

FINANCE AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Wednesday, 7th May 2025 at 14:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor David Bennett in the Chair

Councillors Rowan Clarke (Vice-Chair), Steve Fritchley, Justin Gilbody and Janet Tait.

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Director of Strategic Services), Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal and Monitoring Officer), Ian Barber (Deputy Chief Executive, DDL), Lesley Botham (Customer Services Manager), Cheryl Staples (Programme and Projects Officer), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer), and Matthew Kerry (Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was the Cabinet Member for Resources Councillor Clive Moesby, and the Chair of Customer Services Scrutiny Committee Councillor Vicky Waplington.

FCO41-24/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Duncan McGregor.

FCO42-24/25 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to be considered.

FCO43-24/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

FCO44-24/25 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Justin Gilbody and seconded by Councillor Janet Tait

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25th Feb be approved as a true and correct record.

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FCO45-24/25 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Committee considered the List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private.

RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in the Private document be noted.

FCO46-24/25 CORPORATE AMBITIONS PERFORMANCE UPDATE - OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2024 (Q4 - 2024/25)

The Committee considered a report presented by the Programme and Projects Officer, which provided an update on performance for Quarter 4 of 2024/25 under the Council's Corporate Ambitions. The Officer explained that the majority of Council targets were either on track or had been achieved, with only 6% reported as not on track. Out of 54 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the vast majority had been achieved or showed a positive outturn, while only 9% had a negative outturn.

The Programme and Projects Officer referred to Appendix 1, "Our Customers", and highlighted performance under indicator CSP07, which measured external satisfaction with Customer Services via real-time feedback. This indicator was relatively new, having been introduced in Quarter 2. Performance across the quarters showed a decline: 82% in Q2, 75% in Q3, and 69% in Q4 against a target of 85%. The Q4 data was based on 805 surveys issued, with 79 responses received. Of these, 70% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service received. It was noted that some feedback related to services outside of Customer Services and that 13 responses required further follow-up. The Customer Services Manager provided additional context, noting that the new methodology for collecting satisfaction data was introduced in Q2, meaning there was not yet a full year of comparable data. Additionally, the surveys were conducted via email and Live Chat, with telephone feedback not currently included, which may have impacted overall figures.

In relation to Financial Services, the Programme and Projects Officer explained that Q4 data for the KPI concerning the percentage of sundry debtor arrears collected was not yet available due to year-end processes. The relevant teams had been working collaboratively to pursue recovery, and several instalment agreements were in place, which would delay reaching full collection targets.

A Member raised a query regarding the Human Resources KPI on days lost to sickness per full-time equivalent (HR01). The Programme and Projects Officer referred to the attached explanation in the report which explained that Quarter 4 had recorded the highest sickness absence figures since 2022/23, primarily due to 19 cases of long-term absence. Of these, 14 were attributed to physical health issues and 5 to stress or depression, with 2 of the latter being work-related. Ten employees had since returned to work, while seven remained absent and two had resigned.

The Programme and Projects Officer also informed the Committee that Q4 data for Revenues and Benefits KPI 12 was not yet available, as it depended on figures still to be published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

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The Committee was then referred to Appendix 2, “Our Environment”. It was noted that target ENV.03 had been withdrawn.

In response to a Member’s question about progress on the food waste collection service, the Director of Strategic Services confirmed that orders had been placed for new collection vehicles, which were expected to arrive in November. North East Derbyshire District Council would be vacating the Riverside Depot to accommodate the new fleet. The Council had already procured 23-litre food waste caddies, which were currently in storage. An application had been submitted to vary the Council’s operator licence to facilitate vehicle operations from the depot. Contact was being made with other authorities using similar vehicles to gather insights, and policies would be amended or drafted in preparation for implementation. Capital and transitional funding had been secured from the government, and the Council was awaiting further updates from DEFRA regarding new burdens revenue funding. The project remained on track.

The Programme and Projects Officer advised that Q4 figures for ENV.06 were not available at the time of reporting due to outstanding data required from DEFRA. Of the eight Council targets under the Environment theme, six were on track, one was not on track, and one had been extended. In terms of KPIs, one had a negative outturn, one was within target, and the remaining eight were showing a positive outturn. It was noted that the dog fouling KPI (EH05) was currently behind target due to staffing shortages.

Moving on to Appendix 3, “Our Economy”, the Programme and Projects Officer referred to a supplementary document issued prior to the meeting, which contained updated data following the original report’s publication. Five out of the seven targets within this theme were on track, while two had been extended. The Chair queried the acronym “RLB” referenced in ECO.04. The Deputy Chief Executive of Dragonfly Development Limited (DDL) clarified that this referred to Rider Levett Bucknall UK Ltd, an architectural firm working in partnership with DDL.

In reference to Appendix 4, “Housing”, the Officer reported that of the ten targets, one had been achieved, one had been achieved outside the target date, seven were on target, and one was not on track. The Chair queried the number of properties planned for construction on Mill Lane under Key Council Target 2. The Strategic Director of Services confirmed that 38 properties were to be built.

KPI performance in the Housing theme showed most targets within range, with only one negative outturn. The Officer highlighted Housing KPI 05, which measured the average number of working days from Dragonfly handover to re-let. The indicator had been skewed by two long-term voids totalling 251 days.

The Committee was then directed to Appendix 5, “Dragonfly KPIs”. The Chair made a comment on voids, encouraging DDL to improve performance in this area. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive of DDL explained that the negative outturns were largely due to agreed reductions in capital spending. These reductions were made in consultation with BDC Housing Management through the Business Plan Monitoring Group, in anticipation of outcomes from the Council’s recent stock condition survey. As a result, budget underspends in areas such as welfare adaptations, external doors, heating, kitchens, and the Bramley Vale and Safe and Warm schemes were deliberate and prudent.

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Updates were also provided in Appendix 5 of the report on compliance with commercial building standards, particularly in relation to lift inspections. At the Riverside Depot, access issues delayed an inspection, but remedial work had been ordered and a re-inspection was scheduled for the end of April. At Tangent Business Park, it was identified that a LOLER inspection list had a lift missing off the list supplied. Once identified this was rectified; all other safety checks were being undertaken and the lift was safe to use throughout and was now included on the inspection schedule.

An update on the Facilities Management contract with Dodd Group was also included in the appendix, which commenced on 1 October 2024. Initial performance was below standard, attributed by Dodd to early “teething problems”. It was agreed that this grace period ended on 1 January 2025. Since then, performance had improved, with weekly and monthly performance management meetings in place to monitor progress.

In relation to void turnaround times, issues with the previous electrical contractor necessitated re-procurement. A new provider had been identified. In the interim, in-house electricians were working overtime and additional contractors were trialled to mitigate losses in service delivery.

The Chair and Members expressed concern over the clarity and presentation of the data in the performance reports. The Programme and Projects Officer acknowledged these concerns and confirmed that her team would be undertaking a review of the reporting format. An improved layout and approach were expected to be implemented from the next quarter.

Moved by Councillor Steve Fritchley and seconded by Councillor Rowan Clarke
RESOLVED that the report be noted

FCO47-24/25 WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

Committee considered their work programme 2024/25 presented by the Scrutiny Officer.

Moved by Councillor Janet Tait and seconded by Councillor Rowan Clarke
RESOLVED that the work programme 2024/25 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 14:30 hours.