend meetings of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel and encouraged Members to attend the Panel's next scheduled meeting in April.

Following the presentation of the report, the Director of Learning and Opportunities: Children and Young People, Eleanor Brazil, responded to Members questions and concerns.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Independent Chair's Assurance Report, as attached at Appendix A, be noted;

- (2) the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan, as attached at Appendix B, be noted; and
- (3) the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel response to the report, as attached at Appendices C and D, be noted.

93. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2015/16

The Council considered a report presented by Councillor Bob Johnson, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism, Regeneration and Growth, and Veterans Champion, which proposed a programme of Member training and development for 2015/16 to support them in their role and a summary of the Member Development activities undertaken during 2014/15, as set out in Appendices A and B of the report, respectively.

Councillor Johnson reported that in the past, the Council had been criticised by the Commissioners regarding poor attendance by Members at training and development courses. However, further to the work of the Member Development cross party Working Group, the Council's approach to Member Development had improved over the last two years and this was highlighted in the report.

Members were informed that the Council now had a co-ordinated approach to developing a programme through the Member Development Working Group and presenting to Council. Training was run on at least two occasions and a twilight session to ensure working Members had an opportunity to attend. Compulsory training to support all Members had been agreed by Full Council. Evaluation forms had been reviewed on a regular basis and the necessary improvements had been put in place and attendance information was reported back to Group Leaders regularly.

With regard to the proposals for 2015/16, Members were informed that Council previously agreed compulsory training for all Members should include Data Protection, Equalities, Children's Safeguarding and Health and Safety, and once undertaken, this remained valid for 3 years. It was recommended that due to its importance, Adult Safeguarding was also added to this list for 2015/16.

Members noted that the report recommended compulsory training for Overview and Scrutiny Members, including performance management, which had not been undertaken in a three year period, as the Scrutiny role was important in supporting the Council's programme moving forward and effectively challenging and holding decision makers to account. Further dates and times of training and seminars would be arranged over the coming weeks and the completed list made available to all Members and prospective Members by the end of this month, so that these could be diarised.

In terms of moving forward, all out Elections gave an opportunity to ensure Members could receive and complete compulsory training in the first part of the year. The remainder of the programme would focus on skills and development, and supporting Councillors in their role and would be developed further by the Member Development Working Group assessing the needs of Members after the Elections.

It was reported that consideration would be given to further ways of delivering the necessary training and support to Councillors for example, through e-learning and joint Officer/Member training, to ensure Members had the opportunity to enhance their development.

Members were asked to agree an indicative programme of Member training and development for implementation in the new 2015/16 Municipal Year.

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

In response to an enquiry from Councillor R. Allan Jones', whether e-learning could be made available for Elected Members, Councillor Bob Johnson stated that the Member Development Working Group would consider this issue.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the indicative programme of Member Development activities and seminars scheduled for 2015/16, as detailed within Appendix A to the report, with a focus on delivering compulsory training early in the 2015 Municipal Year, be approved;
- (2) the list of training deemed to be compulsory be approved and include:-
 - (i) Adult Safeguarding which has been added to the list of compulsory training for all Members; and
 - (ii) Overview and Scrutiny and Performance training be deemed compulsory for all Overview and Scrutiny Members; Members who have undertaken this training within the last three years will not be required to repeat this training.
- (3) the approach to Member Development and training, as detailed within paragraphs 16 to 21 of the report, be supported; and
- (4) the Member Development activities undertaken during 2014/15, as detailed at Appendix B, be received and noted.

94. PROPOSED DIARY OF MEETINGS – 2015/16

The Council considered a report which set out the provisional Diary of Meetings for the 2015/16 Municipal Year, as set out at Appendix A.

An overview of the diary of meetings was set out in paragraphs 5 to 12 of the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the proposed Diary of Meetings for the 2015/16 Municipal Year, attached at Appendix A, be noted; and
- (2) the final version of the Diary of Meetings be presented to the Annual Meeting of Council in May, 2015, for approval.

95. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MOTION, WRITTEN NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR FRED GEE AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR PAUL BISSETT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 16.1

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.1, a Motion was submitted by Councillor Fred Gee and Seconded by Councillor Paul Bissett:-

“Everyone should be appalled at the findings in Louise Casey’s report on the prevailing culture at Rotherham MBC, now also Sue Berelowitz the Deputy Children’s Commissioner stating that too many children are ‘slipping through the net’ which has enabled the abusers of children to commit horrific crimes over many years. Other reports have suggested that Child Sexual Exploitation has been rife all over the North of England. Can the Council tell us if there are, or has been similar problems in Doncaster?”

