

CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL

COUNCIL

MONDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY, 2024

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER DN1 3BU, on MONDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY, 2024, at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Duncan Anderson

Vice-Chair - Councillor Julie Grace

Mayor - Ros Jones

Deputy Mayor - Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Nick Allen, Bob Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Glenn Bluff, Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, Bev Chapman, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Aimee Dickson, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Martin Greenhalgh, John Healy, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie Hutchinson, Richard A Jones, Jake Kearsley, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracey Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlins, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale, Thomas Noon, Ian Pearson, Cynthia Ransome, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith, Sarah Smith, Gary Stapleton and Austen White.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rachael Blake, Linda Curran, Andy Pickering and Dave Shaw.

59 MINUTES SILENCE AS A MARK OF RESPECT

Prior to being seated, the Chair of Council, Councillor Duncan Anderson, asked that everyone remained standing to observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Honorary Freeman of the Borough, Bobbie Roberts, MBE, and longstanding Council Officer, Joan Beck, former Director of Adult Social Services at the Council, who had both recently passed away.

60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillors Bob Anderson, Steve Cox, Susan Durant, Nick Allen, Sue Farmer, Bev Chapman, Nigel Cannings, Aimee Dickson, Mark Houlbrook, Jake Kearsley, Joe Blackham, Jane Nightingale and Sarah Smith, declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other registerable interest in Agenda Item 11, the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024/25 to 2027/28 report.

61 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 18TH JANUARY, 2024

RESOLVED that, subject to the addition of Councillor Ken Guest to the list of Members in Attendance, the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January, 2024, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL, THE MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Chair of Council made the following announcement: -

“I am pleased to announce the introduction of a new annual Civic Mayor’s award to recognise a worthy organisation or individual who has made a positive contribution to our communities. The award will particularly seek to celebrate the unsung heroes who work tirelessly in our voluntary and community sector to support those in need or help create a more positive and vibrant place to live. Recipients will receive a certificate and engraved trophy and small celebration event at the Mansion House with the Civic Mayor and close family and friends.

I will be making my personal choice later in the year however, the inaugural award will be made posthumously to the late John Holt former Deputy Lord Lieutenant to recognise his work in promoting the City and to recognise his charitable work. You will recall John was instrumental in the creation and development of Bluebell Wood Children’s Hospice and was a significant supporter of our Civic events. Thank you.”

Councillor Sarah Smith made the following announcement: -

“We’re really happy to share that on 8<sup>th</sup> March, we will be hosting a Reclaim the Night Walk in Doncaster! This empowering event comes as a response to a concerned resident writing to Mayor Ros Jones - reaching out to us, highlighting the absence of such a vital initiative in our communities.

Reclaim the Night marches have a rich history dating back to 1977, when the first march took place in Leeds, inspired by similar events worldwide. Since then, these marches have served as powerful demonstrations against gender-based violence, harassment, and inequality.

Our aim is simple: to create a safe and inclusive space where all members of our communities, regardless of gender, can come together to raise awareness and demand change. By marching together under the night sky, we symbolically reclaim public spaces and assert our right to feel safe at all times.

The urgency of our cause is underscored by the alarming statistics from last year’s Doncaster City Council’s survey: which showed:

- 78.4% of people feel unsafe taking public transport at night
- 90.6% feel unsafe walking the city at night
- and a staggering 93.1% don't feel safe being in a park at nightfall.

These numbers are not just statistics; they represent the lived experiences of our community members. And I am sure nearly everyone in this room has had experience of feeling or being unsafe in a public space – I know I have as a survivor of both harassment and domestic violence. And they demand action.

We invite you, our valued councillors, colleagues, residents, family members, and friends, to join us in solidarity as we take to the streets. Let’s walk together, shoulder to shoulder, to send a powerful message: that everyone deserves to feel safe in our city, day or night.

So mark your calendars and spread the word! Let's make our voices heard and reclaim the night for everyone."

63 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE  
RULE 13:-

(a) Question from Mr David Dixon to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones: -

"On a Saturday night is it safe to wait for a bus at Frenchgate bus station?"

Mayor Ros Jones gave the following response: -

"Thank you for your question, Mr Dixon, Doncaster Interchange otherwise known as the Frenchgate Bus Station does have dedicated security officers employed by the Doncaster Interchange and is covered by a CCTV system which is monitored by Interchange staff. These measures enhance safety in the area for users of the bus station.

The interchange area is also patrolled by South Yorkshire Police and our own City Centre Engagement Officers, and we have regular liaison with the security staff and management, who are part of our City Centre Partnership meetings, alongside the Frenchgate Centre.

Recently we have been made aware of an increase in anti-social behaviour at the Interchange and Frenchgate Centre, particularly during school holidays and as a result the Police and our own Engagement officers have increased patrols in the area. This has been supported by a wider Partnership Plan to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in this area, based around an engagement, intervention and enforcement approach.

I would encourage anyone who witnesses Anti-Social Behaviour to report it, both to this council and South Yorkshire Police, we cannot be everywhere, but we will deploy our limited resources based on intelligence and reported incidents."

