

# Public Document Pack

## DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COUNCIL

MONDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 2022

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER, on MONDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 2022, at 2.00 pm.

#### PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Richard A Jones  
Vice-Chair - Councillor Ian Pearson  
Mayor - Ros Jones  
Deputy Mayor - Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Bob Anderson, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Linda Curran, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Julie Grace, Martin Greenhalgh, John Healy, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie Hutchinson, Barry Johnson, Majid Khan, Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracey Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlins, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Thomas Noon, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith, Sarah Smith, Gary Stapleton and Austen White.

#### APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Allen, Glenn Bluff, Jake Kearsley, Jane Kidd and Dave Shaw.

#### 63 Minute's Silence for the recent death of former Councillor Eddie Dobbs

Prior to the commencement of formal business, Elected Members, Officers and members of the public, observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect and remembrance in relation to the recent death of former Councillor Eddie Dobbs.

#### 64 Declarations of Interest, if any

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, and Councillors Bob Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Joe Blackham, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, Sue Farmer, Mark Houlbrook, Tracey Moran, Jane Nightingale and Sarah Smith, declared a non-disclosable interest in Agenda Item 11, the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/23 report.

#### 65 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 20th January, 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 20th January, 2022, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to Minute No.61 (B) (B) on page 15, a question from Councillor Cynthia Ransome to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, be amended to read as follows:-

“Last Saturday lunchtime, I sat in a Town Centre restaurant with some friends. The restaurant was empty and we were seated in the window. We were feet away from a full rubbish bin and next to it was a young beggar. Five people stopped and gave him money. Someone drove up and gave him a package. How can we encourage people to return to the Town Centre if this is what they are faced with?”

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

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

“We have all seen over recent weeks and months, the build-up of the Russian military on the Ukrainian border, with the Russian President stating on numerous occasions that there was no plan to invade Ukraine. The past few days have proved this to be nothing more than lies.

My sympathy goes out to the people of Ukraine. It is the innocent men, women and children who will be the biggest victims of this war.

I trust that Western allies can find ways and means of freeing the people of Ukraine from this oppression, and that the people of Ukraine can once again enjoy the freedom that they deserve, away from tyranny and terror.

Doncaster is currently twinned with Ozyorsk in Russia. I must inform Council that I plan to formally end this twinning relationship, in outrage to the actions of the Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has invaded a previously peaceful and democratic country and brought war to the European continent, not seen in over 75 years.

Doncaster stands with Ukraine during this difficult time, and anything that we think is difficult in this country pales into insignificance when we see what the people of Ukraine are now having to endure. In support of Ukraine, from this evening, we will be lighting our Mansion House and Doncaster Gallery, Library and Museum, in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, in solidarity and support for Ukraine and Ukrainians across the world.

The thoughts and prayers of everyone here in Doncaster are with the Ukrainian people.”

Councillor Mark Houlbrook, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Waste, made the following announcement:-

“On behalf of Doncaster Council, I would like to say a huge thank you to all the staff who went the extra mile earlier in the month, dealing with 3 successive storms, extreme winds, a mini tornado and flooding across the Borough. I would also like to pay tribute to our partners, including the emergency services and the Environment Agency.

The floods last week were a stark reminder to us all of the devastating floods of 2019, where some communities are still picking up the pieces.

The Connected by Water Action Plan was recently launched. This is a £400 million scheme to better protect thousands of homes and businesses from severe flooding in South Yorkshire. Doncaster Council is leading on the following projects:-

- Bentley Flood Alleviation Scheme
- Conisbrough Natural Flood Management
- Tickhill Natural Flood Management
- Doncaster Borough wide Surface Water Flood Alleviation Scheme

We are also supporting the Environment Agency with the following projects:-

- Fishlake Flood Alleviation Scheme & Recovery
- St Marys Bridge Wall Refurbishment
- Nature Based Solutions in Lower Don
- Refurbishment and Replacement of Lower Don Embankment
- Wheatley Park Embankment Refurbishment

I will be perfectly honest with you all in that there is a significant shortfall within the current funding settlement from Government. Government has currently committed £153 million, with a further £34 million in partnership funding; this leaves a £211 million funding shortfall. We will continue to work with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to lobby Government for the further required funding. For every £1 spent on flood protection, our residents and businesses avoid around £5 in property damage. If Government is serious about levelling up Doncaster and the North, then this must include funding the protection and resilience of our communities from flooding.

