

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2016

A MEETING of the COUNCIL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE on TUESDAY, 1ST MARCH, 2016, at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Paul Wray
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, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, Pat Haith, James Hart, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Alan Jones, Glyn Jones, Ros Jones, Kenneth Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Andy Pickering, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Alan Smith, Clive Stone, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nuala Fennelly, Richard A Jones, Cynthia Ransome and Jonathan Wood.

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

Councillors George Derx, Mark Houlbrook and Dave Shaw declared a Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No.7, 'Revenue Budget 2016/17', by virtue of being a trustee of the Thorne Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Nick Allen, declared a Non Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 7, 'Revenue Budget 2016/17', by virtue of being a trustee of Homestart Doncaster.

Councillor Rachel Hodson declared a Non Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 7, 'Revenue Budget 2016/17', by virtue of being an employee of UNISON.

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray and Councillors Joe Blackham and Jane Nightingale declared a Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 9, 'Housing Revenue Account Budget 2016/17', by virtue of being members of the St. Leger Homes Board.

75 **Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28th January, 2016.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28th January, 2015, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

76 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, Councillor Paul Wray, made the following announcements:-

'Firstly, I would like to make an announcement with regard to Councillor Tony Revill. I regretfully have to notify you all that he passed away this morning and as a mark of respect, we will now hold one minute's silence.

(Elected Members, Officers and members of the public, observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect and remembrance in relation to the death of Councillor Tony Revill).

'I'm very pleased to announce that following the recent promotion of Doncaster Belles F.C. to the Women's Super League, a reception is being held in their honour tomorrow evening.

Finally, I would like to bring to your attention an event that has recently taken place at Doncaster.

On Friday 19 February 2016, we played host to a medal award ceremony.

In the magnificent setting of the Mansion House and in the presence of family and friends the Ushakov Medal, which is awarded by the Russian Government to British veterans in recognition of their personal courage and bravery displayed during their service on the Arctic Convoys, was presented to veterans by representatives from the Russian Embassy in London.

It was a privilege and an honour to be in attendance and witness the presentation of these medals. It was a very moving and humbling experience and one that I will always remember. It was certainly one of the highlights of my year as Civic Mayor.

I would like therefore to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the veterans of the World War II Arctic Convoys, many of whom are no longer with us, but whose bravery and sacrifice will always be remembered.'

Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transportation made the following announcement:-

'Members will be aware of the news regarding the FARRRS link road and the opening of Great Yorkshire Way this week. This project has been several years in the making and will unlock £1.7bn of Private Sector investment in the area. It will be a major boost to the local economy, and there will be up to 5000 new homes built in the area in the future. I would like to personally thank everyone involved in delivering the project. We delivered this on time and within budget. I look forward to when the connecting road to Rossington also opens at the end of the month.'

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

'This morning I attended a Housing Summit at the Racecourse which was attended by a number of developers and investors. I found it very informative and helped us to see how the Borough is moving forward. We have met our housing target for this year already, and there are still several more weeks to go. It was a very interesting event, and developers and investors seemed very interested in what we had to say.'

77 Questions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.

There were no questions from the public received for this meeting.

Prior to Members' consideration of the report, the Monitoring Officer, Scott Fawcus, reminded Members that it was a requirement of the Constitution, that, a recorded vote was required and would be included in the minutes to show how each Elected Member had voted on the decisions the Council was to take relating to the budget and level of Council Tax. Therefore items 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 would all be subject to a recorded vote and this would be documented in the minutes.

The Monitoring Officer also reminded Members that the Due Regard Statement and Equality Implications were fundamental in making a decision and it was of utmost importance that Members had fully considered the impact on certain groups and individuals and had given due regard to any implications of this decision under the Equality Act.

The Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, presented the report to Council, which sought approval of the Budget proposals for 2016/17.

The Mayor outlined that in 2014, Full Council agreed a three year budget plan - to fix a £109m budget gap caused by the Conservative government cuts and rising costs. This equated to a reduction of more than £305 for every man, woman and child in Doncaster and created a very difficult situation. Overall, the cuts would result in a smaller Council, with fewer staff and ultimately delivering less public services at a time when demand for many services was continually increasing.

The Mayor commented that she was determined that these Government cuts would not set Doncaster back and since becoming Mayor, she had made significant improvements. The Labour Party had led the Council out of government intervention and a long term plan has been put into place, including the following:

- to balance the budget
- modernise the Council
- make better use of technology; and
- retain as many front line services as possible.