Will the Mayor ease the minds of parents and other responsible adults in Doncaster by setting up or calling for an impartial enquiry into how Children’s Services have been carried out in Doncaster over the last 20 years, focussing on; teenage boys and girls under the age of consent; teenage boys and girls in Council care; Council Officer interaction in such cases with South Yorkshire Police and latterly, the Crime Commissioner’s office?”

An amendment to the Motion was MOVED by Councillor Nuala Fennelly and Seconded by Councillor Rachel Hodson, to read as follows:-

“Everyone should be appalled at the findings in Louise Casey’s report on the prevailing culture at Rotherham MBC, now also Sue Berelowitz the Deputy Children’s Commissioner stating that too many children are ‘slipping through the net’ which has enabled the abusers of children to commit horrific crimes over many years. Other reports have shown that Child Sexual Exploitation is a national issue which must be addressed.

Everyone has a part to play in tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and it is imperative that Doncaster Council takes a leading role on this important issue.

This Council:-

- is fully committed to working with partner organisations and members of the public to protect children from sexual exploitation and bring to account perpetrators of this heinous crime;
- fully supports National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day on 18th March and the Helping Hands campaign;
- will take steps to raise awareness of the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation including actions that can be taken by employers, employees, Councillors, volunteers and members of the public;
- notes the various historic reports detailing the past failures to safeguard children in Doncaster, the actions that have been taken to improve services to protect young people and the challenges we face;
- welcomes the additional resources which have been dedicated to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in Doncaster;
- welcomes the report today from the Independent Chair of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children's Board, which details the current situation in Doncaster and the action plan for making further improvements; and
- notes that a further update will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny in April and requests that regular reports are provided to Elected Members to ensure this important issue remains a high priority in Doncaster."

A vote was taken on the amendment to the Motion proposed by Councillor Nuala Fennelly, which was declared as follows:-

For – 43

Against – 6

Abstain – 4

On being put to the meeting, the amendment to the Motion was declared CARRIED.

A vote was then taken on the Substantive Motion which was declared as follows:-

For – 48

Against – 0

Abstain – 5

On being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that everyone should be appalled at the findings in Louise Casey's report on the prevailing culture at Rotherham MBC, now also Sue Berelowitz the Deputy Children's Commissioner stating that too many children are 'slipping through the net' which has enabled the abusers of children to commit horrific crimes over many years. Other reports have shown that Child Sexual Exploitation is a national issue which must be addressed.

Everyone has a part to play in tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and it is imperative that Doncaster Council takes a leading role on this important issue.

This Council:-

- is fully committed to working with partner organisations and members of the public to protect children from sexual exploitation and bring to account perpetrators of this heinous crime;
- fully supports National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day on 18th March and the Helping Hands campaign;
- will take steps to raise awareness of the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation including actions that can be taken by employers, employees, Councillors, volunteers and members of the public;
- notes the various historic reports detailing the past failures to safeguard children in Doncaster, the actions that have been taken to improve services to protect young people and the challenges we face;
- welcomes the additional resources which have been dedicated to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation in Doncaster;
- welcomes the report today from the Independent Chair of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children's Board, which details the current situation in Doncaster and the action plan for making further improvements; and
- notes that a further update will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny in April and requests that regular reports are provided to Elected Members to ensure this important issue remains a high priority in Doncaster.

96. DURATION OF MEETING

RESOLVED that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.2, Council having sat continuously for three hours, continue to consider the remaining items of business on the agenda.

97. QUESTIONS BY ELECTED MEMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES 15.2 AND 15.3

A. Questions on Notice

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.2, the Chair accepted the following question from an Elected Member during "Question Time":-

(a) From Councillor Paul Bissett to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

Q. "Mayor, at the same time that you and your Cabinet were clearing the way for all Council run Residential Homes to be transferred to independent providers or closed to save money, you also approved the purchase of 5 plots of land at Thorne, from the Town Council and private owners, for house building. At what cost?"

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

"I'd like to thank Councillor Bissett for his question, which raises a number of issues that I would like to address.

The first point is that Councillor Bissett's question appears to be confusing the Council's Revenue Budget and its Capital Budget.

The Revenue budget is for running services, including ensuring that everyone in Doncaster that needs residential care has access to high quality care provision.

Since David Cameron became Prime Minister, the Conservative-led Government has reduced the annual grant funding that Doncaster Council receives by more than £122m. That is a cut of nearly half our grant funding in just five years, despite rising costs.

In spite of these unprecedented Government cuts, we are managing to maintain services as effectively as possible whilst minimising the impact on local people.

Councillor Bissett will be aware that the Council's Care Homes are not closing. We have managed to identify a high quality provider, Runwood Homes, to take them over. This means that:-

- The homes will stay open;
- The staff will be transferred on their existing terms and conditions, saving jobs;
- The homes will receive millions of pounds of new investment;

- The Council will save on revenue costs, meaning that we do not have to cut other services; and
- The taxpayer can be confident that the Council is using its budget effectively and getting the best value for money possible.