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

"Given the rise in anti-social behaviour, would you be able to use your influence to recommend that the satellite police station in the Frenchgate Centre be manned from 7-9.30pm?"

Mayor Ros Jones gave the following response: -

"I will indeed put that to the Police. Whilst they are facing the same problems as us in terms of resources, I know they have increased resources within the city centre."

64 COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN 2024/25

The Mayor presented to Council the Corporate Plan for 2024-2025 which sets out this Council's contribution to the Team Doncaster Borough Strategy for the forthcoming financial year.

The Mayor reiterated to Members the importance of the Corporate Plan and Borough Strategy, and outlined how, in 2023/24 the Council had continued to make significant contributions to all of its themes.

Under Tackling Climate Change theme, additional electric charging points had been installed and Low Carbon grants administered to businesses.

Within the Skills Priority, Doncaster hosted the UK's first Remake Learning festival which engaged over 10,000 residents, and the delivery of the Stainforth Towns Deal and ongoing work to re-open the Airport demonstrated how the Council has supported its economic ambitions,

In terms of 'Healthier and Happier borough' theme, Doncaster's All Age Carer's strategy had been launched, and Wellbeing hubs had continued to deliver help for residents with food banks, warm banks, debt advice and energy advice. Members noted that the Localities working model had been embedded across the borough in order to help make our communities safer, stronger, cleaner and greener, as well as delivering road safety advice in schools and helping over 225 Ukrainian refugees to settle in Doncaster following the war in their home country.

Organisations had been supported in order to achieve child-friendly accreditation and have provided school holiday activities to help nurture a child and family-friendly borough, and Transport connectivity across the borough had been further developed, with rail improvements at Hatfield and Stainforth and investments in walking and cycling routes to improve active travel options.

Finally, the Mayor reported that they had continued to promote the borough and its cultural, sporting and heritage offer through a variety of events throughout the year, and had received a Royal Visit from His Royal Highness King Charles to mark our new city status.

Moving forward, the 2024-25 Plan identified 10 key corporate priorities that would look to represent the Council's borough strategy contributions for this year.

The priorities for 2024 to 2025 had been grouped into 3 themes:

- **Organisational Priorities** which looked at cultivating a dynamic, diverse, informed and empowered workforce. Additionally, this priority looked to create a fairer, kinder, more inclusive city and worked on a 'think local, act personally' outlook.
- **People-focused priorities** which include Improving outcomes in adult social care and our children's directorate, and Co-delivering an impactful NHS partnership.
- **Place-focused priorities.** These include work to re-open the Airport, Delivery of our programme of major projects, and a range of activity to create safer, stronger, cleaner neighbourhoods.
- **Team Doncaster strategies** linked to Education & Skills, Health & Wellbeing, Culture, the Economy, Housing and Environment & Sustainability.

The Mayor noted that the Council would have to continue to work hard to deliver more, but with less resources available; and as a result, a large portion of work would be done in partnership with other organisations in the public sector, private sector, and the voluntary and community sector.

RESOLVED that the Council's Corporate Plan for 2024/25 be approved.

## 65 CAPITAL STRATEGY & CAPITAL BUDGET 2024/25 - 2027/28

Prior to Council's consideration of the report, the Chair of Council, Councillor Duncan Anderson, 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.

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which outlined the Capital Strategy and Capital Budget proposals for the next four years, 2024/25 to 2027/28.

The Mayor stated that this Council continued to invest in the future of the Borough despite the tough economic climate with £506.6m of capital investment planned over the next four years that would continue to stimulate growth and prosperity, with £193.1m of investment planned for 2024/25.

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 £227.8m investment in the Council's social housing stock over the next four years, covering maintenance, adaptations and the new build programme. Some areas of investment included:

- Over £1.5m in our parks and green spaces
- Cemetery extensions at Rosehill, Redhouse, Campsall, Mexborough & Rossington
- Cusworth Hall - £2.4m for maintenance and improvements
- Over £20m investment in our schools for 2024/25, including new school places in Armthorpe, Auckley, Dunsville, Rossington and the city centre.
- Over £10m works to improve flood defences in the areas identified with the greatest need including Bentley, Conisbrough, High Melton and Tickhill
- Stainforth - Towns Fund works progress
- Mexborough - £13m to improve access to the town centre, making the road safer and a more attractive entrance to the town
- In our City Centre - Corn Exchange works due to complete this year, Waterfront site remediation due to commence, St James Baths being redeveloped, Copley House redeveloped, and the old library demolished creating public open space.

In addition, Members were informed that the Council was committed to the ongoing refurbishment of its leisure centres:

- With £14.4m for refurbishment works at the Dome that will bring much needed investment, support the long-term service provision at this location and in turn the viability of Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust.
- Over £1.3m for phase 2 of Thorne Leisure centre works

The Mayor advised that the airport did not feature in the Capital Programme at this stage, due to funding not being finalised. The Council had applied for funding from SYMCA and the outline business case was approved on the 13th February. The Council would then be required to submit a Final Business Case before funding could be drawn down.