The Mayor stated that the Council was on track to deliver the plan and must now complete the job. Continuing to balance the Council's budget and prudently manage its finances were central to the Mayor's Revenue Budget proposals presented to Council.

The specific proposals would look to deliver the remaining £31m of budget reductions required for 2016/17 and included reshaping services, pension and staff savings, and income generation. It also included the continued rollout of 'invest to save' projects, such as installing new energy saving LED street lights and introducing more effective street cleaning and grass cutting equipment. Council noted that the plan has also been updated to take account of recent announcements, most notably the National Living Wage. Also included, was the Government's new social care 'levy' on Council Tax, which was announced by Chancellor George Osborne in his Autumn Statement. The Chancellors 2% 'levy' was an increase in Council Tax in addition to the 1.95% previously agreed by the Council and had to be spent exclusively on adult social care.

The Mayor stated that she did not want to see Council Tax go up by nearly 4%, but the Government had left the Council with little choice. Without it there was the risk of not being able to provide vital services in the future.

The Mayor concluded that she believed these proposals outlined within the report, were prudent and sensible, and will deliver that vision – thus ensuring that vital public services were available for Doncaster's residents both now and in the future.

Finally, the Mayor recommended the proposals to Council.

Following the Mayor's presentation of the report, the Chair of Council outlined to the Chamber that an amendment had been received from the Conservative Group which would be presented to Council by Councillor James Hart. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed it had been submitted in good time to allow for officers to confirm that the proposals, should they be agreed, would be deliverable.

Councillor Hart informed Council that the proposed amendments sought to do two things. Firstly, it was proposed that through modest increases to Building Control fees and Highways fees, income could be generated to provide revenue to account for repayments for a Capital Scheme - a Community Road Safety Scheme. It was proposed that such a scheme would enable local communities to bid for money, and allow for road safety features to be introduced. Councillor Hart stated that this was something that local communities felt would have a huge impact on the welfare of residents, and although the Highways Team may deem this to be non-essential it would in fact be of huge benefit to residents across the Borough, hopefully alleviating the risk of future serious injury or death to victims across the area.

Secondly, Councillor Hart proposed that £250k be allocated from the budget for the commissioning of a 16-23 Careers Service, which would look to tackle the problems of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) across the Borough, particularly in relation to those aged 19-23, where the percentage in Doncaster currently stood at 20%. Councillor Hart added that this was a problem that was staring us in the face, and should be addressed in order to prevent further action in the future. The service should be designed to:-

- Engage;
- Motivate;
- Inform; and
- Empower.

Councillor Hart informed Council that there were currently a lot of innovative schemes in place across the country which were having a real impact on the lives of young people, adding that they couldn't afford to sit back and watch the demise of a generation.

Following the Mayor's presentation of the Revenue Budget proposals, and Councillor James Hart's presentation of the Conservative Party's amendment, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the report and the proposed amendment. Particular reference was made to consideration of the budget proposals by OSMC at their meetings and the thorough and robust discussions undertaken in order to fully scrutinise the proposals. Council learned that during the course of debate at Scrutiny, emphasis had been placed on highways improvements and identifying opportunities to support young people into employment. However, Mayor Jones reiterated the significant financial challenges facing the Council, and although there were some proposals that would be of benefit to communities, it would not be feasible to divert money away from the proposals contained within the budget for 2016/17. However, Mayor Jones offered all political groups the opportunity to engage with her to address future financial challenges and proposals.

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

FOR- 5

Councillors Nick Allen, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, James Hart and Alan Smith.

Against – 42

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Vice Chair of Council, Councillor David Nevett, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, Deputy Mayor,, Councillor Glyn Jones and

Councillors Nigel Ball, Rachel Blake, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, Tony Corden, Jessie Credland, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Neil Gethin, Pat Haith, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes. Allan Jones, Ken Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Sue Knowles, Chris McGuinness, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Clive Stone, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Abstain – 4

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

On being put to the meeting, the amendment to the Revenue Budget 2016/17, proposed by Councillor James Hart, was declared LOST.