My final point is that there is currently a consultation taking place in relation to the Connected by Water South Yorkshire Action Plan, which I would encourage residents, businesses and fellow Councillors to get involved with, and put forward their views and experiences. The consultation can be found on the Environment Agency website and I will share the website via my twitter and Facebook channels.”

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

- (a) Question from Mr Chris Owen, to Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Culture and Planning:-

“The Local Plan was prepared before declaration of a Climate Emergency, and issue of the Council’s Climate Commission Report and Environmental Strategy. Will the policies and appropriateness of sites allocated for development set out in the Local Plan, be reviewed and revised to ensure that the important policies and initiatives contained in these and other environmental initiatives are fully reflected in the Local Plan, and therefore will be taken into account in determining planning applications? What will any such review entail, when will it start and when will it be completed? If no review will be performed, why not?”

Councillor Nigel Ball gave the following reply:-

“This very matter was discussed in front of the Government Planning Inspector through the Local Plan examination Hearing sessions whilst the Plan was being examined. Local Planning Authorities are bound by the legal duty in Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, as amended by the 2008 Planning Act, to ensure that, taken as a whole, planning policy contributes to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. This outcome-focused duty on local planning clearly signals the priority to be given to climate change in plan making.

The Local Plan Inspector's Final Report was issued in June last year and noted:-

*"Whilst some representors consider that the Plan fails to respond appropriately to the climate emergency acknowledged by the Council, it has to meet the tests of soundness. For the reasons set out throughout this report...I conclude that the Plan is sound and contains appropriate policies to help mitigate and adapt to climate change in the context of current national policy including by helping to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions."*

The Inspector's conclusions on this matter were that:-

*"There is no national policy requirement for the Plan to include targets for reductions in greenhouse gases in the Borough. The Council advised during the examination that it will take account of future changes to national and local policies and initiatives relating to climate change, such as Doncaster's Commission on the Climate Change,... as it keeps the Plan under review."*

The Local Plan itself acknowledges that there are a number of emerging issues and opportunities that may inform a Local Plan review, including evolving national planning policy and the response to climate change.

The Local Plan was only approved and adopted last September with cross party support. We are now implementing its policies and monitoring the effectiveness of the Plan towards meeting its objectives. These include policies relating to the overall spatial strategy and the allocation of land for development which aim to minimise the need to travel and avoid flood risk, sustainable transport, protection, sustainable design, and low carbon and renewable energy.

As per the Council's response quoted in the Inspector's Report, national Government policy, including planning policy, is likely to evolve in the future to respond to what the Council has formally agreed in its declaration of a climate emergency.

The Council has a legal obligation to review the Plan at least five years from its adoption date, to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of our local communities. National planning guidance states that most Plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every five years, and that reviews should be proportionate to the issues in hand.

As part of keeping the Plan under review, options which the Council could choose to pursue include bringing forward policy via a full Local Plan Review, a

partial Local Plan Review, or adopting an additional Development Plan Document to sit alongside the current Local Plan.

Any such option would need to be carried out in accordance with the relevant planning legislation, including at least two rounds of full public consultation, and concluding with the independent examination process. No decisions have yet been taken with respect to these options, given the Plan has only been in place for less than 6 months.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.10, Mr Owen asked the following supplementary question:-

- Q. “When will you commit to undertaking a proper review of the Local Plan and update the documents? I ask that in doing so, you urgently consider the allocation of Rose Hill and reconsider the sale of this land to housing developers.”

Councillor Nigel Ball gave the following response:-

- A. “The Local Plan is only six months old and was fully endorsed by Council at this point. It will be subject to a review, both a partial review and a full review, but we are still only six months in with the Plan. There are a lot of contentious areas, Rose Hill included, and when it is reviewed, we will look at what can be addressed. However, at this point, six months in, we are not in a position to undertake a review as this would be extremely time consuming and would need to be subject to a full public consultation, which does not happen overnight, and it is a process that we take very seriously.”

## 68 Corporate Plan 2022/23

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of a revised Corporate Plan for 2022/23, which would contribute to the ‘Great 8’ Priorities in the Doncaster Delivering Together Borough Strategy, ensure the Council would deliver quality services and contribute to develop as an organisation.

The Mayor was pleased to propose the Plan that set out the Council’s priorities for the next year, which was being presented alongside the budget proposals.

It was reported that the health and economic crisis caused by the pandemic had worsened inequalities in society, and placed unprecedented stress on Council services and resources. The pandemic had also highlighted the best of Doncaster, which had seen compassion, community spirit, innovation and resourcefulness in abundance.