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

Against - 9

Councillors Nick Allen, Glenn Bluff, Laura Bluff, Nigel Cannings, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Thomas Noon, Cynthia Ransome and Gary Stapleton.

Abstain - 2

Councillors Martin Greenhalgh and Richard A. Jones.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Capital Strategy, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, be approved;
- (2) the Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, as detailed within paragraphs 13 to 33 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) Directors, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, take responsibility for allocating the block budgets to specific schemes in the Capital Programme, as identified within Appendix 1 of the report, including the Retained Buildings Programme, School Condition Programme and Integrated Transport Block.

66 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2024/25- 2027/28

Mayor Jones presented a report to Council that set out the strategy for management of the Council's finances and provided a framework for the operation of the treasury management function within the Council. Treasury management aimed to optimise

the council's cash flow and secure the most effective arrangements to support the long-term funding requirement. Key prudential indicators relating to borrowing limits were detailed in the report.

Members noted that there had been no significant changes made to the report this year and the key issue to take was that the Council remained under borrowed and would continue to use its internal resources (reserves and balances) to reduce the need to borrow whilst interest rates remained high.

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

Against - 10

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

Abstain - 1

Councillor Richard A. Jones.

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

RESOLVED that Council approve:-

- 1) the Treasury Management Statement 2024/25 to 2027/28 and the Prudential Indicators included; and
- 2) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy as set out in paragraphs 41-42 of the report.

67 REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 - 2026/27

The Council considered a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, which sought approval of the Revenue Budget proposals for 2024/25 to 2026/27.

The Mayor stated that, despite the significant financial challenges and ongoing uncertainty around government funding, the proposals set a balanced budget whilst maintaining investment in the borough and protecting the most vulnerable in the communities. She explained that the Council now had 24% less to spend on services in real terms than it did in 2010/11 which created challenges and represented a £334 reduction per resident or £745 per household.

The Mayor explained 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 costs. It was noted that there remained a great deal of uncertainty in relation to Adults and Children's Social Care costs and long-term funding for Local Authorities, and yet again the Council had been provided with a single year settlement meaning there was a lack of certainty over funding vital public services in the medium-term.

Mayor Jones highlighted that across the country, Councils of all political control were struggling due to lack of government funding, rising service delivery costs and increasing demand. A survey by the Local Government Association had found that 20% of councils believed it very or fairly likely that they would need to issue a Section 114 notice effectively declaring themselves bankrupt.

In light of the above, the Mayor stated that she wished to reassure residents that, whilst it remained under significant pressure, City of Doncaster Council was in a stable financial position, and it did not envisage issuing a Section 114 notice in the foreseeable future. That being said, difficult decisions had been made to balance the budget and meet an overall recurrent budget gap of £17.2 million by 2027.

In light of the pressures and future risks, a Council Tax increase of 2.99% was being proposed alongside a further 2% increase for Adult Social Care, this would mean council tax would increase by 4.99% in total. The Adult Social Care precept was specifically used to contribute towards Adult Social Care funding pressures.

Overall, this would increase Band A Council Tax by just over £1 per week and Band D by £1.50 per week.

The Mayor concluded by stating that, with still no certainty from Government about funding beyond the next year, it was hard to plan ahead. Thankfully, however, the Council was financially well managed, and the Mayor stated that she would do whatever she could to mitigate the impacts of uncertainty. She remained firmly focused on supporting Doncaster's priorities outlined in the corporate plan and the 10-year borough strategy – Doncaster Delivering Together to create a safer, stronger, cleaner and greener Doncaster.

Mayor Jones thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for their response to her budget proposals, which would enable the Council to live within its means during these difficult times.

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

Against - 10

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

Abstain - 1

Councillor Richard A. Jones.

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

RESOLVED that the Revenue Budget for 2024/25 to 2026/27, 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 £654.0m and a net Revenue Expenditure Budget of £258.3m, as detailed within Appendix A;
- (3) Council Tax increasing by 4.99% to £1,649.73 for a Band D property (£1,099.82 for a Band A) for 2024/25. This includes:-
  - (i) 2.99% Council Tax increase, equating to an increase of 90p for Band D per week, £46.98 for a Band D property per annum (61p per week for Band A, £31.32 per annum); and
  - (ii) 2% Government Adult Social Care precept, equating to an increase of 60p per week for Band D, £31.43 per annum, (40 for Band A per week, £20.95 per annum).
- (4) the Revenue Budget proposals for 2024/25, as detailed within Appendix B (pressures £8.7m) and Appendices C and D (savings £10.9m) of the report;
- (5) the 2024/25 Grants to 3rd Sector Organisations, as detailed within paragraph 53 and Appendix F of the report;
- (6) the fees and charges proposed for 2024/25 at Appendix G of the report; and

- (7) the Chief Financial Officer's positive assurance statements be noted, as detailed within paragraphs 61 to 80 of the report.
- (8) to note that Cabinet delegated the acceptance, and spend decision, of any 2024/25 Household Support Fund grant allocation to the Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Mayor;
- (9) to note that Cabinet delegated approval of a spending plan for the £3.146m additional social care funding to the Director of Corporate Resources and the Assistant Director Finance & Technology (Section 151), in consultation with the Mayor, as detailed in paragraph 35 of the report; and
- (10) to note that Cabinet delegated the approval to change fees and charges in-year, as a result of increases or decreases in energy costs, to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, as detailed in paragraph 49 of the report.

