

**DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**THURSDAY, 28TH JANUARY, 2016**

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE on THURSDAY, 28TH JANUARY, 2016, at 2.00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

Vice-Chair - Councillor David Nevett  
Mayor – Ros Jones  
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Glyn Jones

Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachael Blake, Elsie Butler, Bev Chapman, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Tony Corden, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Jessie Credland, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, Pat Haith, James Hart, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Alan Jones, Richard A Jones, Kenneth Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Pat Knight, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Andy Pickering, Cynthia Ransome, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Alan Smith, Clive Stone, Austen White, Sue Wilkinson and Jonathan Wood.

**APOLOGIES:**

Apologies for absence were received from The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray and Councillors Ted Kitchen, Sue Knowles, Chris McGuinness and Sue McGuinness.

61 **Declarations of Interest, if any.**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

62 **Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th November, 2015**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.4, a recorded vote was taken on the accuracy of the minutes, which was declared as follows:-

**FOR - 35**

The Vice Chair of Council, Councillor David Nevett, Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, and Councillors Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachel Blake, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, Tony Corden, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Nuala Fennelly, Neil Gethin, Pat Haith, Rachael Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, John Healy, Alan Jones, Glyn Jones, Kenneth Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Bill Mordue, John McHale, John Mounsey, Tony Revill, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Clive Stone, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

**AGAINST - 8**

Councillors Nick Allen, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, James Hart, R. Allan Jones, Cynthia Ransome, Alan Smith and Jonathan Wood.

**ABSTAINED - 4**

Councillors Bev Chapman, John Cooke, Sean Gibbons and Andy Pickering.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th November, 2015, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63 To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council, the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor David Nevett, made the following Announcements:-

“I would like to start my announcements by offering on behalf of Doncaster Council, our congratulations to Ben Parkinson. To launch this year’s ‘Get Doncaster Walking’ Programme Ben led a group of over 200 people on a 1.7 mile walk around the Keepmoat Stadium raising nearly £700 for charity in the process. Well done Ben, you continue to inspire us all.

Secondly I would also ask that Council note and recognise the dedicated service of a couple of officers who will be retiring shortly. Paul Marelli the Mansion House officer who has worked at the Mansion House for over 20 years is due to retire at the end of this month and Roger Harvey the current Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring officer is attending his last Council meeting. Roger has worked for the authority for 40 years is due to retire at the end of February. On behalf of the Council I would like to thank them both for their valued and dedicated service and wish them well for the future.

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, made the following Announcements:-

“I would simply like to place on record a vote of thanks from the Labour Party for the unstinting work Roger has undertaken, and also, on a personal note. I was there when Roger started, I remember him coming for his interview and thank him for his work; he has always been very professional in whatever he has done”

“I would like to reiterate the Tour de Yorkshire route has now been finalised. So many local businesses are getting behind it and it will be putting Doncaster on the map.

Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Housing made the following announcement:-

“Over the last few years, we have not met our housing target of 920 homes. However in December 2015, we have built and occupied 953 homes. This is the highest number we have built in 15 years. Over 1000 new homes will have been built by the end of 2015/16, and I would like to pay tribute to the diligence and hard work of DMBC staff undertaken since May 2013.”

Councillor Tony Corden, Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate and Trading Services made the following announcement:-

“I would just like to remind Members to complete their Member Development Questionnaire. The Member Development Working Group is meeting shortly to consider this so I’d be grateful if you could fill it in and return it.”

Chief Executive, Jo Miller, made the following Announcement:-

“I would like to advise Members of a new appointment. I’d like to welcome Kim Curry, who has been appointed as the Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing, which is a statutory role within the Council. This is an 18 month appointment, and Kim will help us go through the necessary transformations.”

- (A) Question from Mr. S. Buttriss, 31 Stone Font Grove, Cantley, Doncaster, DN4 6UQ, to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“Mayor, you recently backed the devolution to governance by a ‘Sheffield City Region’ in the media. What specific guarantees have you sought and are in place to ensure that our hard earned cash is not squandered on hair brained schemes that would benefit only the larger authorities as happened with the ‘Supertram’, which never reached Doncaster as was promised and which we all still had to pay into for years, and what specific guarantees can you give that Doncaster will not get the thin edge of the wedge when it comes to divvying out important resources?”

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

“Thank you for your question Mr Buttriss. This is a very important issue for the future of Doncaster.

Doncaster’s inclusion in the proposed Sheffield City Region Devolution Deal will be decided by Full Council in the coming weeks. Personally, I believe that it is the best option on the table for Doncaster.

Doncaster has suffered from massive government cuts, which will continue to hit our borough irrespective of whether we take part in the Devolution Proposal.

There is a lot to be proud of in our borough. However, there are still too many people in Doncaster who are out of work, and too many people who work hard but still struggle to get by because of low wages.

The only way for this town and its people to thrive, is for us to grow our way out of our current situation. We need more highly skilled, well paid jobs, and we need to make sure local people are supported to access these new opportunities, by gaining new skills or advancing their existing skills.

We are already using the tools of devolution to help achieve this.

I know many people still remember issues around funding the Sheffield Tram, which was built in 1991. However, I would point to current examples of excellent projects where Doncaster has had its fair share of infrastructure funding - and is using it to create new jobs, housing, and improve our borough.

Take for example the new airport link road which opens in just a few weeks. It has been integral in securing the new iPort, a £400m inland port and logistic hub which will include its own rail freight terminal.

1200 new homes are also being built on the site of the former colliery at Rossington, and in March, Flybe will start flying eight new routes from the airport.

The road is expected to help increase passenger numbers at the airport from 900,000 this year to more than 1.35m next year. A thriving airport means more jobs for local people and the growth of aviation related industries in our town.

This is my philosophy. By getting round the table with our regional colleagues and fighting for Doncaster, we have secured £56m from the current Sheffield City Region Investment Fund. Doncaster has more projects than any other area.

