



City of Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday, 6th December, 2023 by Cabinet.
Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 7th December, 2023.

End of the call-in period is 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 18th December, 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 Joe Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement
Councillor Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care and Equalities
Councillor Phil Cole	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Traded Services and Planning
Councillor Mark Houlbrook	Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Waste
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources

Apologies: -

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball and Sarah Smith.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

Mayor Ros Jones read out the following question which had been submitted by Councillor Jane Cox.

'The OBC makes reference to significant sums from Gain share allocation and Local Growth Fund for the full amount and match funding only commences when the funds are exhausted. The implication is that CDC will bear the full financial risk of the reinstatement costs which could be more than £83m. What scrutiny will be applied to the airport operator? What contingencies are there, a delay in reopening the airspace or in a worse-case scenario losing the airspace carries significant financial impacts or a Black Swan event occurs.'

The Mayor thanked Councillor Cox for her question and read out the following response, a copy of which would be forwarded to Councillor Cox following the meeting:-

Thank you for your question Councillor Cox. The Council is undertaking a procurement exercise to identify an airport operator. As part of that process the financial strength, business plans and investment plans of operators will be considered, and a contract will be agreed upon with a successful operator which will deal with the costs of reopening and developing the Airport. Until such time as that work is concluded it would be inappropriate to engage in speculation as to the costs of such an endeavour but the processes being undertaken by our procurement team are designed to ensure that the interests of the Council are protected.

Decision Records from the meeting held on 8th November 2023 were noted.

DECISION 1

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Investment Zone Designation and Business Rates Retention Opportunity (*Rule 15 General Exception Urgent Decision*).

2. REASONS FOR URGENCY

The development of the Investment Zone has been through a number of Government Gateways. The initial timeline for submitting Business Rates Retention information to Government was the end of October, with a formal gateway for submitting further details relating to Business Rate Retention set for mid-November. Information required for the completion of this report, and therefore the information required by Cabinet to make an informed decision, has only recently been developed and made available. This had meant that it had not been possible to provide the usual 28 days' notice of this decision on the Council's Forward Plan.

The decision is therefore being taken in accordance with Rule 15 (General Exception) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, as detailed at Part 4 of the Constitution. Taking this decision in accordance with urgency arrangements is required as providing the 28 days' notice would lead to a further delay in obtaining the approvals required to proceed with the development of the Investment Zone and Business Rate Retention opportunities before further government legislation announcements.

3. DECISION TAKEN

That Cabinet:

- (1) designates the Doncaster Opportunity Sites as part of the South Yorkshire Investment Zone, including the proposed prioritisation; and
- (2) designates Gateway East, subject to the stipulated conditions, as Doncaster's preferred business rates retention zone, subject to an agreement on the operational status of Doncaster Sheffield Airport and the South Yorkshire Airport City programme.

4. REASON FOR DECISION

Mayor Ros Jones introduced a report which sought Cabinet's approval to secure and prioritise the designation of four Doncaster Opportunity sites as part of the South Yorkshire Investment Zone and for the area known as Gateway East to be designated as Doncaster's preferred Business Rate retention site, via a bid for funding from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, subject to an agreement on the operational status of Doncaster Sheffield Airport and the South Yorkshire Airport City programme being approved.

In the 2022 Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that the Government would launch a refocused Investment Zones programme, aimed at catalysing a small number of high-potential clusters in areas in need of levelling up to boost the productivity and growth.

On 14th July 2023, South Yorkshire was announced as the United Kingdom's first Investment Zone, focusing on Advanced Manufacturing.

It was announced that by having an Investment Zone, South Yorkshire, through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), would gain access to an £80m pot of Capital and Revenue funding over a period of five financial years, commencing from 2024/2025. However, on 20th November 2023, it was announced that the funding pot would be doubled to £160m and the funding period would be extended to ten financial years.

The financial breakdowns, as detailed in the body of the report were primarily in relation to the initial £80m, as proposals for the recently announced increase were still being developed with SYMCA.