Members noted that over the last year, the Council had:-

- Continued to roll out Test, Track and Trace, and support local mass vaccination centres across Doncaster;
- Supported businesses, helped residents get back to work, and supported the most vulnerable residents;

- Stepped up its response to the climate and biodiversity crisis;
- Seen major projects come to fruition, for example Danum Gallery, Library and Museum, Savoy Cinema and the University Technical college; and
- Grasped opportunities such as Towns Deals, Levelling Up Fund and Community Renewal Funding, which had brought £64m of additional investment into Doncaster.

The Mayor stated that the Council had learned from lockdowns that it could organise itself and deliver services differently, and work even more closely with its partners, and that she was extremely proud of how the Council had worked together with its colleagues, partners and communities. Along with the Team Doncaster partners, the Council had committed to a decade of delivery, guided by our new Borough Strategy, Doncaster Delivering Together and was looking forward, with hope and ambition beyond the pandemic, but acknowledged its legacy. Doncaster Delivering Together was about Thriving People, Places & Planet which emphasised the need to improve wellbeing. To achieve these Goals, the Corporate Plan detailed the Council's contribution to the 'Great 8' priorities over the next year which included:-

- Plant 100,000 trees as part of the 1 million trees programme;
- Use the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and Gainshare funding to retrofit a further 600 homes;
- Deliver 33 new Council homes and start building another 129;
- Refurbish three local Leisure Centres, in Askern, Edlington and Thorne;
- Extend its Employment Support programmes; and
- Bid for City Status and to become the headquarters for Great British Rail.

It was also noted that the Plan also detailed how the Council would continue to develop as an organisation, and respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

In concluding her presentation, the Mayor expressed her gratitude to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for considering the Plan and providing its feedback and support.

RESOLVED that the 2022/23 Corporate Plan, be approved.

## 69 Capital Strategy and Capital Budget 2022/23 - 2025/26

Prior to Council's consideration of the report, the Chair of Council, Councillor Richard A Jones reminded Members of the legal requirement to include in the minutes, details of how each Elected Member had voted on decisions relating to the budget and level of Council Tax. Therefore, items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, would all be subject to a recorded vote and voting preferences would be documented in the minutes of this meeting.

Subsequently, the Council considered a report which was presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which outlined the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme Budget proposals for the next four years, 2022/23 to 2025/26.

The Mayor stated that the Council continued to invest in the future of the Borough despite the tough economic climate with £386.9m of capital investment planned over the next four years that would continue to stimulate growth and prosperity, with £141.6m of investment planned for 2022/23. The Council was investing in projects to further improve core services such as education, housing, infrastructure, leisure and culture, as well as attracting investors and visitors to the Borough. This included £196.8m investment in the Council's social housing stock over the next four years, covering maintenance, adaptations and the new build programme. A further £29.9m was proposed for continued investment over the next year in its leisure facilities, retained public buildings and fleet replacement, with the acquisition of electric vehicles being prioritised where possible.

Members noted that the Capital Budget also allocated an additional £6m for improving the condition of its roads, with the focus being on adopted estate roads on a 'worst first' basis, which would include £1m towards road safety improvements. The Capital Budget invested in the whole Borough of Doncaster, and the Council would continue to bid for Government funding where possible, including Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Funding. However, the Mayor pointed out that for true levelling up of Doncaster and the North, substantial regenerative funding over a 5 to 10 year period was needed which would enable the Council to 'go deep' and 'go local' in order to provide the opportunities and true levelling up of the Borough and its communities.

Following the presentation of the Capital Strategy and Capital 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 - 40

The Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Ian Pearson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Bob Anderson, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, Bev Chapman, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Linda Curran, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Julie Grace, John Healy, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie Hutchinson, Barry Johnson, Majid Khan, Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracy Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlings, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Andy Pickering, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith, Sarah Smith and Austen White.

Against - 0

Abstain - 8

Councillors Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Martin Greenhalgh, Thomas Noon, Cynthia Ransome and Gary Stapleton.

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

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Capital Strategy, as detailed within paragraphs 36 to 71 of the report, be approved;
- (2) the Capital Programme Budget for 2022/23 to 2025/26, as detailed within paragraphs 11 to 35 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) Directors in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, take responsibility for agreeing any changes to the use of block budgets in the Capital Programme which were identified within Appendix 1 and included the Retained Buildings Programme, School Condition Programme and Integrated Transport Block.