It is a far cry from the approach of former Mayor Peter Davies, whose insular approach risked Doncaster being left behind.

The funding we have secured for Doncaster will deliver:

- Phase 2 of the airport link road
- The DN7 Unity project at Hatfield/Stainforth, which will help deliver 3000 new homes and more than 8000 new jobs
- Improvements to the West Moor Link Road to facilitate economic growth; and
- Improvements to our town centre around the railway station, the Civic and Cultural Quarter, the markets and the Waterfront site

Doncaster is the second largest economy in the Sheffield City Region. These projects demonstrate that Doncaster is not getting the thin end of the wedge when it comes to regional infrastructure funding. Far from it.

There is a clear and transparent process for identifying priority projects in the region. To deliver more of these projects, we must be part of the devolution deal.

It is also right that more decision about local transport services, skills and housing are taken here, rather than in Whitehall. That is why I think that Regional Devolution is the right thing for Doncaster.”

- (B) Question from Mr. D. Wright, 15 Chantry Close, Cantley, Doncaster, DN4 6RX, to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“The format has been changed to the detriment of the general public. For example, only questions relating to a Cabinet meeting agenda can now be asked. Doncaster Council's Constitution Part 4 15.2.1 says Councillors can ask questions without notice at Council meetings which I believe works well. Councillors can introduce a topic, formally ask a question and then receive an answer straight away. Why can't a similar process operate for public questions at Cabinet meetings?”

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

“Thank you for your question Mr. Wright.

I believe that your question refers to the changes made to public speaking arrangements at Cabinet meetings, which were recommended by the Elections & Democratic Structures Committee and subsequently agreed by Council in November 2015.

I don't agree that the changes are detrimental to the public. I have always welcomed the opportunity to engage with the public and residents can put questions to me in a number of different ways, in both public and private.

As well as raising questions at Council or Cabinet, people can arrange a one-to-one meeting at one of my monthly Meet the Mayor events, or they can contact me by email or in writing.

The role of Cabinet meetings is to discuss and agree major decisions that are being proposed for the borough. Members of the public also have the opportunity to raise points and ask questions at the Cabinet meeting about those key issues, before a decision is made.

Over recent months it became apparent that there was scope to improve the arrangements for public questions for the following reasons:-

- Because the questions I received did not always relate to issues on the Cabinet agenda, and were not submitted in advance, it was often difficult to provide a comprehensive answer if technical detail or further research was required. This was not helpful for the public seeking a response to their question at the meeting.
- Receiving questions without notice and which do not relate to the business on the agenda was inconsistent with other Constitutional procedures currently in place, for example questions from the public at Council meetings, which must be on notice and public statements at Overview and Scrutiny Panels, which must relate specifically to an item on the agenda.

For these reasons, the Council agreed changes that have ensured arrangements at Cabinet meetings are consistent with other processes currently used by the Council and that members of the public receive a more meaningful response to their question.

You also quite rightly mention that Councillors are given the opportunity to ask questions without notice at Council meetings. As I am sure you will appreciate Councillors are provided with this opportunity as they carry out a unique democratic role and this enables them to obtain information and hold other Members and political groups to account.

This is essential in enabling them to effectively represent the wider public and its communities and ensure open, transparent governance and democratic accountability.

Once again, thank you for your question.”

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

“I would just like to say Mayor Jones, as members of the public, in the past we could raise points and ask a question at Cabinet, and speak for up to five minutes. We are now hampered as this has been replaced by a 100 word question. There are a lot of issues coming up at Cabinet such as the Bus Partnership in March where people may wish to turn up to the meeting and speak on the issue. Would you consider changing this to allow people to make a statement, and ask a supplementary question?”

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

“It is Council who approved the Constitution, and that decision has been made. It is not within my power to do that. We have had discussions whether to elongate the time on certain issues, and I have Chair’s discretion as to whether or not to allow this to be done, and I will use that where I feel it is warranted.”

- (C) Question from Mr. T. Brown, 4 West Grove, Wheatley Hills, Doncaster, DN2 5NB, to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“Given that Mayor Jones is on record as stating that she will not tolerate dishonesty, unlawful discrimination, corrupt practices and cover up, I wonder if Mayor Jones can articulate when exactly did she learn of the stated significant harm to the equalities agenda in Doncaster and what actions has she taken to safeguard the basic rights of the affected citizens, including those amongst us who have been subjected to

victimisation by the Chief Officers that are implicated in trying to ensure that the issues raised by an inspirational former Officer are not properly investigated even though this was a recommendation from the Section 151 Officer?"

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

"Thank you for question Mr Brown.

I do believe that the equalities agenda in Doncaster was damaged under the previous Mayor, Peter Davies.

People should not suffer discrimination or have poorer chances in life because of their age, gender or disability, their religion, sexuality or the colour of their skin.

And treating people equally does not mean treating them the same way. Throughout history we have seen the immense damage caused by intolerance and ignorance.

I believe the actions, and particularly the language, used by Peter Davies in relation to this issue were wrong. They undermined the equalities agenda in Doncaster, made some of our residents feel more vulnerable, and sent out dangerous messages.

Notwithstanding that, my focus is on the present and the future.

We will therefore do our best to raise awareness of equalities issues and take measures to work against discrimination in Doncaster - whether that is conscious discrimination or the result of poor policy making.

My cabinet and I have taken significant steps to embed equalities and inclusion within everything that the Council does. The Council now has very clear objectives and a 3 year equalities plan, that was approved by Cabinet in March 2014 following earlier consultation with the public.

All aspects of our plan are openly and honestly reported and published.

Examples of actions taken include:

- Establishing a new Cabinet Portfolio for Equalities and Inclusion – held by the Deputy Mayor.
- Equality considerations and implications are incorporated in our decision making processes
- Members and staff must understand their responsibilities in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty. Hundreds of people have undertaken equalities training.
- Due regard statements are completed for all projects, service improvements and change and consultations;
- We run monthly drop-in sessions with colleagues to help develop understanding of the due regard arrangements;
- Doncaster now has its first Inclusion and Fairness Forum and we are currently consulting with the public for their views on equality in Doncaster.