The utilisation of £160m funding would be overseen by the SYMCA Governance Board, with a view to being operational from 2024 to enable recommendations to be made to the MCA Board before April 2024 when the Investment Zone goes live.

Four 'Opportunity Sites' were selected for Doncaster, with the opportunity to bring a fifth potential site that may come online in the future, at Carcroft Common.

The four opportunity sites, as outlined in the Council's Local Plan as areas of development, in order of priority, were outlined as follows:-

- Gateway East - identified as the number one priority site, subject to an agreement on the operational status of Doncaster Sheffield Airport and the South Yorkshire Airport City programme;
- Thorne North;
- City Centre Corridor;
- Unity;
(Carcroft Common remains a potential fifth site, that could be brought into the Investment Zone at a point in the future)

It was highlighted that the sites were important for the achievement of the Council's economic ambitions, including growth of important business sectors and the creation of new, high paid, high skilled jobs, particularly in advanced manufacturing and its associated sectors, the key focus of the South Yorkshire Investment Zone. This

provided another step towards the Council's ambition to develop Doncaster as a city with good growth and employment opportunities for its residents.

The report set out the approach for utilising the funding, the financial modelling of the estimated business rates that could potentially be generated, split between Doncaster and the SYMCA and the criteria for assessment of the funding to bid for the sites. The report also showed the potential annual income that could be generated from the site, and key modelling assumptions, which was dependent upon an operational airport being in place.

In welcoming the development of the Investment Zone in Doncaster, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, noted that Gateway East was the number one priority of the four identified opportunity sites, which was subject to the operational status of DSA. He asked Mayor Ros Jones if she was hopeful this would happen. The Mayor confirmed that she was hopeful the Council would be successful and the Outline Business Case for the airport would be agreed, however, there is a process to follow.

5. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

To reject the Investment Zone Opportunity Sites and potential share of a £80m (£160m following the Government announcement on the 20th November 2023) funding pot, and reject the Business Rate Retention opportunity at Gateway East.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

7. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

8. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources.

DECISION 2

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. South Yorkshire Airport City – Outline Business Case (OBC) (*Rule 15 General Exception Urgent Decision*).

2. REASONS FOR URGENCY

The pace of the ongoing discussions and negotiations and the need to establish a way forward with some certainty has meant it has not been practical to provide the 28 days' notice of the decision on the Forward Plan and the forthcoming Christmas and New Year holidays would affect the timescales for implementation, if this decision were delayed to a later date. There are specific risks relating to the controlled airspace which if removed, could significantly delay the programme. There is also a need to ensure the approval of the submission of the OBC to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) for the relevant funding approvals be agreed quickly, to ensure progress continues to be made to achieve

the Council's ambition of opening the airport. This decision is therefore being taken in accordance with Access to Information Rule 15 General Exception, as detailed within Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

3. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) approved the submission of the Outline Business Case (OBC) to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) (Appendices A and B – confidential) and subject to approval of the OBC by SYMCA, delegated authority to the Director of Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Mayor to:
 - i) submit Full Business Case (FBC) submissions to SYMCA, as required to draw down the funding, in accordance with the OBC.
 - ii) enter into funding agreement(s) with SYMCA, to agree the specific funding terms and conditions; and
- (2) subject to approval of the OBC by SYMCA, the funding be included in the Council's Capital Programme.

4. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report, introduced by Mayor Ros Jones which sought approval to submit an Outline Business Case to the South Yorkshire Combined Authority as part of the South Yorkshire Airport City programme to reopen Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA) and develop a cluster of high value economic activity which complemented traditional aerospace functions, including logistics.