70 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022/23 - 2025/26

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2022/23 to 2025/26, which provided details of the Strategy for the management of the Council's finances, and provided a framework for the operation of the Treasury Management Strategy function within the Council.

It was reported that Treasury Management sought to optimise the Council's cash flow and secure the most effective arrangements to support the long-term funding requirement. The Key Prudential Indicators relating to borrowing limits were detailed in the report and the proposals followed the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Code and were compliant with statutory guidelines.

Members were advised that CIPFA published updated Treasury Management and Prudential Codes on 20th December, 2021, but there would be a soft introduction of the new codes prior to full implementation in 2023/24. The new codes were identified in full in Appendix F to the report. Additionally, it was noted that the requirement that the Local Authority must not invest primarily for financial return was now explicit in the code, whereas in the past, it had been implicit. However, the report confirmed that the Council was already complying with this requirement.

Following the presentation of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, 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 - 40

The Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Ian Pearson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Bob Anderson, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, Bev Chapman, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Linda Curran, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Julie Grace, John Healy, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie Hutchinson, Barry Johnson, Majid Khan,



Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracy Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlings, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Andy Pickering, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith, Sarah Smith and Austen White.

Against - 0

Abstain - 8

Councillors Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Martin Greenhalgh, Thomas Noon, Cynthia Ransome and Gary Stapleton.

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

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022/23 to 2025/26 report and the Prudential Indicators included, be approved; and
- (2) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, as detailed within paragraphs 39 to 40 and Appendix B of the report, be approved.

#### 71 Revenue Budget 2022/23 - 2024/25

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the Revenue Budget proposals for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The Mayor reported that despite ongoing uncertainty around Government funding and the continued response to the Covid pandemic, the budget proposals set a balanced budget whilst protecting the most vulnerable across the Borough and provided resources to improve opportunities; the Council now had 28% less to spend on services in real terms than it did in 2010/11, which created challenges and represented a £335 reduction per resident. The overall gross Revenue Budget proposed for the Council in 2022/23 was £526.1m.

The Mayor pointed out that this budget provided sufficient resources to enable front line services to continue to deliver at their current service levels, despite increased service pressures and rising inflation. The Council had allocated an additional £750,000 for additional apprenticeships within the Council which would target hard to fill roles. Also, as Coronavirus had not gone away, the budget proposals ensured specific resources were available for Covid infection control and prevention measures during the next financial year.

Members noted that some difficult decisions had been made to balance the budget and meet an overall recurrent budget gap of £13.1m in 2022/23. Savings had been necessary, but wherever possible, these minimised the impact on service delivery and would be delivered through new ways of working, deployment of technology and generating additional income without negatively impacting on critical services. Overall, the budget proposals met the £21.7m budget gap over the 3 years. In light of the pressures and future risks, a Council Tax increase of 1.99% was being proposed alongside a further 2.5% increase for Adult Social Care, and that the Adult Social Care precept was specifically being used to contribute towards the additional Adult Social Care funding pressures. Overall, this would increase Band A Council Tax by 83p per

week and Band D by £1.25 per week. To offset the impact of this and to help support those residents who were struggling, the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme remained in place and was supplemented by the introduction of a hardship support payment of up to £300 per household per annum. In addition, the Local Assistance Scheme funds would be increased by £450,000, to provide a safety net for periods of hardship experienced by families who were most in need.

The Mayor pointed out that Doncaster would still continue to have the lowest Council Tax in South Yorkshire and one of the lowest overall in comparison to other Councils of similar size in the country. However, with still no certainty from Government about funding beyond the next year, it was hard to plan ahead, but as the Council was a financially well managed, the Mayor stated that she would do whatever she could to mitigate the impacts of uncertainty as she remained firmly focused on supporting Doncaster's priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan and the 10 year Borough Strategy.

In conclusion, the Mayor thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for its response to the draft budget proposals, which she had fully considered and responded to.

Following the 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 - 39

The Chair of Council, Councillor Richard A Jones, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Ian Pearson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Bob Anderson, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Linda Curran, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Julie Grace, John Healy, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie Hutchinson, Barry Johnson, Majid Khan, Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracy Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlings, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Andy Pickering, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith, Sarah Smith and Austen White.

Against - 0

Abstain - 8

Councillors Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Martin Greenhalgh, Thomas Noon, Cynthia Ransome and Gary Stapleton.