## 68 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2024/25 - 2027/28

The Council considered a report, presented by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business, which detailed the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget proposals for the 2024/25 financial year, and the medium-term financial forecast for the next three years, which had a balanced budget.

The Deputy Mayor reported that the Council was proposing that housing rents increase by 6.7%, plus a further 1% which would be used for the acquisition of approximately 26 additional Council properties to help address the demand for social housing, which would mean a total rent increase of 7.7% in 2024/25. This increase was in line with Government policy. Average rent in Doncaster would continue to be the lowest of all South Yorkshire Councils and 9th lowest in the whole Country at £88.16 per week.

The Deputy Mayor stressed that this recommendation had been given careful consideration due to the current economic climate, but approximately 73% of tenants would see an increase in their housing benefit and universal credit payments to cover the impact of this change.

It was noted that Council rents continued to be significantly lower than those in the private sector and in Doncaster there was still in the region of 8,000 people on the housing register. With this rent increase, the Council would continue to maintain the standards and services for its current properties and tenants and provide additional properties to help to alleviate the demand for housing.

The Deputy Mayor stated that, for the first time since the right to buy regulations were introduced in 1980, the Council was budgeting to have an increase of properties within the Housing Revenue Account in the next financial year.

The Deputy Mayor explained that while the Council had a budget of over £12m next year for the acquisition of 138 additional HRA properties, it was disappointing to note that this was expected to be offset by the sale under right to buy of approximately 90 properties.

The Deputy Mayor stated that the main changes in this year's budget that he wished to draw Members' attention were: -

- £1m to be used to create a team to deal with damp, mould and condensation and also to address any issues that arise out of these property surveys and visits, this new investment equates to a 1.2% rent increase.
- Budget allocations of £1.1m to deal with the expected cost of regulation, which includes the estimated fees for the regulator of social housing, the building safety regulator, the housing ombudsman and the anticipated cost of stock condition surveys which are required under the new consumer standards, these costs are also equivalent to a 1.3% rent increase.
- The HRA continued to fund an expanding apprenticeship programme within St Leger Homes and this year 4 additional craft apprentices and 2 brand new building surveyor apprentices had been funded to help with the skills gap and aging workforce.

The Deputy Mayor explained that housing rent also funded major investment and improvements in the Council's housing stock, the main details of which were covered in the capital programme report. However, he stated that he wished to specifically draw attention to the following points: -

- Over 50% of the budgeted capital expenditure equating to £15.9m would be on energy efficiency measures as reducing fuel poverty continued to be one of the Council's top priorities. It was also planned to bring on board additional resources in advance of 2025/26 to accelerate further the investment in roofs, windows and insulation. The Council was on track to achieve EPC level C for all properties by 2030, this was an ambitious but deliverable target, that would both improve heat retention and reduce the need for heating and as such reducing fuel poverty.
- Tenant and property safety also continued to be one of the Council's top priorities with just over £4m being invested in electrical improvements and fire safety works.
- All other fees and charges would be increased by the appropriate rate of inflation.

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 Chair of Council, Councillor Duncan Anderson, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor Julie Grace, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, and Councillors Bob Anderson, Lani-Mae Ball, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Bev Chapman, James Church, Gemma Cobby, Phil Cole, Aimee Dickson, Susan Durant, Sue Farmer, Sean Gibbons, Ken Guest, John Healy, Leanne Hempshall, Charlie Hogarth, Mark Houlbrook, Debbie Hutchinson, Jake Kearsley, Jane Kidd, Majid Khan, Sue Knowles, Sophie Liu, Tracy Moran, John Mounsey, Emma Muddiman-Rawlings, Tim Needham, David Nevett, Jane Nightingale,

Ian Pearson, Rob Reid, Andrea Robinson, Glynis Smith, Sarah Smith and Austen White.

Against - 8

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

Abstain - 3

Councillors Nick Allen, Steve Cox and Richard A. Jones.

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 1st April, 2024 by 7.7%, as detailed within paragraphs 7 to 10 of the report in line with Government policy. This will increase average weekly rent by £6.30, resulting in an average rent of approximately £88.16 per week. Rents will be charged every week of the year;
- (2) the budget proposals for the HRA for 2024/25, which are contained within Appendix A to the report. These proposals set a balanced budget for the HRA and maintain a reserve of £3.5m; and
- (3) fees and charges, as detailed within paragraph 14 of the report.

69 COUNCIL TAX SETTING AND STATUTORY RESOLUTIONS 2024/25

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 City of Doncaster Council's Council Tax requirement for 2024/25.

The Mayor confirmed that the City of Doncaster Council was the 'billing authority' and was responsible for preparing the Council Tax Base, setting the Council Tax, billing and collection of Council Tax and maintaining the Collection Fund.