I would hope that Councillor Bissett will join me in welcoming this good news.

The second point is that if we are to properly provide for our elderly residents and ensure we are equipped to meet the demands of our growing population of older people, then we must do much more than provide residential care.

We must also support people to live independently in their own home. This can be assisted through services such as Home Care. Our new 'Help to Live at Home' scheme should significantly improve the current situation in Doncaster.

This is just one of a number of initiatives we are implementing to improve Care Services in Doncaster. These include for example, an increase in the number of dementia cafes and our pilot programme to share best practice in Care Homes.

The scheme in Thorne that Councillor Bissett refers to is not simply house building. It is for an Extra Care Scheme. Extra Care Schemes are also a superb example of housing provision that enables people to live in their own home and remain independent, whilst being able to receive Care Services they require.

Councillor Bissett should be aware of this and the benefits it will bring because the decision was made at Cabinet in January and clearly laid out the rationale for purchasing the land and Rokeby Gardens in Councillor Bissett's own Ward is one of the few examples of Extra Care in Doncaster.

I want to see more Extra Care facilities and I want to see residents in other areas of the Borough benefit from this kind of care and housing support.

Fortunately, despite the disproportionate Government cuts to our Revenue Budget, we do have some Capital funding available for spending on assets and infrastructure that allow us to work with such organisations as Housing 21, to deliver facilities such as this.

That is why we are able to invest in the Swallowdale Extra Care complex in Edlington, which is due to open in the coming months. It is also why we are proceeding with the development of an Extra Care scheme in Thorne.

Negotiations are on-going and as described in the Cabinet report, the information Councillor Bissett has asked for is commercially sensitive and therefore not in the public domain. For this reason, I am not in a position to announce the land valuations at today's council meeting.

However, the public section of the report was clear. Thorne has been identified as one of the priority areas requiring additional provision of older people's accommodation.

A land identification exercise has shown there are no suitably located sites that are within Council ownership available in the area, which has necessitated the need to purchase land.

The site at Peel Hill in Thorne satisfies the specific criteria the Council has established relating to the design, location and suitability of new older peoples accommodation. It is important that Extra Care is located close to key facilities such as shops, doctors and chemists.

The purchase has been approved subject to the preparation of a financially viable scheme and a satisfactory planning consent.

On this basis, I hope Councillor Bissett will welcome this development which will allow other people in the Borough to benefit from the same facilities as those available in his own Ward."

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Paul Bissett asked the Mayor of Doncaster, the following supplementary question:-

Q. "Why hasn't the land at Hungerhill been used for house building instead. You chose not to build on land already in the ownership of the Council. Builders are being encouraged to build on this site. Is this because no-one wants to live opposite a Waste Transfer Station. However, I do commend you for building houses for the elderly?"

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

"We have undertaken proper studies to identify where extra facilities are required. Strict regulations have been laid down. This was announced last year to have four more care facilities and Thorne was identified as one of these."

B. Questions Without Notice

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.2, the Chair accepted the following questions from Elected Members during 'Question Time':-

A. Questions to Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster

Q. Councillor Jonathan Wood asked the Mayor of Doncaster:-

“I would like to draw your attention to page 18 of the minutes of the last meeting. I asked a question on 15th January, to one of your Cabinet Members, asking which legislation have you used and why you have used it. I got a reply a few weeks ago, quoting facts and figures of the previous administration. I submitted another question to that Cabinet Member and I have received a reply which states that this information has already been provided to me.

The point I am trying to make is that you don't answer the questions. Instead, you just send a letter back to me without the questions being answered. When will you stop lambasting and belittling people?”

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

“Councillor Wood, my Cabinet Members always answer the questions. It might be that it is not what you want to hear. I don't lambaste people. I welcome you to work along with us. My Cabinet Members always answer the question.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Jonathan Wood asked the Mayor of Doncaster, the following supplementary question:-

Q. “Why have you not asked your Cabinet Member to answer the question properly. I wanted to know what legislation has been used by your Cabinet Member, but I was provided with an answer relating to Peter Davies's administration. All I asked was a simple question?”

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

“I will handover to Councillor Joe Blackham to respond to your question. This is not about lambasting; it's about you being part of what we are doing.”

A. Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following response:-

“I am the Cabinet Member for this area. The advice I have given you is correct. I have made it clear in my letter that if you require further information when Selective Licensing was agreed, the Officer in question is Karen Hanson, who will be able to answer your questions and provide you with any additional information you require.”

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

No questions were put to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Equalities and Cohesion.