This work is ongoing. Resources have been made available and you will see that progress will be monitored and reported throughout.

I can assure you we will continue to make equality and inclusion a priority for this Council, for as long as I am Mayor.

The issues you have raised on many occasions regarding a former employee have been answered previously and I refer you again to the Chief Executives correspondence with you on the point.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.10, Mr. Brown asked the Mayor, the following supplementary question

“I would respectfully like to ask how you can claim to be a Mayor of all people when you have failed to promote fairness. You could promote fairness for all instead of allowing barristers to suppress the truth and protect your Officers?”

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

“Mr Brown, I have communicated with you on this issue many times before and I will not respond any further. I have provided you with an answer to your question.”

65 Proposals for Localised Council Tax Support for 2016/17 (the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme)

Council received a report, presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, that detailed the proposals for the Localised Council Tax Support for 2016/17. As Members were aware, under National Welfare reforms, from the 1st April 2013, Council Tax Benefit was replaced by Local Council Tax Support and Local authorities received considerably reduced funding from Government for the scheme. Previously, the full cost of awarding this reduction was funded by the Government. The estimated cost of Local council tax support for 2016/17 would be £20.672m.

Under the Localism agenda, Billing authorities have to decide for working age claims, who is eligible for a reduction in their Council Tax and what level of support they should receive. Pensioners however, and certain other aspects of the local scheme are prescribed by the Government, and the Council has no discretion in relation to these matters.

Localised Council Tax support is a means tested form of help to assist the most vulnerable and those who may not have the means, to pay their Council tax in Doncaster.

Members noted that Doncaster has a history of low council tax levels with the majority of properties falling in Band A. We currently have the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest Band D Council Tax of the 91 Metropolitan and Unitary authorities.

There are over 27,950 households receiving a reduction in their Council Tax from the Local support scheme in Doncaster with over 12,620 householders being of pensionable age and more than 15,330 of working age on a low income. The proposed local scheme will help to support those households with the most vulnerable and those least able to pay in Doncaster.

It was noted that the Council have been able to avoid making major changes to the scheme this year, avoiding reducing support further by introducing an across the board deduction which would impact on the most vulnerable and those who may not have the means to pay.

Council noted that there had been concerns that Doncaster’s scheme could have come under severe pressure, with the need to make further significant cuts. However due to improvements

in the local economy, a reduced number of claimants, and a more buoyant tax base it was not necessary to cut the scheme further for 2016/17.

The only revisions to the scheme that were therefore proposed from the 1st April 2016, were those required under the Prescribed Requirement Regulations. These Regulations have been recently made by Government, and provide for the uprating of allowances and premiums used in the calculation of support for pensioners, along with other minor amendments. In accordance with the legislation, the final revised scheme has to be agreed by Full Council by the end of January 2016.

Following the presentation of the report, Members of Council were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that Council note the protection for pensioners as a result of the annual uprating allowances, premiums and non-dependant deductions which are prescribed by the Government and the associated change in expenditure which is funded locally;
- (2) the Authority should uprate relevant allowances and premiums for those of working age in line with the annual uprating set by the Government and used in the current scheme and in other forms of support including Housing Benefit. The Government has decided to freeze certain allowances for 4 years from April 2016;
- (3) that Council notes that any increase in Council Tax liability for the Council, its major preceptors and local parish preceptors will increase the cost of Local Council Tax Support. The assumptions used in the cost of the scheme are an increase of 1.95% for Doncaster's Council's Tax and that of the major preceptors and parish preceptors. There is also a further 2% Council tax increase proposed and built into the assumptions for the newly introduced Social Care flexibility. The purpose of this flexibility to increase council tax further is to help to fund additional expenditure pressures created by the Governments introduction of the National Living wage which has a significant impact in social care contracts and some of the additional spending pressures created by an increase in older people accessing social care services. Even a further 2% additional increase in council tax does not cover the additional expenditure created from the national living wage;
- (4) the Equality analysis attached at Appendix 1 and Due Regard Statement be considered as part of the decision making; and
- (5) Council approve the revised scheme which is linked at Appendix 2 and has been amended to take into account The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. These regulations in the main are to ensure consistency with changes to social security legislation. The amendments also increase certain of the figures which are used in calculating whether a person is entitled to a reduction and the amount of that reduction. These increases relate to pensioner claims and most of the rates used in the calculation of working age claims have been frozen in line with the rates for Housing Benefit. The amendments also abolish the family premium for new pensioner claims from 1st May 2016 with transitional protection arrangements for existing claims. The Regulations were issued on the 21st December 2015 and come into force on the 14th January 2016 for application in the Council's revised local scheme from the 1st April 2016.



Council received a report presented by the Director of Public Health, Dr Rupert Suckling. This was the third report received by Council since the public health function was transferred from the NHS to the Council in 2013, albeit the first report prepared by Dr Suckling following his appointment to the post.

Members noted that the purpose of the report wasn't to publish statistics or inform of performance as there were alternative vehicles for this, but was to provide an independent assessment of the health of the local population. The report described the health of Doncaster people, what makes people healthy and how the health of people across the Borough, from varying communities and groups differed.

Members learned that the health of the population in Doncaster was starting to improve, but still not as quickly as other areas of the country. However, it was positive to note that the life expectancy of people in Doncaster was at an all-time high. The health of the population was not solely influenced by the level of clinical care received, but was largely influenced by a number of factors with social and economic factors being the largest contributor to a person's health at 40%, followed by health behaviours at 30%. It was noted that good family support, a high standard of education and living in good quality housing from a young age influenced health chances positively, whereas living in low quality housing and receiving a poor education would negatively impact on a person's health as they grew older.

There were therefore a number of challenges faced by Doncaster in order to tackle health inequalities, and work was underway to address them in order to make the improvements required for the children, families and communities in the Borough.