The Mayor explained that the report before Members detailed the Council Tax and statutory resolutions, based on the legislative requirements and decisions taken by the relevant organisations, including the Revenue Budget report considered earlier on the agenda, comprising the following proposals:

- Band D Council Tax charge increase of 4.99% for 2024/25 to £1,649.73, including core Council Tax of 2.99% and an increase in the Adult Social Care precept of 2.0%.
- Over 87% of domestic properties in Doncaster fall into Bands A, B and C with almost 58% falling in Band A, which equates to a charge of £1,099.82 for a Band A property and is an increase of £1.01 per week.

- Increase in Council Taxes of the Joint Authorities (South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire) represent an overall increase of 4.96% for Doncaster residents.

It was reported that Doncaster would 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. The Mayor stated that Doncaster was an incredibly well managed council, which was why it was still able to deliver the services it did, for one of the lowest council tax rates in the country, as it was very aware of the cost of living crisis people were facing.

The Mayor stated that Doncaster was a caring council, which was why it was committed to protecting the most vulnerable and whilst many Councils had amended their Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, this Council's policy continued to provide a much-needed safety net for those who were most vulnerable and on the lowest income including pensioners, single parents and those with complex needs or disabilities.

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

Against - 9

Councillors Nick Allen, Glenn Bluff, Laura Bluff, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Martin Greenhalgh, Thomas Noon, Cynthia Ransome and Gary Stapleton.

Abstain - 2

Councillors Nigel Cannings and Richard A. Jones.

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 2024/25 of £1,649.73 for the City of Doncaster Council services and passed the appropriate Statutory Resolutions, as detailed and recommended within Appendix B of the report, which incorporated the Council Taxes of the Joint Authorities (subject to final ratification) and which, taken together with Doncaster's 4.99% increase,

represented a 4.96% increase from the 2023/24 Council Tax for Doncaster residents.

70 TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL TAX LONG-TERM EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM

The Council considered a report in relation to reviewing the Council Tax Long-Term Empty Homes Premium, which was presented by Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources.

Councillor Nightingale reported that since April 2020, in accordance with legislation, City of Doncaster Council had charged an additional 100% Council Tax premium for properties that had been empty and substantially unfurnished for more than 2 years, taking the overall Council Tax charge to 200%. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, had reduced the time period before an additional premium could be applied from 2 years down to 12 months. In line with this change, the report proposed that the Council Tax long-term empty premium should now be applied after 12 months from 1 April 2024.

It was noted that this proposal was aimed at encouraging owners to bring empty properties back into use to provide much-needed additional housing for Doncaster residents and reduce some of the issues associated with long-term empty properties such as vandalism and nuisance. The proposal was initially expected to apply to around 634 properties across Doncaster.

Councillor Nightingale explained that this Council and St Leger Homes would continue to work with property owners, providing appropriate advice and support to enable them to bring the properties back into use wherever possible and so avoid paying the premium charges. Where owners chose not to bring their properties back into use, the increased Council Tax income was estimated to be around £500,000 in 2024/25.

RESOLVED to approve the decision to charge a Council Tax premium on properties that have been long-term empty for a period of 12 months rather than the current time period of 2 years, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

71 COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM ON PERIODICALLY OCCUPIED PROPERTIES (UNOCCUPIED BUT SUBSTANTIALLY FURNISHED)

The Council considered a report in relation to the proposed introduction of a Council Tax premium on periodically occupied properties (unoccupied but substantially furnished), which was presented by Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources.

Councillor Nightingale explained that, since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, in accordance with the legislation, City of Doncaster Council had charged a 100% Council Tax charge to properties which were unoccupied but furnished, also known as second homes. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, had introduced changes to Council Tax legislation. In accordance with this updated legalisation, it was proposed that Doncaster Council applies a 100% Council Tax premium to properties which have been unoccupied but substantially furnished for at least 12 months, from 1 April 2025.

It was noted that, as with the long-term empty premium, the proposal was aimed at encouraging owners to bring empty or unoccupied properties back into use, to provide

much-needed additional housing for Doncaster's residents and reduce some of the issues associated with long-term empty or unoccupied properties, such as vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. Based on the number of properties currently meeting the criteria, this would potentially affect around 471 properties across Doncaster.

Councillor Nightingale confirmed that this Council and St Leger Homes would continue to work with property owners, providing appropriate advice and support to enable them to bring the properties back into use wherever possible and so avoid paying the premium charges. Where owners chose not to bring their properties back into use, and if numbers remain consistent by 1 April 2025, the increased Council Tax income was estimated to be circa £750,000 in 2025/26.