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

RESOLVED that the Revenue Budget for 2022/23 to 2024/25, as detailed within the report, be approved including:-

(1) the Medium-term Financial Strategy including all proposals in the report, as

detailed within Appendix A of the report;

- (2) a Gross Revenue Expenditure Budget of £526.1m and a Net Revenue Expenditure Budget of £219.4m, as detailed within Appendix A;
- (3) Council Tax increasing by 4.49% to £1,511.03 for a Band D property (£1,007.35 for a Band A) for 2022/23. This includes:-
  - (i) 1.99% Council Tax increase, equating to an increase of £28.78 for Band D per annum, 55p per week (£19.18 for Band A per annum, 37p per week); and
  - (ii) 2.5% Government Adult Social Care precept, equating to an increase of £36.15 for Band D per annum, 70p per week (£24.10 for Band A per annum, 46p per week).
- (4) the Revenue Budget proposals for 2022/23, as detailed within Appendix B (pressures £19.0m) and Appendices C and D (savings £12.1m) of the report;
- (5) the 2022/23 Grants to 3rd Sector Organisations, as detailed within paragraph 58 and Appendix F of the report;
- (6) the fees and charges proposed for 2022/23 at Appendix G of the report; and
- (7) the Chief Financial Officer's positive assurance statements be noted, as detailed within paragraphs 68 to 70 of the report.

## 72 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/23

The Council considered a report, presented by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Equalities, which detailed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget proposals for the 2022/23 financial year, and the medium-term financial forecast for the following three years, which had a budget to break even.

The Deputy Mayor stated that the Council was proud of its low rents in Doncaster which made good quality homes affordable for over 20,000 households in the Borough. However, he was disappointed that the rent increase was larger this year than in previous years, but it was still below the current rate of inflation. Social rents in Doncaster remained the lowest in South Yorkshire and were significantly lower than those in the private sector, as they were also more than £11 a week lower than they would have been if rents had not been reduced by 1% a year for 4 years from 2016 to 2019. The rent increase was much needed because as a landlord, the Council had recognised the impact of high inflation on all of its costs, and that this rent increase would generate additional income of £3.1m, but the Council's estimated expenditure for the year would increase by £3.6m.

It was reported that the Council was also seeing increased demand for social housing as many other housing options had become unaffordable for residents. The demand on services and the need for investment in the Council's properties continued to rise and all of this was paid for from tenants' rents. The services provided to tenants and

the quality of the housing offer exceeded those of many other landlords at a time when the Council rents were not only the lowest in South Yorkshire, but in the lowest 10 for the whole Country.

The Deputy Mayor stated that the Council wanted its tenants to be able to sustain their tenancies and that staff were available to assist with this, and also with maximising their income and reducing outgoings; if nothing else had been learned from the Covid pandemic, everyone had all learnt the value of the roof over their heads.

The Deputy Mayor stressed that poverty and especially fuel poverty was a concern to the Council which would continue to invest heavily in energy efficiency improvements across all of its housing stock and it was on track to achieve EPC level C for all of its properties by 2030. Almost 60% of the planned Housing Capital Investment Programme for next year would be on investment which would improve the energy efficiency of Council properties. The HRA continued to fund in excess of £100m of investment into the existing Council stock over the next four years; the main areas of investment were energy efficiency improvements and external works such as new roofs including fascias, gutters and soffits.

In concluding his presentation, the Deputy Mayor pointed out that within Housing, the Council had recognised the importance of its contribution to the wider objectives for the Borough and would continue to grow the number of apprentices employed to 45, which was more than 5% of the St Leger Homes workforce. The Council was also looking to increase this number further to match the growing investment programme over the next few years. In addition, funding had also been identified to plant an additional 150 trees a year on housing land.

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

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

For - 39

The Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Ian Pearson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Bob Anderson, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Linda Curran, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Julie Grace, John Healy, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie Hutchinson, Barry Johnson, Majid Khan, Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracy Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlings, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Andy Pickering, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith, Sarah Smith and Austen White.

Against - 0

Abstain - 8

Councillors Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Martin Greenhalgh, Thomas Noon, Cynthia Ransome and Gary Stapleton.

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

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

- (1) rents be increased from 4th April, 2022 by 4.1%, as detailed within paragraphs 7 to 10 of the report in line with Government policy; this will increase average weekly rent by £3.00, resulting in an average rent of approximately £76.06 per week. Rents will be charged every week of the year;
- (2) the budget proposals for the HRA for 2022/23, which are contained in Appendix A to the report; these proposals set a balanced budget for the HRA and maintain a reserve of £4.0m; and
- (3) fees and charges, as detailed within paragraph 14 of the report.