The report identified four key challenges for the Council and its partners:-

- The improvement of children's health and wellbeing;
- The link between education, work and health;
- Addressing low Disability Free Life Expectancy and high levels of preventable health condition; and
- Reducing inequalities in health between and within Doncaster communities.

Following consideration of the report, Members were afforded the opportunity to speak on this report. The report was commended with Members welcoming its comprehensive and insightful content. A number of points were raised through the course of the discussions on issues such as life expectancies and health inequalities on which Dr Suckling endeavoured to provide a succinct and concise explanation. However, in response to a query raised by Councillor Phil Cole on the issue of preventable disabilities and the links to fast food provision, and a query from Councillor Neil Gethin relating to the health inequalities of children living in poverty, Dr Suckling advised that he could provide further data and more detailed information on these issues outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED that Council note and publish the report.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health, Councillor Pat Knight, presented the Doncaster Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21 to Council. Council noted that in order to fulfil its statutory duties, the Doncaster Health and Wellbeing Board were required to produce a Health and Wellbeing Strategy, thus replacing the previous version agreed by Council in 2013. The revised strategy considered by Council, was a much more up to date reflection of the Health and Wellbeing Board's strategic priorities and its changing health and social care landscape.

The Health and Wellbeing strategy needed to reflect local needs of the local population but also join up the key strategic plans for example the JSNA and partners organisational plans. It must also align to the Borough strategy, Mayoral priorities and the Team Doncaster Partnership priorities and needed to be refreshed in view of the changing membership and changing health and social care landscape.

The revised Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a high level document, underpinned by a number of plans and delivery mechanisms and builds on the foundations of the first Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16. In its production, it has identified 3 key aims, along with 4 key themes.

#### 3 Key Aims:-

- The strategy presents a high level vision for health and wellbeing in Doncaster and describes the locally adopted model for health and wellbeing;
- The strategy outlines the role and ways of working for key partners to play in ensuring the effective delivery and implementation of the Health and Social Care Transformation Fund which would focus on the development of early interventions and lower level wellbeing support in communities; and
- The identification of 4 key themes for development to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes in Doncaster.

#### The Four Key Themes identified within the plan:-

- Wellbeing;
- Health and Social Care Transformation;
- Five areas of focus (Substance Misuse (alcohol and drugs); Obesity; Mental Health; Dementia; Children and Families); and
- Reducing Health Inequalities

Council noted that detailed quarterly reports would be received by the Health and Wellbeing Board, with an annual report published by the Board to Council detailing its progress, to be communicated to the wider public.

The report received by Council was welcomed, and following consideration, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the strategy. Members took the opportunity to commend the report, and the work undertaken by Councillor Knight, The Health and Wellbeing Board and Officers in producing it. A number of concerns were raised with regard to those living in areas of deprivation where health inequalities were more prevalent, and emphasis was placed on educating people as to how they could make informed and healthy choices, live better lives and have a healthier lifestyle. Councillor Knight took the opportunity to inform Council that a Food bank was being opened in Hatfield and Stainforth following on from the good work undertaken by Councillor Gibbons in Mexborough. It was hoped that this would benefit the local communities by helping residents, supporting them, and giving them the education to make healthy lifestyle choices to work towards achieving much healthier communities in the future.

#### RESOLVED

- (1) the Health and Wellbeing Strategy be endorsed for final publication at the end of January, 2016; and
- (2) the Due Regard Statement considered alongside the Health and Wellbeing Strategy be endorsed.

68 Appointment of a Monitoring Officer to the Council

Council considered a report presented by the Chief Executive that sought approval to appoint Scott Robert Fawcus as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 1 March, 2016 further to the retirement of the current Monitoring Officer, Roger Harvey. Mr Harvey would be leaving the Authority with effect from 29th February, 2016, having been in post since 2010. The Chief Executive paid tribute to Roger Harvey, and commended the work he has undertaken whilst appointed to the role, praising his integrity and professionalism.

Members noted that the Council has a duty to appoint a Monitoring Officer under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989, (as amended), and failure to do so would mean the Council was not meeting its statutory responsibilities. The Monitoring Officer is a key post in the senior management structure which provides advice on lawfulness issues, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and policy framework issues.

Recruitment to the post of Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, which also encompasses the Monitoring Officer role, was undertaken by the Chief Officers Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee on 13 January, 2016, and as a result of this, Scott Fawcus was appointed to the post with a unanimous recommendation.

Following consideration of the report, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

Members from all Political Parties joined the Chief Executive in paying tribute to Roger Harvey and echoed her sentiments, thanking him for all the work he had undertaken in seeing the Council through some very difficult times.

RESOLVED that Scott Robert Fawcus be appointed as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 1st March, 2016.

69 Minor Amendments to Council Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, presented a report that proposed minor revisions to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and the Council's Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs).

Members noted that the proposed amendments were minor, reflecting best practice and were in order to streamline and simplify processes and would provide greater clarity.

Specifically, the amendments relating to the Contract Procedure Rules brought them in line with the enactment of the Public Procurement Regulation 2015. Additionally, the CPRs also contain the revised European Procurement thresholds as prescribed by the European Commission, which reflected changes in the exchange rate for the Euro.

With regard to the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, Council noted that these have been updated slightly, largely with regard to the approval for capital projects and grants to voluntary organisations, to update the virement limits to include the Chief Officer up to £100k, and other minor updates to reflect current practices and guidance.

Following consideration of the report, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

RESOLVED that Council:-

- (1) agree the proposed minor revisions to the Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) attached at Appendix A; and

- (2) agree the proposed minor changes to the Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs) attached at Appendix B.

70 Establishment and Appointment of a Representative to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Support Health Service Changes in South and Mid Yorkshire, Bassetlaw and North Derbyshire

Council received a report, presented by Councillor John Mounsey, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee that sought approval for the Council to join a Joint Health and Scrutiny Committee to consider proposed substantial variations in the local health Service.

