



## Report

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**26 February, 2024**

**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 27th February, 2023 and 26th February, 2024.

#### **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 until 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 reasons for urgency before the decision was taken.

6. There have been 6 decisions taken under special urgency procedures during the last year. Five 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. The reasons for urgency are detailed below.
7. This report reflects decisions taken from 27th February, 2023, to 26th February, 2024, to coincide with the publication of this report.
8. Set out below are the decisions taken that fall into this category:-

a) **Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: Acceptance of Doncaster's Local Authority Housing Fund Allocation on 13 March 2023**

The department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities required a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the 15 March, 2023 to approve this funding. However, as the Council only received successful confirmation of the bid and funding offer in February, 2023, Rule 16 provision was therefore necessary to enable the Council to accept and utilise the funding.

b) **Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: Easter Holiday Food Provision for Children on 14 March, 2023**

This decision enabled financial assistance for the school Easter holidays when low-income families spend on food for their children increases. Rising food and energy costs, with subsequent increased requests for assistance, have highlighted the need to provide this support quickly to avoid undue hardship to residents. Taking this decision urgently provided certainty and assurance to those hit hardest by the cost-of-living crisis.

c) **Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Councillor Rachel Blake: Safe Accommodation Duty – Acceptance of Grant Funding on 13 April, 2023**

The decision was deemed to be urgent as the timescales in which the money was awarded and then had to be accepted was very tight. Therefore, it was not felt to be practicable to advertise this decision in line with the 28 days notice period and therefore Rule 16 provisions were utilised.

d) **Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: Supplementary Grant for the Early Years Funding Rate taken on 24 July, 2023**

Grant details and Early Years Supplementary Grant funding rates for the period September 2023 to March 2024 for individual local authorities were published with very little time to enact the payments. Not meeting the payment dates for September would have placed undue financial pressure on providers who were struggling to remain sustainable post covid and during a cost of living and recruitment crisis. There was an expectation nationally that providers would receive this increased rate in their payment from the start of the Autumn term (September).

e) **Rule 16 Special Urgency Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones - Land at Hungerhill, Edenthorpe, Doncaster taken on 4 August, 2023**

The sale of the land had been delayed a number of times for reasons beyond the control of the developers and if the exchange of contracts had not taken place there was a risk that the developer would withdraw and City of Doncaster Council would need to remarket the site. The nature and urgency of the decision meant it would not be practical to provide the 28 days' notice normally required for a key decision or to wait for a call-in period before implementation.

f) **Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: The Wraparound Childcare Programme Costs Grant taken on 8 November, 2023**

This decision was urgent in nature due to the timeliness of the notification of the grant and timescales specified by the Department of Education. The Wraparound Childcare Programme Costs Grant Determination letter was received on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 with an expectation that the Memorandum of Understanding would be signed by the Section 151 Officer by the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in order to receive the funding in the December 2023 Payment run. Therefore, Rule 16 Special Urgencies were applied to ensure that the funding could be accepted and utilised.



Full details of each decision can be viewed by following the links to the decision papers listed under 'Background Papers' at the back of this report.







## 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				✓
 Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs				✓
 Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough				✓
 Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future				✓
 Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities				✓
Fair & Inclusive				✓
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 13/2/24]**

- 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**

13. No specific financial implications have been sought for this report. Any relevant financial implications relating to each individual decision is included within the accompanying report.

### **Human Resources Implications**

14. No specific Human Resource implications have been sought for this report. Any relevant Human Resource implications relating to each individual decision is included within the accompanying report.

### **Technology Implications [Officer Initials:**

15. No specific Technology Implications have been sought for this report. Any relevant Technology Implications relating to each individual decision is included within the accompanying report.

### **RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS**

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

### **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS & LINKS TO DECISIONS**



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

- Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: Acceptance of Doncaster's Local Authority Housing Fund Allocation on 13 March 2023  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Acceptance of Doncaster's Local Authority Housing Fund Allocation - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: Easter Holiday Food Provision for Children on 14 March, 2023  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Decision - Easter Holiday Food Provision for Children - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Councillor Rachel Blake: Safe Accommodation Duty – Acceptance of Grant Funding on 13 April, 2023  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision - Safe Accommodation Duty – Acceptance of Grant Funding - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: Supplementary Grant for the Early Years Funding Rate taken on 24 July, 2023  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision: Supplementary Grant for the Early Years Funding Rate - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Rule 16 Special Urgency Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones - Land at Hungerhill, Edenthorpe, Doncaster taken on 4 August, 2023  
[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision: Land at Hungerhill, Edenthorpe, Doncaster - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision taken by Mayor Ros Jones: The Wraparound Childcare Programme Costs Grant taken on 8 November, 2023

[Issue details - Rule 16 Special Urgency Key Decision: To accept and receive the Wraparound Childcare Programme Costs Grant for 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-2026 - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

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