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 – 48

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Vice Chair of Council, Councillor David Nevett, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, Deputy Mayor,, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Ball, Rachel Blake, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, Tony Corden, John Cooke, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Jessie Credland, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Neil Gethin, Pat Haith, James Hart, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes. Allan Jones, Ken Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Sue Knowles, Chris McGuinness, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Alan Smith, Clive Stone, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against – 0

Abstain – 3

Councillors Bev Chapman, Sean Gibbons and Andy Pickering.

On being put to the Meeting, the Mayors Revenue Budget 2016/17 was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) The revenue budget proposals for 2016/17 and 2017/18 detailed at Appendix B to the report (savings £40.169m) and Appendix C to the report (pressures £9.264m) be approved;
- (2) Council Tax be increased by 3.95% to £1,190.32 for a Band D property (£793.55 for a Band A) for 2016/17. This includes:
 - i. 2% Chancellor's Social Care "levy" equates to an increase of £22.90 for Band D per annum, £0.44 per week (£15.27 for Band A per annum, £0.29 per week);
 - ii. 1.95% council tax equates to an increase of £22.33 for Band D per annum, £0.43 per week (£14.89 for Band A per annum, £0.29 per week);
- (3) The 2016/17 Grants to 3rd Sector Organisations outlined in paragraph 23 and Appendix E of the report be approved;
- (4) The summary fees and charges analysis shown in Appendix F together with the detailed fees and charges proposed for 2016/17 at Appendix G be approved;

- (5) The Medium Term Financial Plan including all proposals in the report as set out in Appendix I be approved; and
- (6) A gross revenue expenditure budget of £489.2m and a net revenue expenditure budget of £217.1m as detailed in Appendix I to the report be approved.

79 Capital Programme 2016/17 to 2019/20.

The Council considered a report presented by Mayor Jones which outlined the proposals for the Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2019/20.

The Mayor reminded Council of the deep government cuts to the revenue budget, which has vastly reduced the money to spend on running public services every year. However, the Mayor outlined that she would not allow those cuts to take Doncaster backwards and had therefore worked hard to create a Capital Programme that enabled the Council to invest in the borough and its future.

Mayor Jones stated that she was delighted to bring forward proposals to invest £316m in Doncaster over the next four years, at the heart of this was job creation and skills development. The proposals would also look to deliver vital housing projects, school buildings improvements, support for the disabled and elderly, highways investment and town centre regeneration schemes.

If Doncaster and its people were to thrive in the coming years, a successful economy was essential and therefore it was reported that it was necessary to create an environment where businesses want to invest and were able to grow. This would create more jobs – particularly highly skilled, well-paid jobs, and in doing so would need to ensure that local people were supported to make the most of these new opportunities.

To help bring this investment and growth, a key new infrastructure would be delivered with major regeneration projects included as part of this including:-

- The new National College for High Speed Rail;
- Phase two of the FARRRS project - to unlock nearly 400,000 square metres of commercial development space at Doncaster Sheffield airport; and
- Numerous Town Centre regeneration projects including further improvements at Doncaster Market, the civic and cultural quarter, and around the railway station.

Council noted that planning was underway to meet people's on-going needs through different schemes to create:-

- 330 new primary school places
- 140 new council-owned affordable homes; and
- Between 60 and 80 places at new extra care facilities for the elderly, continuing our current build programme

However, Members noted that the proposed Capital Programme would also deliver real improvements more immediately for people, including.

- An estimated 1,200 housing adaptations for the elderly and disabled will be completed each year;
- Improvements in 32 of our schools – with electrical and lighting upgrades, window replacement and heating system improvements helping to create a better learning environment; and
- Further thermal efficiency work will complete a three-year programme which will result in improvements to 1,660 council properties and will reduce tenants' energy bills.

However, the Mayor went on to add that the challenging revenue budget meant that the Council's finances needed to be managed prudently, and therefore it was imperative that the Council must modernise and be innovative, delivering the best overall value for money possible. The Capital budget would help to do this, through 'invest to save' projects, with new equipment and technology improving services and reducing annual running costs to minimise the impact of harsh government cuts.

Mayor Ros Jones concluded her proposals by stating that she felt the Capital Proposals for 2016/17 to 2019/20 were an excellent programme, which both planned for the future and delivered more immediate improvements for local people. Mayor Jones therefore recommended the proposals to Council.

Following consideration of the report, Members of Council were afforded the opportunity to speak on the proposals contained within the report.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor James Hart, welcomed the proposals and offered his support to the Capital Programme, asking for assurance that good quality risk analysis would be carried out and that close monitoring of all schemes would be undertaken.