RESOLVED to approve the decision to charge a Council Tax 100% premium on properties which are unoccupied but substantially furnished for a period of at least 12 months, to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

## 72 ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/2025

The Council considered a report on the Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25, presented by Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources, 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 clearly demonstrated a willingness to increase 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 some changes to the ratios this year due to the 2023/24 national pay award being agreed and implemented;
- (ii) The ratio between the highest paid employee salary of the Chief Executive, £179,274 and the lowest employee salary of £22,366 had positively reduced from 8.55:1 to 8.02:1 this year;
- (iii) The ratio between the highest employee salary and average employee salary had slightly reduced from 5.64:1 to 5.46:1, although the average salary had increased by £2,094 per annum;
- (iv) All pay ratios remained well within the threshold considered by the Hutton Review that should be no greater than 20:1; and
- (v) The Council remained committed to reducing the pay difference and increasing low pay.

During subsequent discussion, Councillor Jane Cox asked the Cabinet Member the following question:

“Now that Assistant Directors salaries are over £100,000 do you think there is merit in these appointments going through the Chief Officer Appointments committee?”

After some discussion, the Chair, Councillor Duncan Anderson, suggested that this question be dealt with outside the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25, be approved.

73 QUESTIONS BY ELECTED MEMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES 15.2 AND 15.3:-

A. Questions on Notice

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

Q. “As you will be aware, there has been an issue with St Leger Homes carrying out statutory Electrical Safety Inspections. Apparently, the previous contractor was unable to complete the job and so another contractor, Concorde, was recently appointed to undertake the work. Unfortunately, Concorde had to start from scratch because of missing paperwork. Many tenants, therefore, will experience a duplicate Electrical Safety Inspection. Do you know how many St Leger Homes tenants will be affected by this? Obviously, the duplicate tests have caused inconvenience to tenants and residents. Will the council and St Leger Homes apologise, and could you explain why the original contractor was unable to complete the work?”

The Mayor of Doncaster gave the following response: -

A. “Thank you for your question Councillor Allen. However, you are mistaken with some elements of your question.

As a council we have a statutory responsibility to undertake electrical safety checks on all council premises, including our council housing. St Leger Homes manage this responsibility on behalf of the Council in respect of council housing.

In the autumn of 2023, three private sector electrical contractors were appointed to undertake the domestic electrical safety checks. There are 19,813 inspections that have to be undertaken on a cyclical basis. Immediately prior to Christmas, one of these contractors went into liquidation without warning and with immediate effect. This contractor had been allocated 1,550 inspections from the 2023/24 programme. They had completed and invoiced for 911 inspections. However, because they went into liquidation with immediate effect, it was not possible to secure any inspections certificates that they may have been undertaken in respect of the outstanding works. It is possible that some of the outstanding 639 inspections may have been completed by the contractor, but St Leger has no way of knowing this. Unless able to produce an appropriate and in date certificate for all inspections it would not be possible to comply with electrical safety regulations.

To ensure compliance with these statutory regulations and for the safety of our tenants and our homes, St Leger had no other option than to reissue these works to a new contractor. To date, St Leger has only found a handful of instances where a visit had previously been conducted by the liquidated company. All visits



have been coordinated with agreement with tenants and feedback from those tenants affected has been generally favourable as these inspections have been done in consultation with the tenant choosing the most convenient and appropriate appointment for them.

Unfortunately, immediately prior to Christmas, all staff employed by the liquidated company were made redundant. St Leger was able to step in and offer a role to the electrical apprentice that was also made redundant. It is unfortunate that a small number of tenants have had to allow two electrical safety inspections of their homes, but I believe it was certainly the right thing to do in order to ensure the safety of our tenants and staff.

If you have any further questions, I suggest you put them in writing to the Deputy Mayor as the relevant cabinet member. Thank you.”

(b) Question from Councillor Jane Cox to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones: -

Q. “How many vacancies are there across the Council. What is the breakdown by Directorate. Which position has been vacant the longest and for how long?”

The Mayor of Doncaster gave the following response: -

A. “Thank you for your question Councillor Cox. Current vacancies per directorate are as follows:

- Adults Wellbeing & Culture - 164
- Chief Executives - 69
- Children, Young People & Families - 319
- Corporate Resources - 103
- Place - 283

This equates to a total of 938 vacancies across the council. This is against a total establishment of over 5,700. Our average vacancy rate is 16% which is slightly better than the national average in local government.

An establishment audit is currently being carried out and all managers are required to confirm their establishment. This is to be completed every 6 months. The expectation is that the number of vacancies will reduce from the current number identified on the HR system.

The following positions have been identified as vacant for over 4 years:

- 1 x Assistant Transport Planner
- 2 x Assistant Engineer
- 1 x Engineer.”

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

Q. “If there are 938 vacancies across the Council, is the £30.7 million for these posts accrued in the budget or is it extra money that needs to be found if the posts are filled.”

The Mayor of Doncaster gave the following response: -

- A. "Budgets are always calculated knowing the number of turnover factors so each budget head can be calculated differently. So therefore, simply to equate one to another would give the wrong answer but if you require specific information on these issues, please put it in writing to Councillor Nightingale."

(c) Question from Councillor Martin Greenhalgh to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones: -

- Q. "I submitted a Councillor online request on behalf of Councillor Nigel Cannings and myself for a "20 is plenty" scheme for the whole of Tickhill. To be fair, the Council's Highways department responded with comprehensive reasoning why this is not possible. However, we and Tickhill Town Council for specific reasons, request the Mayor support a full review of this proposal."

The Mayor of Doncaster gave the following response: -

- A. "Thank you for your question, Cllr Greenhalgh, as a Council we are committed to improving road safety, which is why we have been rolling out 20mph limits in some residential areas and around schools.

The 20mph project currently being undertaken is targeted specifically to appropriate streets that, on the whole, are residential in nature, and where good levels of compliance with a lower limit are likely to be achieved. This will ultimately cover additional parts of Tickhill beyond those already treated near the schools.

However, in terms of blanket coverage for the whole of Tickhill, the main road networks comprising the A60 and A631 are different in nature in that they are not purely residential streets, but form part of the main classified route network, as such carrying through traffic. In order to be effective in influencing actual vehicle speeds, any speed limit requires a good level of understanding and voluntary compliance by drivers without relying on intensive levels of police enforcement, which understandably could not be sustained on all roads across the city.

If you could send me and Cllr Blackham the details of your request, we can pick this up with the relevant officers. Thank you."

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

- Q. "Thank you for your response, I will check with the Clerk of the Town Council. I'm going to support that too and check up on that."

(d) Question from Councillor Glenn Bluff to Councillor Joe Blackham: -

- Q. "Following Councillor Blackham's update at the last full Council could he provide assurance to both members and residents that the halting of work on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), as advocated by my motion from 2023 and endorsed by full Council, will not impede efforts to secure funding for the bypass? This project had been highlighted by the Prime

Minister in his 2023 address as part of an Hickleton to A19 scheme and we seek confirmation that, upon approval of any business case and the allocation of funds, the construction of the bypass would commence from the Hickleton end.”

Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following response: -

A. “In relation to construction commencing from the Hickleton end, the scheme would likely be constructed across the whole length and connected to the existing network at the final stage meaning that until the whole scheme is complete the existing network would need to continue to be used. This will likely be out of our control as due to the sheer scale of this scheme it would be a nationally led scheme.

In relation to your further question, I refer to my announcement at the last meeting of Full Council where I stated the following:

‘If we were to continue down the route of exploring a TRO, then it could be detrimental to our case for a bypass.’

Network North states a commitment by the government to launch a new £1 billion roads fund to fund new schemes such as the A1-A19 Hickleton bypass. As this is the only named scheme within this fund, I would expect this puts us in a good position for this new government funding.”

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

Q. “Can we have sight of the original plan as well as the new plan with any revisions as this is very important for the North of Doncaster?”

Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following response: -

A. “Yes, it will be released when the new scheme with a business case is completed, and it will be distributed for comments that anyone wishes to make.”

(e) Question from Councillor Laura Bluff to Councillor Lani-Mae Ball: -

Q. “How many council paid teachers are on long term sick and what is the cost to the council and their relevant grades?”

Councillor Lani Mae Ball gave the following response: -

A. “There are currently 4 on long term sick as of the 20<sup>th</sup> of February. The cost to the Council for the 4 long term absences so far in salary terms is £31,690.

We cannot provide grade data as this would be potentially identifiable data due to such a low number involved.”

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

Q. "What is the plan to get these teachers back into work?"

Councillor Lani Mae Ball gave the following response: -

A. "I'm not HR, nor am I their line manager and neither are you and I don't think we can answer that. They may be waiting for surgery or treatment so we have no idea when this will be."

B. Questions without Notice

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.2, the Chair accepted the following questions from Elected Members during "Question Time": -

A. Questions to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones

Councillor Nick Allen asked the following question: -

Q. "Since the 2021 Mayoral Election, how many trees have been planted successfully across Doncaster and is there any wastage?"

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

A. "As I do not have those figures readily to hand, please put your question via email to the Executive Office and I will make sure you are provided with a written response."

Councillor Jane Cox asked the following question: -

Q. "We are now six weeks on since I asked this question regarding getting a defibrillator installed on a lamp post in Finningley Village and we are still no closer to getting this fitted, despite the involvement of a Director and Assistant Director. May I suggest that we speak to Rotherham Council who just said 'yes, which lamp post', to the same request."

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones passed this question onto Councillor Joe Blackham, who gave the following response: -

A. "I apologise for the delay. There have been several emails about this, and I have only latterly understood that the difficulties relate to how the defibrillator can be attached to a lighting column. This Council currently has a policy which does not permit such a fitting, but this issue is being addressed as we speak and should be resolved soon. However, it may not be that the defibrillator becomes attached to a lighting column."

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

Q. "I find it absurd that there is no policy to attach a defibrillator, but you can attach Christmas Decorations to any lamp post."

Councillor Thomas Noon asked the following question: -

Q. "Is the money saved on unfilled vacancies across the Council ringfenced or are they not budgeted for?"

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

A. "These are included with the budget as we budget for a certain amount of turnover, they are not ringfenced as the budget covers the overall costs for the provision of services."

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

Q. "There are currently 319 vacancies in the children, young people and families Directorate. This is £10.2 million per year on average. Are these children being left behind by our unwillingness to fill the vacancies?"

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

A. "No, this is totally wrong. It is not a case of being unwilling to fill these vacancies. The Council always tries to fill vacancies, but there is always a turnover factor. The level of vacancies at this Council is currently slightly below the local government average.

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

There were no questions submitted to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Housing and Business.

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

There were no questions submitted to Councillor Lani Mae Ball, Cabinet Member for Early Help, Education, Skills and People.

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

In the absence of Councillor Rachael Blake, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Equalities, Members were requested to put their questions in writing to the Executive Office and a written response would be provided.

E. Questions to Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities, Leisure and Culture

Councillor Richard Allan Jones asked the following question:-

Q. "Can I ask what the issues are with the windows at the new museum, and who will bear the costs of any repairs?"

Councillor Nigel Ball gave the following response:-

A. "Some of the windows at the museum have shattered. We are currently investigating this issue with the contractor and the manufacturer of the windows to ascertain the reasons for the windows failing. In my opinion, it is not normal for so many windows to shatter over that period of time, so we are looking into this and we are awaiting the outcome."

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

Councillor Thomas Noon asked the following question: -

Q. "Would you agree that we need to change the approach in how we mend potholes?"

Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following response: -

A. "We are currently looking into this issue and discussing the options available. I believe there may well be better methods out there for fixing potholes on a more permanent basis. There is some new JCB equipment on the market and we are investigating the viability of using this, including whether it can be funded. But it is acknowledged that the way in which we are mending potholes at the moment is not the best way and there is scope for improvement."

Councillor Nick Allen asked the following question: -

Q. "Would you be willing to review the proposed action by City of Doncaster Council in relation to Bessacarr Football Club's failure to sign an SLA? I understand that the Council may serve a breach of tenancy notice on the Club, so I wondered if you might review this given that there is ongoing between the football club and Council officers?"

Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following response: -

A. "I understand that there has been a breach of tenancy. There is no reason why we cannot continue discussions to reach a position of certainty in relation to renewing the lease but while there are real health and safety concerns I am not prepared to allow any lease to continue until those concerns have been addressed."

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

Q. "I think the Health and Safety Breach was because they temporarily switched off the Fire Alarm as it related to a further issue in connection with their utilities bill. Will ongoing dialogue ensure that the Club is listened to?"

Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following response: -

A. "Yes, they are a community group, so I can fully guarantee that we will listen to everything the football club has to say. But they will need to radically change the way they currently operate. The concerns around

health and safety must be addressed before any consideration can be given to extending or renewing their lease.”

Councillor Nigel Ball asked the following question: -

Q. “Regarding potholes, there are large swathes of the borough that have been patched and resurfaced. Can I ask if Councillor Blackham feels that the loss of budget due to Tory austerity has caused these problems.?”

Councillor Blackham gave the following response: -

A. “It’s not that simple. We need a new methodology to find a way to do this properly.”

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

Councillor Jane Cox asked the following question: -

Q. “In the place Capital Programme presented earlier in the meeting, there is £256,000 earmarked on a line item described as Cantley library refurbishment. In earlier budgets this amount was listed as £150,000. Why has the associated cost increased by £100,000 despite no money being spent?”

My colleague Cllr Allen has previously asked and been assured that Finningley Ward Members will be consulted about moving the library into the Finningley ward to Cantley Community Centre. We would agree in principle but as yet have had no communication.

How many other projects that never come to fruition are sat in the programme? Can we please have a clear timeline on the future of Cantley library?”

Councillor Phil Cole gave the following response: -

A. “I will liaise with my Cabinet colleagues and we will make sure that you receive a full reply in writing from the appropriate Cabinet member.”

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

Councillor Steve Cox asked the following question: -

Q. “I have been contacted by a resident whose daughter has left the army after 16 years and has been trying to get support from the Council in relation to housing but they seem to be stumbling. Could you give them direction as to how they can get any support in relation to this matter?”.

Councillor Mark Houlbrook gave the following response: -

A. "Thank you for the question. We are covered now by the Armed Forces Covenant which includes housing and education. I am quite willing to investigate this case and refer it to the appropriate officer to make contact with you."

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 Sarah Smith, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

There were no questions put to Councillor Sarah Smith, 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 Julie Grace, Chair of the Elections and Democratic Structures Committee

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

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

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

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

There were no questions put to Councillor Jane Kidd, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

74 ANNUAL REPORT ON EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER SPECIAL URGENCY PROVISIONS

The Council received the Annual Report on Executive Decisions taken under Special Urgency provisions for the past 12 months. The Council's Constitution required that



all these decisions be reported to Full Council on an annual basis, in order to demonstrate openness and transparency.

It was noted that there had been 6 urgent decisions which fell into this category, that had been taken within the period, all of which were detailed in brief within the report with information given as to who took the decision and when, and what the reasons for urgency were in not following the standard decision-making procedures.

RESOLVED that Council note the contents of the report.

75 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE JOINT AUTHORITIES

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

- A. South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Board held on 9th January, 2024
- B. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 15th January, 2024
- C. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority held on 7th September, 2023
- D. South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on 11 December, 2023.

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

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