C. Questions to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Neighbourhoods

No questions were put to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Neighbourhoods.

D. Questions to Councillor Tony Corden, Cabinet Member, Support to Lead Member for Children's Services with a focus on Safeguarding

Q. Councillor Patricia Schofield asked Councillor Tony Corden:-

“On 7th February, the Yorkshire Post reported that three Local Authorities had come under fire for failing to make a significant commitment to tackling loneliness and have pledged to address the issue in the Health and Wellbeing Strategies; Doncaster was one of them.

Your response to these comments were and I quote, ‘that loneliness had been identified’ and it was an area to be addressed. You went onto say that there were many activities across Doncaster which will aim to improve health and wellbeing, and that includes tackling loneliness and isolation. My question is do you know what these activities are and who will be delivering them?”

A. Councillor Tony Corden gave the following response:-

“We have set up various activities within the different areas and some of these are being delivered by the Area Teams, which includes lunch clubs, health activities and dementia cafes, and numerous other activities. We will try to do more in the future and will be asking people what they want doing in their locality.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Patricia Schofield asked Councillor Tony Corden, the following supplementary question:-

Q. “Thank you for your response. Can you tell me if voluntary organisations have been approached to do some of these activities?”

A. Councillor Tony Corden gave the following response:-

“Yes, voluntary organisations have been approached, such as Age Concern and Care UK, along with various Community Groups and Parish Councils. I will provide you with a written response outlining the relevant voluntary organisations.”

E. Questions to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Lead Member for Children’s Services

No questions were put to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Lead Member for Children’s Services.

F. Questions to Councillor Bob Johnson, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, Leisure and Tourism, and Veteran’s Champion

No questions were put to Councillor Bob Johnson, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, Leisure and Tourism, and Veteran’s Champion.

G. Questions to Councillor Pat Knight, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

No questions were put to Councillor Pat Knight, Cabinet Member, for Health and Adult Social Care.

H. Questions to Councillor Christine Mills, Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Waste

No questions were put to Councillor Christine Mills, Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Waste.

I. Questions to Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation

Q. Councillor Alan Smith asked Councillor Bill Mordue:-

“My question relates to Street Lighting. When will this be rolled out across DMBC and is there a schedule of installations?”

A. Councillor Bill Mordue gave the following response:-

“Thank you for your question Councillor Smith. Tenders have gone out already on the provision of lanterns. The first to be installed will be on concrete posts in Carcroft. The remaining installations will be completed over the next two years. Installations on Estate roads will be undertaken first, then the Main roads. Not all columns will be replaced, just the lanterns on existing columns. This will be a ‘win’ ‘win’ situation for everyone.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Alan Smith asked Councillor Bill Mordue, the following supplementary question:-

Q. "Apart from the Street Lighting project in Carcroft, what other areas will the Council be looking at over the next year?"

A. Councillor Bill Mordue gave the following response:-

"Work on the concrete columns will be carried out next year. I will provide you and all Members, with a written response outlining the schedule of works to be undertaken."

J. Questions to Councillor John Mounsey, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

No questions were put to Councillor John Mounsey, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

98. 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 26th February, 2014 and 20th February, 2015, which were not included on the Forward Plan, under Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Two decisions had been taken under Special Urgency provisions, which were reported to Council as follows:-

(a) Management Agreement between St Leger Homes of Doncaster and DMBC - (Decision Reference No. S0353)

The decision was taken by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing, Equalities and Cohesion, on 26th March, 2014, in agreement with Councillor Tony Revill, Chair of Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel. A copy of the Decision Record was circulated to all Members of the Council on 27th March, 2014.

(b) Approval of the Contract with Doncaster Children's Services Trust for the Delivery of Social Care - (Decision Reference No. S0354)

This decision was taken by Cabinet on 17th September, 2014, in agreement with Councillor Rachel Hodson, the Chair of the Schools, Children and Young People's Panel. A copy of this Decision Record was circulated to all Members of the Council on Friday 26th September, 2014.

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

99. MINUTES OF THE JOINT AUTHORITIES

Councillor Iris Beech drew Members attention to a drafting error in the second paragraph of the Minutes of the Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 30th January, 2015, which had incorrectly identified Councillor R. Sixsmith as being a Member of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. The Senior Governance Officer undertook to raise this issue with Legal and Democratic Services at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, who serviced the Police and Crime Panel meeting.

RESOLVED that the Minutes and Briefing Notes of the following Joint Authorities, be noted:-

- A. South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on held on 30th January, 2015.
- B. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 5th January, 2015 and Section 41 Briefing Notes for January and February, 2015.
- C. Sheffield City Region Combined Authority held on 5th January, 2015.
- D. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority held on 13th November, 2014 and 15th January, 2015.