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 – 48

The Vice Chair of Council, Councillor David Nevett, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, the Deputy Mayor Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachel Blake, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Tony Corden, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Jessie Credland, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Neil Gethin, Pat Haith, James Hart, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, Andy Pickering, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Alan Smith, Clive Stone, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Abstain – 1

Councillor Sean Gibbons.

Against – 0

On being put to the meeting, the Mayor's Capital Programme, was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that Council agreed to approve the Capital Budget proposals for 2016/17 to 2019/20 as set out in the report.

80 Housing Revenue Account Budget 2016/17.

Council considered a report presented by Councillor Jane Nightingale, the Cabinet Member for Housing which sought approval for the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2016/17.

Councillor Nightingale outlined that the report set out the HRA budget for the 2016/17 financial year and the next three years and followed the same strategy as in previous years, with the 2016/17 budget estimated to break even, to have a working balance of £3.0m over the next four years.

Members were informed that the recommendations within this report included the following:-

- That housing rents are decreased by 1% in 2016/17 and in the following three years.

- That charges for garages, garage sites and enclosed gardens are frozen.

The rent decrease was announced by government in the summer budget last year and it was included with the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015/16 which were currently working through the parliamentary process. Councillor Nightingale reiterated that any reduction in housing costs was clearly very beneficial to current tenants in the short term and the average rent in Doncaster would remain the lowest of all Metropolitan Councils at £70.57 per week.

However, Council noted that this change would also mean a significant reduction in the money available to spend on maintaining and improving the Council's housing stock and it would have a significant impact on the Council's capacity to build new Council houses.

Councillor Nightingale added that the Council would also have to consider the other implications of the Government's new social housing policies during the coming months, including the extension of right to buy and 'Pay to Stay'. Unfortunately these Government policies could mean that in the future there would be significantly less affordable housing to rent in Doncaster for residents who need it.

However, Councillor Nightingale assured Council that the Labour administration would continue to build Council housing in Doncaster to meet local need, including the development of 140 new council-owned affordable homes as detailed in the Capital Budget.

The report informed Members that overall the impact of the Government's policies on the Housing Revenue Account transformed a healthy account to one which only just breaks even in four years time, but Councillor Nightingale reassured Council that she was confident that Doncaster Council and St Leger Homes would continue to deliver excellent, value for money services to all their tenants over the next four years and therefore recommended the proposals to Council.

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- 49

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor David Nevett, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachel Blake, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, Tony Corden, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Jessie Credland, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, Pat Haith, James Hart, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, David Nevett, Andy Pickering, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Alan Smith, Clive Stone, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against – 0

Against - 0

On being put to the meeting, the Housing Revenue Account 2016/17 was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that Council agreed to approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget proposals as set out in the report including:-

- (1) Rents be reduced from 4 April, 2016, by 1% as detailed in paragraphs 7 to 10 of the report;

- (2) The budget proposals for the HRA for 2016/17 contained within Appendix A of the report which sets a balanced budget for the HRA and maintains a reserve of £3m; and
- (3) The fees and charges as set out within paragraph 13 of the report.

81 The Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 - 2019/20.

The Council considered a report presented by the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones that sought the approval of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17 to 2019/20.

The Mayor raised a number of points contained within the report which included information on how the strategy managed the Council's banking, money market and capital market transactions, whilst balancing risk and optimum performance. Members noted that there was a requirement to ensure that the Council has access to money to pay its bills and that its finances must be managed in the best interests of local residents.

It was reported that the Treasury Management Strategy proposed a sound, prudent approach to the management of our budgets and was a continuation of the plans agreed last year.

The primary amendments to the Strategy include a review of the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which would help the Council to spread its payments and ensure the best use of the financial tools was being made in order to minimise the impact of Government cuts on local residents.

The Mayor concluded that all the relevant changes have been proposed after consultation with external auditors and this was a sensible approach to Treasury Management and therefore recommended the proposals to Council.

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 – 50

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor David Nevett, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachel Blake, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Tony Corden, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Jessie Credland, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, Pat Haith, James Hart, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, David Nevett, Andy Pickering, Kevin Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Alan Smith, Clive Stone, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against – 0

Abstain - 0

On putting the proposals contained within the report to Council the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20 was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20 report and the Prudential Indicators included be agreed;

- (2) Council note the changes to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy from 2015/16 as set out in paragraphs 22-29 as detailed in Appendix B to the report.