### 73 Council Tax Setting and Statutory Resolutions 2022/23

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which set out how the Council Tax was calculated and sought approval regarding Doncaster Council's Council Tax requirement for 2022/23.

The Mayor stated that the report set the Council Tax across the Borough based on the Revenue Budget report which had been considered and agreed at the meeting today. It was proposed that Doncaster Council's element of the Band D Council Tax charge be increased by 4.49% for 2022/23 to £1,511.03. The proposals included an increase in the core Council Tax of 1.99%, as set out in the 2022/23 Revenue Budget report, and an increase in the Adult Social Care precept of 2.5%.

It was reported that just under 88% of domestic properties in Doncaster fell into Bands A, B and C, with 58% falling in Band A. The proposals equated to a charge of £1,007.35 for a Band A property, which was an increase of 83p per week.

Members were also informed that the report included increases in Council Taxes of the Joint Authorities (South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire) which represented an overall increase of 4.41% for Doncaster residents.

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

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

For - 39

The Chair of Council, Councillor Richard A Jones, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Ian Pearson, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Bob Anderson, Duncan Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Linda Curran, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Julie Grace, John Healy, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie

Hutchinson, Barry Johnson, Majid Khan, Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracy Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlings, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Andy Pickering, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith and Sarah Smith.

Against - 0

Abstain - 8

Councillors Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Martin Greenhalgh, Thomas Noon, Cynthia Ransome and Gary Stapleton.

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

RESOLVED that Council approved a Band D Council Tax for 2022/23 of £1,511.03 for Doncaster Council services and passed the appropriate Statutory Resolutions, as set out and recommended within Appendix B of the report, which incorporated the Council Taxes of the Joint Authorities and which, taken together with Doncaster's 4.49% increase, represented a 4.41% increase from the 2021/22 Council Tax for Doncaster residents.

#### 74 Annual Pay Policy Statement 2022/23

The Council considered a report on the Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, which was presented by Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services, which set out the Council's policy for the pay of the workforce, particularly senior staff, and detailed the ratios between the highest, lowest and average paid employees in the organisation.

Councillor Nightingale stated that the Policy Statement was a public document and was published on the Council's website each year, and demonstrated clear public 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.

It was proposed that the same format be used this year as in previous years with the following observations:-

- (i) There had been minimal changes to the ratios this year. National pay award negotiations had not yet been concluded and agreed for 2021/22.
- (ii) The current ratio between the highest paid salary and lowest employee salary remained at 9.46 to 1 this year.
- (iii) The ratio between the highest employee salary and average employee salary had slightly reduced from 6.20 to 6.13 to 1. Although the average salary had increased by £294 per annum.
- (iv) All pay ratios remained well within the threshold considered by the Hutton Review that should be no greater than 20 to 1.
- (v) The Council remained committed to reduce the pay difference and increase low pay.

Members noted that it was anticipated that this Policy may need to be amended during the period it covered which was from 1st April, 2022 to 31st March, 2023 should a national pay award be agreed. Any amendments would be included in the following year's statement presented to Full Council.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, be approved.

75 Options to Support the Delivery of the Region's Bus Service Improvement Plan

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, presented a report to Council that detailed the options being discussed with regard to the delivery of the region's bus service improvement plan.

It was reported that the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority considered a report with regard to the future of bus services and outlined that there were considered to be two main options; to retain the Enhanced Partnership and not explore franchising or alternatively to further explore the franchising option. More details of these two models were set out in the report considered by Members.

The Mayor reported that following consideration of the report, it was the view of herself and Cabinet that the franchise option was the preferred route, but there were still a number of points to consider before support was given.

Members noted that the process of assessing a franchising scheme would enable the Combined Authority to fully consider whether a bus-franchising scheme would be the preferred model for delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan. With this in mind, the Mayor sought the support of Full Council in going to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to explore the potential of the franchising model. However, the Mayor assured Council that she would stipulate that there must be no cost associated to Doncaster Council and that the Council reserved the right to formally withdraw from the process at any stage, if appropriate funding solutions could not be found.

RESOLVED that the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority be requested to explore the potential of the franchising model, but there must be no cost associated to Doncaster Council and that the Council reserves the right to formally withdraw from the process at any stage, if appropriate funding solutions could not be found.

76 Membership and Chiring Arrangements - Overview and Scrutiny Communities and Environment Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The Council considered a report which sought nominations to fill the following vacancies following the resignation of Councillor Daniel Barwell as an Elected Member on 10th February, 2022:-

- A Labour Group Member to fill the vacancy on the Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- The appointment of a Chair for the Communities and Environment Panel from within its Membership; and

- The appointment of the newly elected Chair of the Communities and Environment Panel to the vacancy on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC).

Members noted that Council had previously agreed to disapply proportionality to OSMC and the Standing Panels, as this provided an opportunity for a greater number of seats to be offered to those Members who were not in the Majority Group which allowed more flexibility in reviewing the membership of OSMC and the Standing Panels in year. As the seats were not allocated in proportion to the political make-up of the Council, but agreed on a Political Group basis, the seat vacated by Councillor Barwell was deemed a Labour seat.

Members were also informed that to ensure the OSMC effectively managed and co-ordinated the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, Members appointed as Chairs of the Standing Scrutiny Panels were also appointed as Members to the OSMC. Therefore, to continue this best practice principle, Council was requested to consider appointing the newly elected Chair to the vacancy on OSMC.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) Councillor Barry Johnson be appointed as the Labour Group representative to the vacancy on the Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel;
- (2) Councillor Gemma Cobby be appointed as Chair of the Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel; and
- (3) Councillor Gemma Coby, as the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, be appointed to the vacancy on the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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

A. Questions on Notice

- (Q) Question from Councillor Nick Allen to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“Unfortunately, meetings of the Assets Board are closed to the public and Elected Members. Would you support making these meetings more transparent by including the Assets Board as an agenda item at a Committee meeting? For example, an update about the Assets Board could be included as a regular item on the Audit Committee’s Agenda. This would enable Councillors to scrutinise the disposal of assets in a much more effective way. Alternatively, do you feel that it is time to open up Assets Board meetings to the public and Ward Members?”

- (A) The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, gave the following reply:-

“Thank you for your question Councillor Allen. The Assets Board is an internal advisory meeting only with no decision making functions. It therefore falls outside the Council’s formal decision making structures.



The activities of the Assets Board operate in accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules. Proposed asset transactions, including acquisition, disposal and leases in and out of the Council, are considered by the Assets Board process, which includes Ward Member consultation prior to decision making.

The Assets Board provides a framework for consultation with Local Ward Members to occur before decisions are taken. Decisions regarding individual property disposals and acquisitions are made as set out in the Council's Constitution and in accordance with Standing Orders. Depending on the values involved, such decisions are taken by either the Property Officer, the relevant Portfolio Holder or Cabinet. All decisions are published on the Council's website in accordance with legislation and subject to any exemptions due to confidentiality.

Consultation also forms part of the decision making process and Ward Members are involved where appropriate, but where there is a level of commercial sensitivity and confidentiality, access to information discussed cannot be made freely available as a matter of course."

#### B. Questions Without Notice

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

#### A. Questions to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones.

Q. Councillor Jane Cox asked the following question:-

"Does the Mayor agree that given the circumstances around a recent resignation of a Labour Councillor, that at a very minimum, DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks should be done on Elected Members? I understand the policy is to not do this because we as Elected Members should not be left with children or vulnerable people on our own, but this is not always possible, and I think the public deserves to know who is representing them. Part of the training that is given to new Councillors is around what to do when they are in a home with somebody, so we do acknowledge that Councillors find themselves in these situations."

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

"As this is part of an ongoing situation, it would be wrong of me to make any further statement because it is a Police investigation."

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

Q. "I am not asking about a comment about an ongoing Police investigation, I am asking about Council Policy. The Council Policy is for us not to have DBS checks on Elected Members. I feel that we

should have DBS checks on Elected Members and it should become Council Policy?”

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

“There are different levels of DBS checks as you know, and therefore, the required DBS checks are carried out in accordance with the processes the Council has in place at the moment.”

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

Q. Councillor Steve Cox asked the following question:-

“Would it be possible to know why the Welcome Back Fund was not used? On the report you gave to Cabinet on 23rd June, 2021, one recommendation was that the fund would be spent quickly; what went wrong? Has there been any Covid-19 funds that have had to be clawed back to Government?”

A. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, gave the following response:-

“If you had given me prior warning about this question, I could have got a detailed response for you, but I am not aware at this moment in time, of any funding that has had to be returned to Central Government. That is not to say that has not happened because as we know with this Government, everything is very short-term and has to be spent in very short timescales which sometimes cannot be achieved. I will find the answer and provide you with a response.”

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

Q. “I look forward to the response. Could you also look into what has been stated as ‘Navel Gazing’ undertaken by the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority in holding back funds and taking their time in making the decision how much Doncaster gets?”

A. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, gave the following response:-

“I am not certain which element of funding you are talking about, but if you can furnish me with the details, I will do my best to find out the answer and take the issue forward.”

C. Questions to Councillor Lani-Mae Ball, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Young People

There were no questions put to Councillor Lani-Mae Ball, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Young People.

D. Questions to Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Culture and Planning

There were no questions put to Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Culture and Planning.

E. Questions to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement

There were no questions put to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement.

F. Questions to Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities

Q. Councillor Steve Cox asked the following question:-

“What has gone wrong with the consultation on the Localities Model? We have been informed numerous times in meetings about the ‘Great 8’ Priorities. Half of our Ward has been missed out since 2015 and it still seems that in the consultation for this Locality Model, half of our Ward has been left out again. We were told this by Officers. I have emailed you to ask why half of the Ward is missing. Could you just tell me why it is not there?”

A. Councillor Rachael Blake gave the following response:-

“Regarding your original point in respect of the lack of consultation on the Locality Model, I disagree that this is the case. I think all Members in this room have attended briefings to understand what was happening with Locality Working. I believe there have been 4 Locality meetings which has included an Elected Member who has been chosen by their Ward to be the lead Ward Member. I understood that the first meetings have taken place and there is another meeting tomorrow night. I do not think there has been a failure of consultation. From what I can see up to now, Members attendance has been excellent. I will be attending all the Locality meetings in the next two months to be sure about the progress.

The purpose of Locality Working, as outlined in the Corporate Plan, is that we have a Locality Plan. At the heart of the Locality Plan is what our residents want based on the consultation which has taken place in the Wards. I understand that the next step of Locality Working is for lead Ward Members to see the Locality Plans which will come to Cabinet in March, 2022.

So I disagree that there has been a failure. The consultation has been very robust and I think Members have engaged in the process.

In terms of your specific question, I totally understand your frustration in terms of where your Ward sits. I do not think you have been missed out. In Locality Working, my understanding is that you sit in 2 areas; you could be represented in the Central Area, but equally, you need to

be represented in the South Area. I will speak to the two Directors responsible to ensure you are provided with an update before the next round of Locality meetings.”

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

Q. “I am glad you referred to our Ward sitting in the Central Area. We have been saying this since 2015 and it is still not clear in there that half of our Ward sits within the Central Area. We have not been asked to put anyone forward, so therefore there is a flaw in the consultation process?”

A. Councillor Rachael Blake gave the following response:-

“I will get back to you this week because it is not right that any Ward Members cannot attend their Locality meeting.”

G. Questions to Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services

There were no questions put to Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance and Trading Services.

H. Questions to Councillor Mark Houlbrook, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Waste

There were no questions put to Councillor Mark Houlbrook, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Waste.

I. Questions to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources

There were no questions put to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources.

J. Questions to Councillor Andrea Robinson, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

There were no questions put to Councillor Andrea Robinson, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

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

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

L. Questions to Councillor Ian Pearson, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee

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

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

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

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

In the absence of Councillor Jane Kidd, Members were asked to submit their questions in writing to the Scrutiny Team within Governance Services, and a written response would be provided.

78 Annual Report on Executive Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency (Rule 16) Provisions

The Council considered a report which informed Members of Key Decisions which had been taken by the Executive between the period 19th February, 2021 and 28th February, 2022, which were not included on the Forward Plan, under Special Urgency provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules. It was stated within the Council's Constitution that all decisions taken under Special Urgency provisions, be reported to Council on an annual basis, to ensure that the public be kept informed of all aspects of the democratic process.

The report outlined that historically, the Council had made limited use of the Rule 16 (Special Urgency) Provision, and between 2015 and 2020, there had been only six decisions of this type. However, this had increased in 2020/21 to 32 as a result of the urgent response needed to the Covid Pandemic, and in 2021/22, this had increased further. All decisions were largely related again to the Council's response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and delaying these decisions could have resulted in the delay of the provision of grants or services to the people of Doncaster.

It was reported that since the publication of the agenda papers, an additional Rule 16 decision has been taken by Mayor Ros Jones on the 23rd February, 2022 to accept £3,244,525 of funding from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for the delivery of works related to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

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

79 To receive the minutes of the following Joint Authorities

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

- A. South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Board held on 24th January, 2022.
- B. South Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board held on 13th January, 2022.
- C. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 10th January and 24th January, 2022.

CHAIR: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_