



City of Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 1st February, 2023 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Friday, 3rd February, 2023

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 14th February, 2023. These decisions will not be implemented until after this date and time.

Present:

Chair - Mayor Ros Jones (Mayor of Doncaster with responsibility for Budget and Policy)
Vice-Chair - Councillor Glyn Jones (Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business.)

Cabinet Member for:

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball	Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Young People
Councillor Nigel Ball	Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Leisure, Culture and Planning
Councillor Joe Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement
Councillor Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities
Councillor Phil Cole	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Trading Services
Councillor Mark Houlbrook	Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Waste
Councillor Andrea Robinson	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources

Apologies:-

An apology was received from Damian Allen, Chief Executive.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

There were no public questions or statements submitted for the meeting.

Decision records dated 18th January, 2023, (previously circulated) were noted.

DECISION 1

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. School Admissions Arrangements for 2024/25 Academic Year.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved the following admission arrangements for the 2024/2025 school year:-

- Community School Admission Arrangements (as set out at paragraphs 13 to 14 of the report);
- Community School Nursery Admission Arrangements (as set out at paragraphs 13 to 14 of the report);
- Primary Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements (as set out at paragraphs 15 to 17 of the report);
- Secondary Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements (as set out at paragraphs 15 to 17 of the report);
- Notification of parents of the arrangements for admission, including those to the Doncaster University Technology College (as set out at paragraph 18 of the report); and
- Relevant Area for Consultation on Admission Arrangements (as set out at paragraph 33 of the report).

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Consideration was given to a report, which set out the requirements for the adoption of schemes for Co-ordinating the Admission Arrangements for Primary and Secondary Schools and sought Cabinet's approval of the Admission Arrangements for the City of Doncaster's Community Schools for the 2024/2025 School Year.

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Young People, introduced the report and outlined that:-

- The Council had a statutory responsibility to determine the arrangements for the coordinated admission arrangements of children to primary and secondary schools and nurseries across the City each year;
- The Council has an important role to ensure that parents are given every opportunity to apply for a place at their preferred school. This is best achieved through the Council co-ordinating and monitoring the process;
- The co-ordinated arrangements apply to all types of schools across the City, including academies and free schools;
- In September 2013, the Government withdrew the requirement to co-ordinate in year applications. This raised concerns within the Authority regarding the safeguarding of children. Since March 2012, each year Cabinet has reaffirmed its commitment to co-ordinate in year admissions and the Council is in a privileged position, with all schools taking part;

- Co-ordinating year of entry admissions is a statutory function of the Council and it achieves this through an online application and paper based system of which 99% of applications are received online;
- Outcomes for applicants in Doncaster are very positive and have improved when compared to the previous year. For Secondary admissions in 2022, 88% of children were offered their first preference and this was even higher at 96% in primary schools. These improve further when we look at children receiving a place at one of their preferred schools to over 96% in secondary and 99% in primary;
- Separate to the Council co-ordinating the overall process, each admission authority in the City must set its own admission arrangements which include the order in which places are offered when a school is full;
- The Council is responsible for setting these for 20% (24 out of 118) of the schools in Doncaster, the remainder are the responsibility of church schools and Academies;
- The Council's arrangements reflect the requirements to give first priority to children in care and are followed by catchment area children. In recognising the importance of keeping families together the Council then prioritise children with siblings attending the same school;
- These arrangements are reviewed annually and updated as necessary to take account of relevant legislation, guidance and local changes;
- It is crucial to offer support for parents throughout the admission process to minimise any disruption to a child's time in education. The support the Council provides through the Admissions Service has previously been reviewed and a number of actions were taken to ensure smooth transition into and between schools;
- This includes having dedicated support staff for each phase of education, minimising complaints and allowing the processing of applications in a timely manner.

Following the presentation of the report, the Mayor invited questions from Members.

In response to questions from Phil Cole, officers detailed how the Council ensures that parents are made aware of the process for school applications.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The options considered were set out in paragraphs 21 to 32 of the report.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Riana Nelson, Director of Children, Young People and Families.