82 Council Tax Setting and Statutory Resolutions 2016/17.

Council considered a report on Council Tax Setting and Resolutions, which made recommendations for Doncaster's Council Tax requirement for 2016/17.

Mayor Ros Jones presented the report which identified the proposals for a 3.95% Council Tax increase, which had been outlined in the Revenue Budget report agreed by Council earlier in the meeting.

The Mayor reported that the proposal included an increase in Council tax of 1.95% as set out in the 3 year budget plan and in addition, the government's 2% social care 'levy', would be implemented, which was announced by the Chancellor George Osborne in the Autumn Statement. All of the additional money raised will be used to help manage the growing pressure on adult social care services.

Council noted that the 2% social care precept would equate to £1.77m in additional income for the Council. However it was pointed out that this would not cover all the additional costs and spending pressures in social care that were continually rising, with these estimated to be over £7m for the next financial year.

Mayor Jones outlined to Members that the proposal meant a total Council Tax increase of 66 pence per week for a Band A property – this included the Fire Service and Police precept and was representative of the majority of homes in Doncaster. However, it was pointed out that this excluded Town and Parish Council precepts where relevant. Nonetheless, despite the rise, at this stage it was expected that of the 91 Metropolitan districts and Unitary authorities across the country, Doncaster would still have the seventh lowest Council Tax in 2016/17.

The Mayor stated that she had considered long and hard whether to propose a Council Tax increase of almost 4%, but concluded that it would be irresponsible not to. Given the scale of government cuts facing Doncaster, it was felt necessary in order to uphold the Council's responsibility to ensure that public services were to be sustained in the future.

The Mayor concluded by stating that the government could have chosen not to cut Council funding so dramatically, but instead its clear direction of travel was to increase Council Tax. As the money raised from this Council Tax increase would go some small way towards mitigating the effects of these cuts, Mayor Ros Jones therefore commended the report to Council.

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 – 50

The Chair of Council, Councillor Paul Wray, the Vice-Chair of Council, Councillor David Nevett, the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones and Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Ball, Iris Beech, Joe Blackham, Rachel Blake, Elsie Butler, Phil Cole, John Cooke, Tony Corden, Jane Cox, Steve Cox, Jessie Credland, Linda Curran, George Derx, Susan Durant, Neil Gethin, Sean Gibbons, Pat Haith, James Hart, John Healy, Rachel Hodson, Charlie Hogarth, Sandra Holland, Mark Houlbrook, Eva Hughes, Alan Jones, Ken Keegan, Majid Khan, Jane Kidd, Ted Kitchen, Pat Knight, Sue Knowles, Chris McGuinness, Sue McGuinness, John McHale, Bill Mordue, John Mounsey, Jane Nightingale, David Nevett, Andy Pickering, Kevin

Rodgers, Craig Sahman, Dave Shaw, Alan Smith, Clive Stone, Austen White and Sue Wilkinson.

Against – 0

Abstain – 0

On being put to the meeting, the recommendation contained within the report was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED that Council Approved the level of Council Tax for 2016/17 and to pass the appropriate statutory resolutions as set out and recommended at Appendix B, including the Council Tax requirement for 2016/17 including:-

83 Annual Pay Policy Statement 2016/17.

Council received a report presented by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones that detailed the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17. The Pay Policy Statement set out the Council's policy for paying staff, in particular its Chief Officers and detailed the relationship between the highest, lowest and average paid employees in the organisation.

The policy statement is a public document and is published on the Council's website each year. It clearly demonstrates a willingness to increase accountability, transparency and fairness in setting pay and also includes information about where more detailed salary information is published as part of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.

The Deputy Mayor drew Members' attention to the following points:-

- There has once again been a positive reduction in pay ratios, meaning there is less of a gap between the highest and lowest paid staff.
- The current ratio between the highest salary and lowest salary has reduced from 9.84 to 1 last year to 9.36 to 1 this year, and continues to compare favourably with other local authorities in the local area.
- This year includes the potential of a 1% pay award to be implemented from 1st April 2016. A collective agreement has also been reached with the Trade Unions relating to changes to the Council's pay structure under revised Terms and Conditions. These will also take effect from the 1st April 2016; and there has also been an overall reduction again in the number of Chief Officer posts reducing from 20 down to 19.