At its meeting in September 2023, Cabinet considered a progress report setting out the key findings of the work undertaken to date by a range of independent experts who had been commissioned by the Council to advise on the potential to re-open DSA. The report also highlighted the extent of the re-instatement costs, which were significant due to the full closure of the airport by the current DSA owner and the ceasing of all aviation operations, and that this was an impediment to attracting a prospective investor. Therefore, securing an investor/operator was likely to require the Council to de-risk the investment to an appropriate level and to enable an attractive Internal Rate of Return to be achieved, particularly given the large reinstatement costs, and the risks associated with reopening the airport and growing aviation operations from a standing start.

Whilst there remained multiple risks associated with restarting the airport, the report suggested that reopening DSA was feasible and would bring significant economic benefits to Doncaster and the wider region. Since September, further work had been undertaken to produce a SYMCA Outline Business Case, for the reopening, operation, and development of DSA. If the forecast 30-year benefits and passenger numbers and freight expansion are realised, it is estimated that almost 5,000 gross direct jobs will be supported under a Central scenario, as well as circa 6,000 gross indirect and induced jobs and circa 4,400 catalytic jobs in surrounding aviation-related development.

The OBC had identified that re-opening DSA offers the most favourable balance between benefit and cost and is therefore the preferred option.

The overall objective of progressing the funding was to de-risk the project sufficiently to secure an airport operator, that can successfully reopen, operate and develop the airport over the 50-year period, subject to the satisfactory outcome of the procurement.

SYMCA would, in accordance with Government funding rules, independently review the business case as it stands at the OBC stage. Subject to this review the SYMCA Board will then be asked to consider progressing the scheme to an in-principal approval and advancement to the Full Business Case (FBC) stage. Any SYMCA commitment to funding would follow on the consideration of an FBC informed by the conclusion of the procurement exercise.

The report builds on the report submitted to Cabinet in September 2023 and the outcome of the first phase of the procurement process currently being carried out by the Council to identify an airport operator with the ability and resources to restore commercial aviation operations at the airport. However, it was noted that the overall timescales remained challenging, linked to the implications of the controlled airspace which if removed would significantly delay the programme.

To access Gainshare funding a detailed Outline/Full Business Case needed to be produced, assessed and then approved by SYMCA; which was appended to the report with Doncaster's Gainshare funding application, which describes the requirement to access both revenue and capital expenditure for the development of land, buildings and supporting infrastructure on the DSA site. It was the intention, post Cabinet approval, that this application would be submitted to SYMCA. A summary of the headline estimated costs included in the SYMCA OBC were provided in Appendix A of the report.

Councillor Phil Cole welcomed the OBC, noting the overwhelming support from the residents of Doncaster and the business community to re-open DSA airport. He highlighted the significant contribution the re-opening of the airport would make, not only for the city of Doncaster, but also the wider South Yorkshire City region.

5. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Do Nothing: The City of Doncaster Council could determine to do nothing and not pursue funding; this is not recommended based on rationale contained within the report.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Rachael Blake sought advice from the Monitoring Officer, as she was employed by one of the independent experts who had been commissioned by the Council to provide advice on the potential to reopen DSA. The Monitoring Officer advised that whilst Councillor Blake had included the declaration of her employment on her declaration of interest form, she did not have an interest in relation to the recommendations set out in the report, and therefore, was not to be precluded from being able to take part in the meeting.

7. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

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

8. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources.

DECISION 3

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. 2023-24 Quarter 2 Finance and Performance Improvement Report.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved the Quarter 2 Performance and Financial information, including;

- (1) approved the virements per the Financial Procedure Rules, as detailed in Appendix A – Finance profile of the report;
- (2) noted the allocations of block budgets in the Capital Programme, as detailed in Appendix A – Finance profile of the report, in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Consideration was given to a report, introduced by Councillor Phil Cole, Cabinet Member for Finance, Traded Services and Planning, which summarised the Council's financial performance and position at the end of Quarter 2 of the 2023-24 financial year. Appendix A of the report set out the Council's Financial Profile for July to September 2023.