DECISION 2

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. Asset Management Strategy 2023-2030.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the draft Asset Management Strategy 2023-2030;
- (2) That Cabinet review and work through the Overview and Scrutiny Community and Environment Panel recommendations relating to the Asset Management Strategy and Community lettings policy, and that these recommendations be attached as an appendix to the minutes from this meeting.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report introduced by Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure, and Enforcement, which sought endorsement of the Council's Assets Management Strategy 2023 to 2030.

The report sets out a revised and updated Asset Management Strategy to replace the existing strategy which ran from 2017 to 2022. The new strategy aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan and supporting strategies, including those covering Sustainability and Housing Delivery and builds on the principles established for asset management with a focus on;

- Developing a modern, fit for purpose estate
- Reducing costs and maximising income
- Supporting skills development & economic growth; and
- Supporting our communities

The refreshed Strategy sets out the principles and approach the Council would take with regard to the management of its Assets, including clear strategic objectives and decision making guidelines that would enable Doncaster Council's teams and services to make consistent and joined up decisions regarding the physical assets required to deliver its objectives and operational priorities; and in doing so, supports residents, partners and businesses to realise the City's collective goals.

The Strategy would guide future decisions associated with the use, acquisition and disposal of the Council's property assets over the next decade. The Strategy is

based around 4 guiding principles:-

- Evidence-led decision making
- Whole Council, whole partnership approach
- Maximised Value
- Environment focused

The principles would guide the Council in relation to the decisions it makes, which would ensure that its assets were managed efficiently and sustainably, such that they remained 'fit-for-purpose' and thus supported front line services to deliver their core functions to its residents and businesses. The Strategy would be mindful of new technologies and ways of working, as well as putting the environment at the forefront of the Council's thinking to ensure that its carbon footprint and any negative impact on the environment was minimised.

Councillor Blackham outlined that the Council has an extensive asset portfolio, that both provides a home for its services, and, in some instances, brings income into the Council to support vital services. Due to ongoing financial pressures the Council must look to rationalise its assets accordingly and increase income, where possible. This does however mean that the Council can look to consolidate services within its communities, to see local hubs instead of multiple Council facilities, enabling the Council to invest in its reduced estate and provide a cost effective modern estate.

Councillor Blackham reported that as part of the Council's review and consultation process, feedback received from Cabinet and Members of the Community and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel had been included in the updated Strategy.

The Mayor invited Councillor Gemma Cobby, Chair of the Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel to the meeting, who was in attendance to provide the Panel's feedback on the proposed Asset Management Strategy, and also referred to the recommendations of the Panel's recent Review of the Community Asset Transfer process.

Councillor Cobby thanked the Mayor and Cabinet for accepting the Panel's recommendations and outlined the recommendations from the Panel's review and also the recommendations relating to its consideration of the Asset Management Strategy.

Cabinet thanked Overview and Scrutiny for their work on reviewing the Strategy and its feedback on the Community Lettings Policy. This had been an open and transparent process and showed how the effective use of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny procedures could help to improve and contribute to the Council's Policy and Strategy.

Cabinet welcomed the Strategy, and in particular referred to the proportion of assets that the Council had been successful in disposing of in the last 5 years in order to rationalise and make more efficient the use of Council buildings, which would enable the Council to lease the assets to community groups and community organisations.

In response to comments and questions from Cabinet Members, it was confirmed that the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority did not have authority in terms of the disposal of, or use of, Council assets.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

To choose not to update the Asset Management Strategy and continue without a current and published document.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

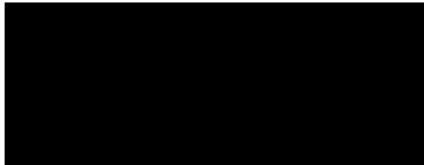
There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Dan Swaine, Director of Economy and Environment.



Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker