



## Report

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**27 February, 2023**

**To the Chair and Members of the COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL REPORT ON EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER SPECIAL URGENCY PROVISIONS**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The Council's Constitution requires those key decisions that can be implemented immediately without a call-in period (usually referred to as "Rule 16 Special Urgency Decisions"), to be reported to Council on an annual basis. This report outlines such decisions taken between the period 23rd February, 2022 and 27th February, 2023.

#### **EXEMPT REPORT**

2. N/A

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

3. Council is asked to note the contents of the report.

#### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

4. The Council is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance and ensuring that the decision making process is open and transparent. By reporting the key decisions taken under 'Special Urgency' provisions over the past year, the Council is ensuring that the public are well informed with regard to the democratic processes undertaken. The report demonstrates that the Council has effective processes in place to respond to urgent situations and events.

#### **BACKGROUND**

5. The Council's Constitution requires that decisions taken using Special Urgency provisions are reported to Council on an annual basis. The ability to take decisions under Special Urgency are provided for in legislation and reflected in the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. Rule 16 decisions are decisions which require immediate implementation and therefore, the usual requirements of placing upon the Council's Forward Plan 28 days in advance and not being implemented during the 7 working day "call-in" period, cannot be followed. In each instance, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny was asked to confirm acceptance of urgency before the decision was taken.

6. There have been fourteen decisions taken under special urgency procedures during the last year. Thirteen of these decisions relate to the acceptance or spend of central government grant funding. In each case notification of the award or the requirement to spend within short timescales has meant there has been no opportunity to provide the required 28 days notice on the Forward Plan or allow a Call In period. Not using the Rule 16 Special Urgency provisions detailed within the Constitution would have meant the Council was unable to meet the grant conditions and potentially lose out on the funding required to support to our communities and vulnerable residents
7. The decision relating to “Easter Holidays Free School Meals” (see 9(d) below) initially committed the Council to fund further free school meal provision for the Easter holidays starting 4th April 2022. As part of the Spring Statement the Chancellor had pledged further monies would be made available for Household Support Fund (HSF). Although it was expected free school meals would be included, the guidance had not been published and an urgent decision was required as the school holidays were imminent. To support and reduce hardship on families during this period, Council funding was committed, the money was however, later recouped from the HSF as this decision was consistent with the funding criteria.
8. This report reflects decisions taken from 23rd February, 2022, to 17th February, 2023, to coincide with the publication of this report.
9. Set out below are the decisions taken that fall into this category:-

- (a) To accept £3,244,525 of funding from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for the delivery of works related to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 23rd February, 2022.

The decision was urgent in nature as the funding notification was received on the 9th February 2022, from the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), for which BEIS have stipulated a requirement to approve and sign the funding agreement by the 28th February, 2022.

BEIS had set financial parameters within which they needed to receive a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to ensure transfer of funding to Local Authorities by the end of the Financial Year 21/22. There was a risk that MoUs received after the deadline of the 28th February may lead to funding not being granted.

- (b) Household Support Fund & Additional Restrictions Grant Payments taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 15th March, 2022

The decision was urgent because both of the one-off government grants had to be spent by 31 March 2022.

- (c) Council Tax Rebate taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 22nd March, 2022

The decision was urgent because the government required the Council to start paying out as soon as possible in April 2022.

- (d) Easter Holiday Free School Meals taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 30th March, 2022.

The decision was urgent because Doncaster's school Easter Holidays started on 4th April 2022 and the schools food vouchers needed to start being issued to parents in the relevant households immediately that week.

- (e) Homes for Ukraine Scheme taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 11 April, 2022

This decision was urgent because Individuals and Families registered on the 'Homes for Ukraine' Scheme were being issued with their visas and some guests have started to arrive in Doncaster as of the 1st April 2022.

Payments needed to be made to guests and their sponsors as a matter of priority, alongside the payments to organisations who were providing vital ongoing humanitarian support to Ukraine guests during their stay in Doncaster.

- (f) Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Duty 22/23 taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 29th April, 2022

The decision was urgent as the Council had only recently received confirmation of the funding award for 2022/23 and was required to accept the monies before 8th May 2022

- (g) National Family Hub and Start for Life Programme taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 26th August, 2022

The decision was urgent as the Council needed to ensure it had the necessary resources and plans in place to complete the sign up form by 31 August 2022. This would ensure that planning could take place for delivery of the programme with immediate effect, should the Council be successful in the bid to become a trailblazer authority and in order to accept the first payment from the Department for Education.

- (h) Household Support Fund October 22 to March 23 taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 14th October, 2022

The decision was urgent to enable immediate financial assistance and support to vulnerable residents and those in need. Rising food and energy costs, with subsequent increased requests for assistance, had highlighted the need to provide this support quickly to avoid undue hardship to residents. Taking this decision urgently also provided certainty and assurance to those hardest hit by the cost of living crisis.

- (i) Turnaround Programme taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 14th November, 2022.

This decision was urgent as the Council needed to ensure it had the necessary resources and plans in place to complete the sign up form by 14th November 2022

The notification for the grant award and the period in which it required ratification precludes the normal 28 day notice normally required for a key decision or to wait for a call in period prior to implementation.

- (j) Distribution of the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund 2022 taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 15th December, 2022.

The decision was urgent due to the huge pressure in Doncaster's NHS and Adult Social Care services and the need to act as soon as possible to improve this, especially helping people leave hospital.

The lateness of national government confirming Doncaster's funding, having originally announced that funding would be provided in September.

The funding was to be spent through the Better Care Fund by the 31 March 2023 and a completed planning template had to be submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care by the 16th December 2022.

- (k) Supported Housing Improvement Programme, Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities Funding taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 19th December, 2022

The decision was urgent as there was pressing need to rapidly mobilise the programme. Councils had received confirmation from DLUHC that the funding allocation for this year of the programme (Doncaster will receive 187K) needed to be spent by the end of this financial year (March 2023) and cannot be carried over into subsequent years of the 3 year programme. A Strategic Lead post needed to be created immediately and recruited into, in order to ensure swift mobilisation of the programme. The success of the programme relies heavily on rapidly appointing the Strategic Lead to establish the necessary arrangements, mobilisation and delivery for the programme.

Another central element of the programme relied on a taskforce (multi-disciplinary team) being mobilised to undertake a series of inspections. This required recruitment into additional temporary capacity from three departments. Given the timescales and challenges around recruitment, it was fundamental that recruitment actions were undertaken without any delay, to ensure capacity and requirements were in place to deliver on the programme aims.

- (l) Acceptance of £613,920 funding from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities as a contribution towards the approved refurbishment of the Little Lane Travellers Site. And, approve that the Section 151 officer considers the grant conditions and signs the Memorandum of Understanding taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 12th January, 2023

The Council only received confirmation of the award on 23rd December 2022 therefore it has not been possible to provide advance notice of this decision on the Forward Plan. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) require a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by Friday 13th January to approve this funding, therefore Rule 16 Special Urgency provision was being used to ensure the Council can accept and utilise the funding by the required deadline.

- (m) Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 10th February, 2023

The decision was urgent as it would enable the delivery of a government scheme that needed to begin by 27th February, 2023 when the government launches the scheme.

- (n) Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 15 February 2023

The decision was urgent in nature as it would enable the delivery of a government scheme that needs to begin on 27th February 2023, when the government launches the scheme and close for applications is 31st May 2023.





## OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASON FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

10. This report is for noting only and therefore, no options were considered

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

11.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Negative overall - Trade-offs to consider	Neutral or No implications
 Tackling Climate Change				✓
Comments				
 Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work				✓
 Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs				✓
 Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all				✓

 <b>Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs</b>				✓
 <b>Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough</b>				✓
 <b>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</b>				✓
 <b>Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</b>				✓
<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>				✓
By publicly reporting all key decisions taken under special urgency procedures, the Council is ensuring that its governance arrangements are open, transparent and in accordance with statutory requirements.				

**Legal Implications [Officer Initials: NC Date: 07/02/23]**

- The content of this report complies with Rule 16.02 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, which requires the submission of an annual report to the Full Council at its last ordinary meeting of the Municipal Year, on the Executive Decisions taken in the preceding twelve months under the Special Urgency provisions contained within those Rules. The report must include the number of decisions taken and a summary of the matters in respect of which those decisions were taken.

**Financial Implications [Officer Initials: PH | Date: 090223]**

- There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

**Human Resources Implications [Officer Initials: KG| Date: 070223]**

- There are no direct human resources implications associated with this report.

**Technology Implications [Officer Initials: NR | Date: 070223]**

15. There are no specific technology implications in relation to this report. Digital and ICT input will be needed to assist with the implementation of any applications required to manage any grant schemes and any additional technical requirements that may be identified will also need to be discussed with Digital and ICT.

## **RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS**

16. There are no identified risks associated with this report.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials ALT Date 07/02/23]**

17. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Special Urgency Key Decision (Rule 16) Reports and Executive Decision Records:-

- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 23rd February 2022 - To accept £3,244,525 of funding from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for the delivery of works related to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: To Accept £3,244,525 of funding from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy \(BEIS\) for the delivery of works related to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 15th March, 2022 - Household Support Fund & Additional Restrictions Grant Payments  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Further Household Support Fund & Additional Restrictions Grant Payments - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 22nd March, 2022 - Council Tax Rebate  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Council Tax Rebate - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 30th March, 2022 - Easter Holiday Free School Meals  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Easter Holiday Free School Meals - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 11th April, 2022 - Homes for Ukraine Scheme  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Homes for Ukraine Scheme - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 29th April, 2022 - Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Duty 22/23  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Duty - Acceptance of Grant Funding - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 26th August, 2022 - National Family Hub and Start for Life Programme  
[Issue details - National Family Hub & Start for Life Programme - Rule 16 Decision - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 14th October, 2022 - Household Support

Fund October 22 to March 23

[Issue details - Rule 16 Key Decision - Household Support Fund October 22 to March 23. - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 14th November, 2022 - Turnaround Programme  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Key Decision - Turnaround Programme - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 15th December, 2022 - Distribution of the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund 2022.  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Distribution of the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund 2022 - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 19th December, 2022 - Supported Housing Improvement Programme, Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities Funding.  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Supported Housing Improvement Programme, Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities \(DLUHC\) Funding - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 12th January, 2023 - Acceptance of £613,920 funding from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities as a contribution towards the approved refurbishment of the Little Lane Travellers Site. And, approve that the Section 151 officer considers the grant conditions and signs the Memorandum of Understanding.  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision: 'To accept funding of £613,920 from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities \(DLUHC\) as a contribution towards the approved refurbishment of the Little Lane Travellers Site - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 10th February, 2023 - Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding.  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision: Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones on 15th February, 2023 – Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision: Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

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