The financial position forecast of the Council for the second quarter of the financial year was a projected £1.7m overspend on the revenue budget, which was attributed to key pressures on both Adults and Children's Social Care costs significantly exceeding budgets. Details of the main variances were provided in paragraphs 123 to 145 of the report. Using the £3m non recurrent underspends had seen the overspend reduced, the Council would continue to review and update the projections, actively seek mitigations to reduce the pressures or identify ways to offset underspends to reduce the forecast year-end overspend. This information and analysis would also be rolled forward to ensure next year's budget setting process was informed.

It was reported that recent information from the Local Government Association had referenced a number of Councils potentially being served with a Section 114 notice from the Chief Finance Officer, whereby it could only commit to delivering essential services and commitments. Despite the financial challenges, it was reported that the Council's finances were well managed and this was not an expected outcome

for Doncaster, as spending was under control.

Since Quarter 1, there had been an improvement to the financial position, which was largely due to the continued efforts to identify savings to offset the in-year pressures. It was recognised that the Council was operating in a challenging financial environment with the cost-of-living crisis particularly impacting directly on many residents receiving Council services.

The report highlighted the areas where the Council was progressing well and where further improvement or actions were required to deliver the Council's 'Great 8 Priorities.

Whilst accepting the challenging environment within which the Council operated, a number of key areas for improvement were identified and these included:

- General costs and demand for social care services, including reducing the number of admissions to residential care for older people
- Improving the number of completed Education, Health and Care Plans, and
- Reducing the level of persistent absence of children in secondary schools.

Despite these challenges Members praised the work of staff in continuing to deliver well managed services and the following areas were highlighted:-

- Successful collections of household waste and recycling, maintaining a figure close to 100%.
- Continuing work to develop a Doncaster Skills profile as part of the Education and Skills 2020 programme.
- More targeted work and activity to support people with a learning disability into employment.
- Maintaining consistent performance regarding the number of people who have received an annual review of their care and support arrangements.
- Meeting the 100% target for Licensing Act 2003 applications processed within the statutory timescale.
- Reduction in the number of children placed outside the authority resulting from actions to grow and build our own facilities.
- Improvement on the national trend for the Percentage of Children Accessing their Entitlement to Free Childcare.
- Successful launch of the Choose Kindness initiative to promote positive values and well-being across communities.
- Continued support for Veterans and exceeding the target for those identified and supported within the Communities service.

In recognising the continued hard work of staff, Members also identified the need for adequate long-term funding and resources from Central Government to deliver effective services to the public.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources.

DECISION 4

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

9. St. Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited (SLHD) Performance and Delivery update Quarter 2 ended 30th September 2023 (2023/24).

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet noted the progress of St Leger Homes of Doncaster's (SLHD) performance and the contribution SLHD makes to supporting Doncaster Council's strategic priorities.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, introduced St. Leger Homes of Doncaster's performance and delivery update report for Quarter 2, which provided Cabinet the opportunity to comment on the performance successes and challenges against SLHD 2023-24 Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The report also included additional Tenant satisfaction indicators. Details of SLHD Tenant Satisfaction Measures and House Mark pulse survey benchmarking were appended to the report at Appendices B and C respectively.

At the end of Quarter 2, eleven of the 22 KPIs measured had met the projected target, or were within tolerances of the set target. Further commentary in relation to the targets was set out in the body of the report. The report summarised the KPI dashboard as of 30th September 2023, together with comparative performance information for previous years, as set out at paragraph 6.4 of the report.

The Deputy Mayor provided an overview of the KPIs and highlighted that the new performance regime meant that in certain areas St Leger Homes' performance was still emerging. The Deputy Mayor referred to those areas of performance that were off target and were being addressed, including:

KPIs 2 and 3, void rent loss and average time to relet a property. These targets had not been met and further actions were taking place. Improvement in these measures were important elements in reducing homelessness. Although below target, there was evidence that this performance was better than other neighbouring authorities and in the top quartile compared to other landlords.

KPIs 4 and 5 related to Homelessness. Those presenting to SLHD as homeless are at an all-time high and this creates an immediate pressure on the service.