Members noted that the NHS Commissioners Working Together (CWT) is a collaborative of eight clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and the NHS England across South and Mid Yorkshire, Bassetlaw and North Derbyshire.

The report informed Council that there was a statutory duty for NHS bodies to consult with Overview and Scrutiny Committees where it proposed changes to a service, and where changes affect more than one local authority, a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee would need to be established in order to consider and respond to the consultation.

Establishment of a Joint Scrutiny Committee would also provide the opportunity for a stronger sub-regional voice on related health matters.

The following nominations were proposed for the appointment of a Council representative to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

Nominations

Councillor Cynthia Ransome  
Councillor Tony Revill

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 21.6, the two nominations were put to the meeting in alphabetical order of surname, the result of the vote being as follows:-

For Councillor Cynthia Ransome - 13

For Councillor Tony Revill - 38

On being put to the meeting, the Motion to appoint Councillor Tony Revill as the representative of the Council to serve on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to support Health Service changes in South and Mid Yorkshire, Bassetlaw and North Derbyshire, was declared CARRIED.

In addition, it was Moved and Seconded that Councillor Rachel Blake be appointed as a substitute representative of the Council to the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

On being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED

- (1) The Authority joins the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to support health service changes in South, Mid Yorkshire, Bassetlaw and Derbyshire;
- (2) To appoint Councillor Tony Revill to serve as a Member of the Joint Health and Scrutiny Committee;

- (3) To appoint Councillor Rachel Blake as a substitute representative of the Council to serve as a Member of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, subject to substitute arrangements being agreed as part of the agreed joint Health Scrutiny arrangements; and
- (4) To delegate the approval of the Terms of Reference of the joint Scrutiny Committee to OSMC.

71 Overview and Scrutiny Update and Progress Report.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, Councillor John Mounsey, introduced a report that provided an update to Council on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC), and its four standing Scrutiny Panels for the period June to December, 2015.

The report provided a short summary of some of the key work carried out by OSMC and the four standing panels between June and December 2015 and any future issues that were to be considered.

Members noted that there continued to be a real effort to focus on performance monitoring and review work through OSMC and its Panels in order to ensure greater impact on future policy development and the improvement of services. The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have undertaken more detailed task and finish work on a small number of important issues, and the Health and Adult Social Care Panel was continuing to undertake the Council's statutory health scrutiny role. The Children and Young People Panel were currently in the process of completing a review on Children with Disabilities and a further review on Place Marketing was due be completed by the Regeneration and Housing Panel before the end of the year.

Councillor Mounsey reported that an Extraordinary Meeting of OSMC had been held to consider the proposed Devolution Deal for the Sheffield City Region. Following an informative and thorough debate, where Members of the Committee were able to question a number of attendees, including Sir Steve Houghton, Chair of the SCR, and representatives from the private sector, the Committee unanimously supported the proposed Devolution Agreement. Members agreed that overall the proposal offered the powers and flexibilities required to deliver the economic ambitions for the Sheffield City Region including the creation of 70,000 jobs and 6000 new businesses. In reaching its conclusion, Members supported the view that to not accept the proposed deal would create the biggest risk to the economy of Doncaster, and the wider Sheffield City Region.

Members were informed that outside of the formal meetings, the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs continued to meet regularly with the Mayor and respective Cabinet Members to ensure they kept up to date with developments in portfolio areas which allowed them to effectively plan and manage Scrutiny work plan issues.

In conclusion, Councillor Mounsey informed Council that the major issues Scrutiny now needed to focus on in 2016 included:-

- Continuing effective Overview and Scrutiny of the now established Children's Trust;
- Reviewing the Mayor's budget proposals. OSMC would be looking to agree a response to the proposals on the 11th February, 2016.
- Crime and Disorder – This was undertaken by the Communities and Environment Panel and would be looking at performance and priorities; and
- Establishing a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny.

Councillor Mounsey thanked Members, the Executive, officers, partners, stakeholders and the public who have taken the time to attend meetings and engage with the Overview and Scrutiny process.

Following the presentation of the report, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report.

Considerable discussion followed, during which there was an exchange of views with regard to the role and structure of Scrutiny. Concerns were noted, and a query raised as to the possibility of an LGA Peer Review being requested in order to ensure that the process was open and all-inclusive. However, Members were reminded that proportionality had been waived in the establishment of Scrutiny Committees in order to allow cross-party representation, where all Members were treated equally, allowing for thorough and inclusive discussions to ensure that the Executive was continually held to account to ensure an open and transparent democratic process.

RESOLVED that Council note the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the four standing Scrutiny Panels for the period June to December, 2015.

72 Questions by Elected Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 15.2 and 15.3:-

A. Questions on Notice

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

(Q) From Councillor Nick Allen to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

"We are all aware of the recent problems caused by SUEZ Environment's failure to collect recycling waste on time over the Christmas and New Year period. Will the Mayor explain the reasons for those problems and advise what the position is under the Council's contract with Suez given the obvious failure to make collections as required and the associated inconvenience to householders. Does the Mayor agree that SUEZ Environment's service was unacceptable and that various problems could have been avoided?"

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

"Thank you for your question Councillor Allen. Yes, I do agree with you.

The service provided by SUEZ, our waste and recycling contractor, in the immediate period after Christmas was simply unacceptable. I am sure that everyone in this Chamber today - and our local residents - feel the same way.

We have had clear and robust discussions with SUEZ and they have apologised for their performance. In terms of the reasons for the unacceptable level of service, I would like to clarify that these were not due to a change in the Christmas collection arrangements. These were the same arrangements that have been implemented successfully four times since 2010. SUEZ had put in place contingency arrangements for the busy period after Christmas, including additional staff and vehicles.

However, the company has told us that during the week commencing 4th January, they suffered an "unprecedented level of sickness" which increased throughout the week to 28 members of staff. These sickness levels meant that the vast majority of agency staff employed to assist with the busy period were effectively filling in for experienced operatives, rather than providing additional resources. The agency staff were

inexperienced in terms of routes, and I am told the volumes of waste presented were above a typical Christmas period, further contributing to the delays.

I am clear that it is the responsibility of the contractor to deliver the level of service agreed and expected of them. Irrespective of sickness issues, they did not do this. I can therefore confirm that maximum remedies in accordance with the contract will be applied. In addition, all extra costs associated with the catch up and contingency resources will be borne by SUEZ.

Our senior managers and Cabinet Member have met with SUEZ to make clear our frustration, anger and disappointment at the level of service provided. They have also spoken directly with the National Manager and the Chief Operations Officer.

I am very unhappy about the situation and I am sorry that residents bore the brunt of the inability of the Council's contractor to deliver the service expected of them.

I have requested SUEZ consider making a payment over and above the contractual damages as a goodwill gesture, given the impact of the poor service on our residents and the Council, including the costs associated with the clean-up of our streets.

I have also instructed officers and SUEZ to undertake a full review of the Christmas collection service so that we do not have a repeat of this situation in the future. This review has already commenced and the lessons learned will be applied to this year's Christmas service. They will also be included as part of the specification for the new contract to be awarded in 2017."

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

(Q) "Would you be able to let me know how much officer time has been spent with SUEZ, speaking to them, trying to resolve this situation, and when will we get the payment for the costs we incurred out of them?"

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

"If you're asking for this minute by minute, we don't have that information, it's not something we would record, but let's not hide from this, the situation was unacceptable, SUEZ let us down, and procedures are now in place to ensure that this will not happen again."

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 Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster

Q. Councillor John Mounsey asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

"In Doncaster we are well aware of the economic and social damage caused by the demise of the coal mining industry at the hands of Mrs Thatcher and her Conservative Government.

Unfortunately the current Tory government now seems intent on doing to the British steel industry, what it did to the coal industry in the 1980s. Every job lost in these vital national industries does not just affect one person, or one family. It affects the whole community including local

businesses – from newsagents to butchers and bakers, the hairdressers and even the local pub.

Thousands of job losses have been announced across the country, including at Scunthorpe, Rotherham and most recently at Sheffield Forgemasters. Once the furnaces have gone, they will not return. This will affect workers and businesses in Doncaster.

The loss of these vital industries is a national disgrace. Unbelievably, at the same time we are using imported steel to build our trains, wind turbines and even our navy's ships.

Does the Mayor agree with me that the Government must do more to 'Buy British' and support our important national industries, including taking urgent action to support British made steel."

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

"Thank you for your question John. I absolutely agree.

The Government should have taken a leaf out of our book in Doncaster. We have introduced policies which have significantly increased the amount of money spent with local businesses. This has provided work for local people, stimulates the economy and most importantly helps local people to pay the bills and support their family.

It is an outrage that the Government has not done more to protect the steel industry, which future generations will pay the price for. Once businesses have closed down, they won't come back.

There are a range of actions it could have taken – such as assisting them in relation to VAT.

We should not be reliant on imported steel. We have seen this before when Forgemaster closed down after asking for a loan. A strong British steel industry supports our country and the Government should be doing more to support it. They should be taking a leaf out of our book."

Q. Councillor James Hart asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

"First Care Homes, now enforcement officers, what next are you going to privatise?"

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

"They have not been privatised. We have employed additional officers as I believe in cleaner, greener streets and will do everything I can to achieve this. The Company that won this contract are self-financing and are cleaning up our streets. I find it farcical that the opposition are saying we are privatising our services when we are simply trying to find value for money and give more to the residents of our Borough. I won't apologise for wanting our streets to be cleaner, and if this is the way to achieve a cleaner Borough then I will do it. It is about using every resource we have got to deliver our priorities. "



Q. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor James Hart asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the following supplementary question:-

“In writing could you provide the number of enforcement officers employed by the authority for the last five years for both full and part time equivalents?”

A. Councillor asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“I will certainly do that but the structure will have changed over the 5 year period, with a number of posts removed.”

Q. Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“I sit on the South Yorkshire Fire Authority. I, along with many members of the public, am dissatisfied with the internal enquiries into the payments of overtime to senior officers and the involvement of the Authority's Chair. The Chair approved these payments with no input from the rest of the Board. Questions were asked about its legality and the hours worked. The monitoring officer deemed it legal. Some of the officers in receipt of payments have decided to pay it back. What I have asked for is the question asked of the QC and the advice given. This has been refused on 3 occasions.

If the process is proper what is there to hide? The situation is we still have many questions not answered. This is taxpayer's money and I would welcome your involvement?”

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

“An enquiry was carried out by the Audit department but maybe the information is not publicly available? I am not on the Fire Authority, whereas you are. Maybe you can write to them and ask the questions, or if you do not feel you are able to, I will write on your behalf.”

Q. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones the following supplementary question:-

“I know I am on the board, and I have written to the SYFA but I am being hampered when I ask questions, and Labour Members have closed ranks, shielding the Chairman. This is Doncaster's tax payer's money.”

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

“This was an Audit investigation, and is not controlled by Labour. If you have been refused information, you need to ask why this has not been allowed. I was told the payments were legal, but if you are not happy then maybe you can ask the Section 151 Officer to write to SYFA on your behalf.”

Q. Councillor Andy Pickering asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“In reference to the 2014 removal of our old people's travel concessions. SYPTE papers recently presented at Transport Committee showed a forecast underspend in this year's Budget of 3%. That equates to £2.42m,

and an underspend of 6% in the Concessions budget equating to £2m. In light of this information, would The Mayor wish to encourage Doncaster's Members on the SYPTTE to press for a restoration of the original concessions?"

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

"We voted against this, and we are where we are now. The SYPTTE know what reductions they have got to make year on year, and I applaud you for asking for it, but we have got to look at the totality of the budget. We have got to do what we can within our means."

Q. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Andy Pickering asked The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones the following supplementary question:-

"My understanding is that under the Sheffield City Region Devolution Proposal, we will have a direct input into the franchise negotiations for transport providers. Is there any good reason that would prevent us from negotiating that these concessions be accepted by the bidding Companies as a pre-condition of a winning bid?"

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

"At this moment in time the SYPTTE cannot run the service as it is felt to be inappropriate. We need to see Devolution go through and we don't know what the outcome will be, but we can't afford to keep giving the SYPTTE our money due to cuts. Oyster cards have been proposed and hopefully they will help with cheaper transport."

Q. Councillor Jonathan Wood asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

"We have talked about privatisation, and you don't believe you have privatised services, even though you have employed private staff to run our services. There is a wider agenda here. Comments were made by Margaret Beckett in Parliament saying that Labour have an inability to accept responsibility for the financial crisis, have a failure to connect with voters and is too left wing to win an election. I'm just wondering if you endorse these comments? You say you're not privatising services, but it looks like it and smells like it?"

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

"Firstly, the financial crisis was not brought about by Labour. In terms of your comments regarding privatisation, we need to find ways of delivering the best services we can for the people of Doncaster whilst still balancing the books. We will continue to keep things in-house where we can provide value for money. We transferred our care homes to Runwood Homes and I won't apologise for that as we listened to the people of Doncaster. We are giving people the best we can. Transferring care homes achieved savings of £2m. We have introduced Extra Care, Help to Live at Home and are providing the best chances for people. We are doing a great job and the Labour Administration is delivering what you were unable to do."

Q. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Jonathan Wood asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones the following supplementary question:-

“There is an inability to accept responsibility. After Thatcher was in power, there were 3 Labour terms of office but there was no investment in the mining industry. In relation to supporting industry, local mining communities such as Hatfield have asked for support and have been turned down. Margaret Beckett is correct with her comments.”

A. The Mayor of Doncaster gave the following response:-

“I don’t believe we are too left wing. I am here and fighting for the people of Doncaster. In terms of funding, who wouldn’t give them any funds? It was because of your Government that we couldn’t give them any funds. Margaret Beckett has spoken of what she believes is right. I am here as a Labour Mayor who cares about the people of this town and am trying to deliver what I can with one hand tied behind my back due to the austerity cuts imposed on us by George Osborne. We are delivering what we can for the people of Doncaster – we have got ourselves out of intervention which we found ourselves in due to the administration you were part of.”

Q. Councillor Nick Allen asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“I have read in the Free Press that there has been a reduction in Youth Unemployment and there is mention of policies being implemented locally. Can you explain what these are and how they have impacted on youth unemployment?”

A. “I have implemented Doncaster Council Policies. We apply every penny we can to improve the Borough and get jobs and growth in. They are not your policies; they are Doncaster Council Labour Policies. We use every trick in the book that we can to bring money into the area to improve the Borough. We will not have Doncaster knocked down.”

Q. Councillor Nigel Ball asked the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones:-

“How are we helping young people in Doncaster move on in life as a result of the last five years under a Tory Administration? There has been the vindictive removal of the connexions service, the increase in student loans and the removal of the Educational Maintenance Allowance. What are we doing in Doncaster?”

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

“Doncaster has fought the national cuts very well, and we are working positively to combat a vindictive Government that seems to have something against young people. We are looking to achieve our manifesto with regard to apprenticeships; we are working together with the private sector to bring the National Rail College to Doncaster which will bring further opportunities to the area. We are working with the private sector to get the best for the people of Doncaster. Devolution will give us further opportunity to direct funding. However, there are still too many people not earning high enough wages. There is still work to do in combatting employment and it is about knowing where we are and what we have to do.”

Q. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Council Nigel Ball asked the following supplementary question:-

“That is extremely enlightening, thank you. Doncaster is very forward thinking and is positively combatting employment.”

B. Questions to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Equalities

Q. Councillor Nick Allen asked the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones:-

“Could you please inform me how many applicants from a BME background have been interviewed by Chief Officers Appointments Committee (COAC) over the last ten years?”

A. The Deputy Mayor gave the following response:-

“Thank you for an interesting question, I obviously haven’t got that data to hand, but will provide it to you in writing. However, I can tell you that in our last round of interviews, we had one applicant from a BME background who was unsuccessful.”

Q. Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones:-

“Cllr Jones, I would like to highlight the deprivation that is happening to our rural villages. Support following an illness is non-existent! Often this is on the grounds that it is too far for the appropriate services. This causes bed blocking and anxiety for elderly people who are not able to return home with adequate care. These are vulnerable people, how is this being addressed?”

A. The Deputy Mayor gave the following response:-

“There are a number of questions with regard to Adult Social Care and we are currently conducting an exercise into helping people to live at home as the current model is not fit for purpose. We are working on a new model and will hopefully provide a Universal model that will work across the Borough.”

Q. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the following supplementary question:-

“People want to stay in their own homes, but they have to wait for an assessment and a care plan before they can return home. I know of 3 people in their 90s who cannot return home.”

A. Councillor Glyn Jones gave the following response:-

“The assessment has to be done before discharge. The new scheme will address any failings. However, if you contact me with the details of these individuals, I will look into this for you.”

C. Questions to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transportation

Q. Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked Councillor Blackham:-

“The Planning department expect residents to follow the guidelines set in place, but yet DMBC Officers do not seem to follow suit. A number of trees have been chopped down and destroyed at Melton Road School in

Sprotbrough with no regard. How can this be prevented, and would it be possible to look at how we monitor contracts in the future to prevent this happening?"

A. Councillor Blackham gave the following response:-

“Thank you for your question, I have recorded the details and I will look into this and provide you with a written response on this matter.”

Q. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.7, Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked the following supplementary question:-

“Thank you. I also extend my thanks from the residents of Barnburgh to you for getting the bus crisis sorted.”

A. Councillor Blackham gave the following response:-

“Thank you, I acknowledge the thanks.”

Q. Councillor Nick Allen asked Councillor Joe Blackham:-

“I have received a number of complaints from residents living along Everingham Road in Cantley, regarding speeding drivers. All three Ward Councillors have asked this question and been told no, no, no. However, is there anything you can do in your capacity as Cabinet Member to look at traffic calming down this stretch of road?”

A. Councillor Joe Blackham gave the following response:-

“In a word, no I can't. However, I will investigate this and see what potential there is for making any changes but we are working within a very tight budget.”

D. Questions to Councillor Tony Corden, Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate and Trading Services

No questions were put to Councillor Tony Corden, Cabinet Member for Customer, Corporate and Trading Services.

E. Questions to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools

No questions were put to Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools.

F. Questions to Councillor Pat Knight, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

No questions were put to Councillor Pat Knight, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing.

G. Questions to Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Member for Communities and the Voluntary Sector and the Environment

In the absence of Councillor Chris McGuinness, Cabinet Member for Communities and the Voluntary Sector and the Environment, the Chair of Council informed Members that any questions for Councillor McGuinness

should be submitted in writing to the Executive Office after this meeting and that the Cabinet Member would respond accordingly.

H. Questions to Councillor Bill Mordue, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills, Tourism and Culture

Q. Councillor Cynthia Ransome asked Councillor Bill Mordue:-

“It is super news regarding the Tour de Yorkshire. It’s passing through Hooton Pagnell and Cadeby and would like you to guarantee that the roads between the villages will be litter free and show Doncaster at its best. The Villages are working hard and doing lots in preparation, so it’s just the connecting roads themselves we need to worry about?”

A. Councillor Bill Mordue gave the following response:-

“Yes of course we will do our best. We want to make sure that when the Borough is on television it is depicting Doncaster in its best light.”

I. Questions to Councillor Jane Nightingale, Cabinet Member for Housing

Q. Councillor Jane Kidd asked Councillor Jane Nightingale:-

“In terms of the bedroom tax, would you agree that this unfair Conservative Policy is unlawful discrimination? Do you agree with me that the bedroom tax should be abolished?”

A. Councillor Jane Nightingale gave the following response:-

“Yes I agree, it should be. It is very badly thought through and we do not have the properties available in Doncaster for people to downsize. The people can’t afford to pay for this and it is an example of inflicting harsh policies on low paid individuals. Families are going into debt and having to pay the price for what the bankers have created in years gone by. They are suffering.”

Q. Councillor John Healy asked Councillor Jane Nightingale the following question:-

“The Housing & Planning Bill is currently going through Parliament.

There are numerous chapters contained in the Bill; on for example Pay to Stay, the Right to Buy enhancements and of its extension to Housing Associations, the selling of high value Council Housing, the loss of secure tenancies for life being replaced by a contract of 3 to 5 years, the loss of the right to succession and so forth.

I believe the impact of the Bill on the people of Doncaster will create instability and uncertainty in our communities.  
Do you agree with me that this proposed legislation will undermine social housing in Doncaster and confirm what action, if any, we can take to support our residents?”

A. Councillor Jane Nightingale gave the following response:-

“Thank you for your question. There are many various chapters to the Housing Bill 2015-16 and as of 26th January 2016 this had its 2nd reading within the House of Lords.

It is envisaged that the Pay to Stay element of the Bill will have huge implications for residents within our communities who rely on Social Housing provided by this Council and its partner St Leger Homes. Currently, until we are advised of the permutation that this will be worked upon it is unclear as to how many will potentially be affected. Though it is thought this information will be gathered via the HMRC and provided to the Council departments as relevant.

I would like to highlight that it is not necessarily going to be the tenant that is deemed the highest earner, it could be another non-dependant person residing at the property. Will this cause further implications to families? I think this could be the case.

The security of tenancies will be brought into doubt via various forms of this Bill and how these changes will be implemented can only create further uncertainty for our residents. After all, this is not just a House to them, it's their Home. Even more so at a time of distress the removal of the right to succession of tenancy will only add further pressures at such difficult times that can occur in families. It is hoped that empathy is used in this case.

But I can assure this chamber that I will be working with all the required officers to seek the information required that details this impact on tenancies of this nature and how we can address this matter where necessary with good advice to those affected.

Within strategic levels of all areas in Housing, Officers and Partners internally and externally are working extremely closely to minimise as much impact of this Bill on our Residents in Doncaster. Though I can only hasten to add the detail will be in the final papers when they return to Parliament for Royal Assent. Currently there are many strikings out and many amendments put forward. Not to mention many opportunities of Lobbying of concerns during this consultation process.

Over the last few years we have not met our House Build target. I am pleased to announce that the target set for 2015/16 year of 920 Houses was met prior to December 2015. In fact, at that point 953 Houses had been built and occupied in Doncaster and we envisage that over 1000 New Homes will have been built by our target end. This is with the hard work and due diligence of our Staff within Housing Departments at all levels and Partnership working. It is a credit to the hard work that has been on-going in Doncaster and this Council since May 2013 and the close working relationships that have been formed.”

Q. Councillor Nick Allen asked Councillor Jane Nightingale:-

“Do you welcome the Conservative Government effort to reduce social rents?”

A. “Yes I do, it's of benefit to tenants, but it does however affect the number of houses we can build up to 2018. We are not going to be building as many as a result and that will put us at a bit of a sticking point.”

J. Questions to Councillor John Mounsey, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

No questions were put to Councillor John Mounsey, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

73 To receive the Minutes of the following Joint Authorities

RESOLVED that the Minutes and Briefing Notes of the following Joint Authorities, be noted:-

- A. South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel held on 16th October, 2015;
- B. Sheffield City Region Combined Authority held on 26th October and 7th December, 2015;
- C. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 30th November, 2015, and Section 41 Briefing Note for December, 2015; and
- D. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority held on 19th November and 3rd and 10th December, 2015.