Councillor Glyn Jones reported that as an authority, the Council was committed to reducing the pay difference and to increasing lower rates of pay and it was outlined that the Council has been able to achieve improvement in its pay ratios as a result of adopting the living wage.

Members noted that it wasn't anticipated that this policy would need to be amended during its period (April 2016 to March 2017). However if circumstances meant that a change of policy was required, any amendments would be included in the following year's statement presented to full Council.

The Deputy Mayor concluded by recommending Council note the contents of the report and approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17.

Following consideration of the report, Members of Council were afforded the opportunity to comment. A number of comments were voiced on the report, whereby concerns were raised regarding the salaries of the highest earners in Chief Officer posts. However, it was reiterated to Members, that only a 1% pay increase would be awarded to Chief Officers, with the Chief

Executive herself forgoing all pay awards, remaining on the original salary agreed by Council when she was appointed to the post.

RESOLVED that Council agreed to note the contents of the report and approved the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17.

84 Sheffield City Region Devolution Agreement: Ratification of the Proposal.

Council considered a report that detailed the proposal for the Sheffield City Region Devolution Agreement. Mayor Ros Jones presented the report, and stressed to Members that the proposal in front of Council was one of the most significant changes to local government arrangements in many years. Regional Devolution offered a major opportunity to bring additional decision making powers and economic development funding to the Sheffield City Region. Mayor Jones informed Members that the principle behind the agreement was that many decisions are better made locally, by people who understand the area, rather than in the corridors of Whitehall. The devolution agreement would look to build upon the current Combined Authority arrangements and would provide the Council with an opportunity to take more control over its future.

Members noted that the proposed deal would devolve power and funding from London to the City Region and was specifically focused on economic development. In particular it covers areas including major infrastructure schemes, housing, transport and skills – all of which are vital to Doncaster's future.

The Mayor added that as part of the proposal, £900m of additional funding would be made available to the region over the next 30 years. In Doncaster it had already been demonstrated how funding of this magnitude could be utilised to facilitate job creation, house building and skills development. This was particularly evident in relation to the new Great Yorkshire Way, which was a great example of this.

Mayor Jones advised Members that as part of the negotiations Doncaster had fought hard to get a good deal for not only the Borough but also the wider region. In addition to the extra funding, Doncaster will work with government and seek to build on the National Rail College – which opens next year – and develop a new National Institute for Infrastructure, Construction and Engineering.

Members noted that as part of the agreement, Regional Devolution also requires an elected city region Mayor. The new Mayor would have a specific role and the arrangements would not take any existing powers away from Doncaster. If ratified, the city region would elect its first mayor in May 2017.

The Mayor informed Council that all nine SCR local authorities would consider this decision individually at meetings of their Full Council. If agreed, the Combined Authority would look to ratify the deal later this month. In conclusion, the Mayor stated that she had thought long and hard about the 'Devolution Deal', and on balance, felt that this is the best offer available, and that ratification of the proposal was in Doncaster's best long term interests. Mayor Ros Jones therefore recommended the proposal to Council.

Following presentation of the report and the proposals before them, Members of Council were afforded the opportunity to comment on the decision they were being asked to make. A number of comments were voiced in support of the proposal with widespread support voiced for the devolution agreement, with Councillors believing that this was in Doncaster's best interest to endorse this.

Councillor John Mounsey, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, informed Council that this issue had been considered at a meeting of the Committee on 12 January, 2016. Councillor Mounsey commented that an exhaustive discussion had been held

on this, with the Committee coming to the unanimous conclusion that the devolution agreement before them was in fact the best way forward for Doncaster. A wide range of issues had been covered during the debate at the Scrutiny meeting, and it was felt that this would positively benefit the people of Doncaster to move forward with this.

Councillor James Hart, Leader of the Conservative Group offered support for the devolution agreement, and urged the Mayor to represent the Council on Doncaster's behalf, taking up all available opportunities offered to the area to achieve the best outcome for Doncaster.

Mayor Ros Jones thanked Council for its support, and added that it was a very important decision for Doncaster as the additional resources would go a long way in benefiting the people and the area.

RESOLVED that Council:-

- (1) note the work that has taken place since the proposal was put forward in October 2015 – in particular those matters detailed in Appendix B of the report;
- (2) take into account that an online consultation exercise took place from the 2 December, 2015 to 15 January, 2016, including the summary of the consultation detailed in Appendix C to the report;
- (3) endorse the devolution agreement set out in Appendix C to the report; and
- (4) delegate authority to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Mayor) to consent to the enabling Orders required.

85 Doncaster Local Plan - Housing Distribution and Vision Aims and Objectives.

Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transportation presented a report to Members that provided information on Doncaster's Local Plan.

The report informed Council that the Local Plan sets out planning policies and new development sites for Doncaster to meet its development needs over the next 15 years. This would be based on a vision for growth and new investment coming to Doncaster. This included the now opened FARRRS link road to a growing Doncaster Sheffield Airport, development at the lport getting underway, the largest number of new homes being built since 2000, and the Unity project which once underway, would benefit the north west of the borough. Councillor Blackham stated that the aim was to see further growth in the borough supporting the future of its young people with new skills, new homes and a great place to live in.

The report asked that the emerging Local Plan vision with its aims and objectives be noted, setting out a more positive future for Doncaster. To achieve this, Doncaster would not only need to have the housing to support local needs, but also provide for a growing workforce that was located in places that would ensure residents could live in safe, attractive and sustainable locations. The report set out a draft strategy for where the Council should locate new housing, and took account of over 600 responses received from the 'Issues and Options' consultation undertaken in summer 2015, as well as the sustainability appraisal and national polices.

Councillor Blackham informed Members that the strategy importantly placed a priority on protecting the environment and supporting regeneration in Doncaster's towns and accessible locations, but also provided the possibility of developing a greater range of deliverable sites. The strategy would form an important part of the Local Plan that Full Council was due to consider later in 2016, and underpin the ongoing work assessing housing sites that the Local Plan would designate for development.

Councillor Blackham asked Full Council to approve the draft strategy attached to the report in appendix A for consultation in addition to supporting the recommendations to publish the plan's updated vision, aims and objectives .

Councillor Blackham concluded by pointing out that Council needed to note an amendment to the recommendation. Consultation on the Strategy would be undertaken for a 6 week period rather than the 4 weeks stated in the report in order to enable stakeholders to respond due to part of the consultation period crossing over the Easter holiday period. Following his presentation, Councillor Blackham invited Jeremy Johnson, Local Plans Policy Manager, to address Council in terms of a minor amendment to the report that he wished to clarify. This was a minor error relating to the figures quoted on p321 of the agenda, and with regard to housing arising from economic growth, the number of 5489, should instead read as 5070.

Following consideration of the report, Members were afforded the opportunity to comment, and in response to concerns raised, Councillor Blackham advised Members to urge their constituents to comment in the consultation in order to ensure their voices were heard and any concerns addressed.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) Council approve the draft housing distribution strategy document (appendix A) for a 6 week period of consultation; and
- (2) Council note the intention to publish the draft Vision, Aims and Objectives of the Local Plan (Appendix B to the report) and publish on the Local Plan website.

86 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:-

"I am grateful for the response which you gave to my question about SUEZ which you answered at the previous meeting of the council held on 28th January. In your response to my questions, you explained that you have asked SUEZ to consider making a payment over and above the contractual damages as a 'goodwill gesture'. Have they made this payment and how much did DMBC receive. If they have not made such a payment, when are they going to?"

(B) "Thank you for your question Cllr Allen.

Following the delay to waste and recycling collections after the Christmas break, SUEZ has agreed to make a total payment of £50,000 covering contractual liquidated damages and including a significant donation.

This is in recognition of the disruption to residents and additional costs incurred by the Council.

We will seek to invest the money with the community, and look at environmental improvements, and education and awareness raising activities about waste reduction and recycling."

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

- (Q) “Mayor Jones, how much was the ‘significant donation’ that you refer to, and would you be willing to spend part of this £50k on road safety in the Borough?”
- (A) “The £50k was broken down in to £15k of contractual liquidated damages, and £35k was the significant donation. As yet, it has not been identified where this money will be spent, but I can assure you it will be going back into the community.”

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

“Can I ask what procedure was used for the appointment of Kim Curry, the new Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing?”

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

“This was done via an agreement with the Chief Executive to get the best person into the position to bring about real changes in the Directorate.”

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

“I welcome the opening of the FARRRS Route but I was disappointed to see that no local Ward Members were present at the tape cutting ceremony. In fact, I was disgusted at this.”

A. The Mayor gave the following response:-

“As I have previously stated, when the ‘spur’ road to Rossington is opened, all Local Ward Members will be invited to the opening.”

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

No questions were put to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Equalities.

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

No questions were put to Councillor Joe Blackham, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transportation.

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

Q. Councillor Alan Smith asked the following question:-

“In terms of the Digital Council Strategy, whilst I appreciate digital advancements are necessary, certain parts of the Borough have poor broadband and it is not accessible. Could you please update us on the project and is it still on track for April 2017?”

A. Councillor Tony Corden gave the following response:-

“We have been progressing this project and are working on the document for interested parties to submit their bids. It still needs more work but progress is being made.”

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

“From that, I can’t go back to people and tell them it will be operational by 2017.”

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

In the absence of Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, the Chair of Council informed Members that any questions for Councillor Fennelly should be submitted in writing to the Executive Office after this meeting and that the Cabinet Member would respond accordingly.

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

Q. Councillor Jane Kidd asked Councillor Chris McGuinness:-

“I’m sure that no one wants to see the Women’s Aid Centre closed. It is of great value and is an independent centre that takes referrals from a wide range of institutions and is a great support to those suffering from domestic violence and does a great job in preventing it. Are we doing all we can to help it to survive?”

A. Councillor Chris McGuinness gave the following response:-

“I have set up a meeting with the Children’s Trust, Officers and representatives from Women’s Aid, but the options for with dealing with it are limited. I have set up a second meeting, and have asked them to come up with a structure and attach all the related costs and there is now another meeting scheduled for Friday, 4 March. Hopefully these meetings will be successful and we will come up with a structure to keep the centre going, and build on what we have got, rather than lose a very valuable service altogether.”

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

Q. Councillor Nick Allen asked the following question:-

“My Ward colleague, Councillor Gethin asked a question at a previous meeting about the possibility of having a plaque put up to commemorate the work of Thomas Rainsborough? Has any action been taken to implement this as I think it’s important that people are able to pay their respects?”

A. Councillor Bill Mordue gave the following response:-

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“We have been making progress with this, possibly not as much as should have been as he is possibly not as well recognised as he should be. I believe it will be a good thing to see a plaque put up in his name and I will ask Officers to do some more work on this in order to report back with a firm proposal.”

Q. Councillor James Hart asked the following question:-

“With regard to the Inward Investment Pilot Scheme, Decision Reference K1255, taken in October, 2014, I believe this was driven by Bob Johnson, your predecessor and included themes such as speculative builds, job creation grants and project set up grants. This was scheduled to be reviewed 6 months after its inception or at £250k spend. If possible could we have sight of this review, and indicate when the post 12 month impact assessment is likely to be available?”

A. Councillor Bill Mordue gave the following response:-

“This was indeed set up by my predecessor, and I know a number of payments were set up to various groups but I don’t have the facts so I will provide you with a written response.”

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

Q. Councillor Nick Allen asked the following question:-

“I want to know what support DMBC has given to residents who wish to exercise their right to buy their Council houses and what amendments have been made to the Right to Buy policy over the last generation or so?”

A. Councillor Jane Nightingale gave the following response:-

“I imagine they will get all the support they need but I will go back to officers to see what information I can get and provide you with a response.”

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.

87 Approval of Councillor Absence.

Further to the attendance of Councillor Ted Kitchen at the Meeting, the Chair advised that this item would no longer be considered by Council.

88 Annual Report on Executive Decisions taken under Special Urgency Provisions.

Council considered a report that detailed the key decisions taken under ‘Special Urgency’ between the period 3rd March, 2015 and 22nd February, 2016. The report informed Members that the law required all decisions taken under ‘Special Urgency’ provisions, had to be reported to Full Council on an annual basis.

The report informed Council that one decision had been taken by the Mayor under Special Urgency provisions during the period:-

DECC Central Heating Fund

The decision was taken by Mayor Ros Jones in consultation with Councillor John Mounsey, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 11 September, 2015.

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

RESOLVED that Council note the content of the report.

89 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 27th November, 2015;
- B. Sheffield City Region Combined Authority held on 1st February, 2016;
- C. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority held on 4th January, 2016, and Section 41 Briefing Note for February, 2016; and
- D. South Yorkshire Pensions Authority held on 14th January, 2016.