Concerns were raised regarding the information provided by DLUHC which was used to set the initial targets for these KPIs. It was stated that the service often goes beyond their legal duties to support residents to ensure they do not end up homeless.

With regard to KPI 7, complaints responded to within timescale, it was noted that although this was within tolerance, the direction of travel was downwards and should be further investigated.

KPI 13 Anti-social behaviour (ASB), reporting is expected to improve by the end of the year, as performance is currently better than last year. ASB tends to be seasonal, with most instances in Q1 and Q2. The establishment of a new ASB team is starting to have a positive impact on this indicator.

KPI 16 Tenant satisfaction, whilst significantly below target, national benchmarking data indicates that against all other local authority Arms Length Organisations (ALMOs), St Leger Homes is in the top 30%. Further work will be undertaken to improve this further.

Reference was also made to those areas performing well, including:- Building safety and compliance, repairs being completed right first time, and for tenants to stay in their homes when they are struggling, which is particularly important during the cost-of-living crisis and rising homelessness. Further reference was made to ensuring the number of voids is reduced to ensure properties remain available and prevent homelessness.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Dave Richmond, Chief Executive Officer, St. leger Homes of Doncaster

DECISION 5

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

10. Housing Retrofit - Gainshare Funding Award.

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet agreed:-

(1) to delegate acceptance of the funding award of £2.7m from the South

Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Gainshare and the entering into the funding agreement to the Director of Place and Assistant Director of Finance; and

(2) that the funding be added to the Council's Housing Capital programme.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet considered a report, introduced by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, which sought Cabinet's approval to delegate acceptance of an award of £2.7m funding from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Gainshare and entering into a funding agreement, to be used as a contribution towards the Council's Thermal Improvement Programme to deliver deep housing retrofit works to an estimated 21 Council properties and external wall insulation works to neighbouring privately owned properties.

A successful bid of £2.7m of funding had been secured from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Gainshare, of which a further £1.25m would contribute to the programme and £840,000 would help to deliver the proposed works.

The deep retrofit works were expected to produce several co-benefits for the Council, the tenant, and the economy, as well as providing important data to help create a business case for a return on investment from a blended public and privately funded retrofit programme

A forecast breakdown of the three contributing funds, subject to final programme costs presented by the Council's contractor, Wates Living Space, were set out in the report at Paragraph 20 of the report

Details regarding the conditions provided by the SYMCA to meet in advance of a forthcoming funding agreement, were also provided for at paragraph 22 of the report.

Councillor Houlbrook, in commenting on the report, stated that the Council in partnership with SLHD had made great headway insulating external walls on 1,800 identified uninsulated properties. Retrofit work had already been undertaken on two thirds of the properties, which would produce several co-benefits for Council tenants and the local economy, including reducing tenants' energy bills and the reduction of carbon emissions in the city. He hoped that the Council's sustainability unit would continue to be successful in securing funding for housing retrofit schemes.

The Mayor recognised the short timescales for delivery and defrayment of funds, which was compounded by challenges; inclement weather and rising costs influenced by global events, and availability of the labour market. She stressed that the Council would continue to expend the monies provided by the Government as vital work was required throughout the Borough.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1 – Do not accept the funding

a. The Council would continue to pay for works at a higher cost than that originally budgeted for, and possibly reduce the delivery of the programme or present a

cost pressure.

- b. The testing of 'deep retrofit' would not be undertaken due to the significant cost it presents per property.
- c. The monitoring and evaluation of the impact of deep retrofit would be missed. The Council would rely on other case studies and experience of other housing providers when seeking to understand the viability of the business case to prove a return on investment.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

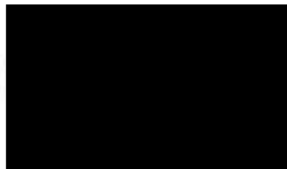
There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Dan Swaine, Director of Place.



Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker