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 Thursday, 23rd July 2026 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor David Bennett in the Chair

Councillors Duncan McGregor (Vice-Chair), Steve Fritchley, Duncan Haywood and Janet Tait.

Officers:- Jessica Clayton (Major Projects and Programme Manager), Theresa Fletcher (Strategic Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Strategic Director of Legal, Governance and Monitoring Officer), Cheryl Staples (Programme and Projects Officer), Angelika Kaufhold (Governance and Civic Manager), Coby Bunyan (Scrutiny Officer), Danielle Badnarek (Governance and Civic Officer) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, were Councillors Donna Hales (Deputy Leader of the Council), Clive Moesby (Portfolio Holder for Resources), Cathy Jeffery (Junior Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing) (from Minute No. FCO13-26/27), Deborah Watson (Leader of the Opposition) and Gez Kinsella (Member of Amber Valley Borough Council – Belper South).

FCO8-26/27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Rowan Clarke, Tom Kirkham and Catherine Tite.

FCO9-26/27 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to be considered.

FCO10-26/27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made.

FCO11-26/27 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Steve Fritchley and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd June 2026 be approved as a true and correct record.

FCO12-26/27 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

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

Moved by Councillor David Bennett and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that the updated List of Key Decisions and Items to be considered in Private in the additional document be noted.

FCO13-26/27 ANNUAL CORPORATE DEBT MONITORING PERFORMANCE REPORT 2025/26

The Strategic Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented the report to the Committee.

Table 1 of the report detailed the sources of income for the Council as at 31st March 2026 (and 2025 for comparison). The figures showed an increase in income billed in the year for Business Rates, Council Tax, and housing rents (as would be expected with an annual increase usually applied to these sources of income).

The small reduction in income from housing benefit overpayments was good news (less claimants had received too much benefit, resulting in less income to reclaim). The decrease in the sundry debtor income was due mainly to the reduction in the Dragonfly Companies' invoices raised in Quarter 4 2025/26 (staff and services were brought into the Council).

Table 2 of the report detailed the level of Council Tax debt as at 31st March 2026 (and 2025 for comparison). The figures showed a decrease for all income sources apart from Council Tax (individuals were still struggling to pay, depending on their individual circumstances – as always, payment plans had been agreed to help debtors not get into Council tax debt if possible).

The current levels of Council Tax debt were at their highest in recent years.

Table 3 of the report detailed the provision for impairment for each class of debtor at 31st March 2026 for the previous 2 financial years – the Council had been able to reduce the impairment provision for all but Council Tax in 2025/26 (the reductions would be transferred to the Council's revenue accounts as part of calculating the outturn).

Table 4 of the report detailed for 2025/26 the movement since the previous financial year in the value of each source of income, the amount that was outstanding as debt, and the impairment allowance which related to that source of income – in 2025/26 the Council had raised £0.103m (net) more in income, debts had decreased £0.905m, and the impairment allowances reduced £0.418m (net).

Table 5 of the report detailed the value of bad debts written off over 2025/26 – it was noted that in all cases every attempt was made to collect the outstanding debt before any write-off was proposed.

Compared to 2024/25, the Council had written off £0.101m more in 2025/26 – mainly for Council Tax debt and sundry debtors.

A Member expressed concern on the provision of warning letters to residents regarding debts – it was unknown if a limited lack of prior warning was down to Council systems or Royal Mail's ongoing performance issues in delivering letters, but material evidence was on hand to prove the lack of prior warning. The Strategic Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer informed the Council's systems generated all tasks automatically and that it was unknown if there were any issues present.

However, it was stated The Arc, Clowne's postcode appeared to have issues as did other postal areas within the District. A Member concurred, noting Council agendas were not being delivered even before meetings (a Planning Committee agenda, sent by 1st Class Stamp, was dated 26th June 2026 but was not received until 14th July 2026 – it was recommended Members inform the Governance and Civic Team if they experienced the same issues).

It was agreed the lack of prior warning letters being sent could be discussed further after the meeting.

A Member noted good work had been achieved in 2025/26, with £103,000 additional income raised, arrears decreasing by £905,134, and the impairment allowance being reduced by £417,563.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Janet Tait
RESOLVED that Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee note the report concerning the Council's Corporate Debt as at 31st March 2026.

FCO14-26/27 FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2025/26 REPORT

The Strategic Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer presented the report and provided an additional presentation to the Committee.

On 12th June 2026, the Council's draft Statement of Accounts 2025/26 was completed. The draft Accounts were now subject to the independent audit from the Council's external auditor, Forvis Mazars, and the group accounts section of the financial statements contained figures taken from the Dragonfly Companies' unaudited financial statements, which were subject to audit from their independent external auditor, Hewittcard Chartered Certified Accountants.

The Strategic Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer informed that until both sets of these accounts had been agreed by their respective auditor, there remained the possibility that they would be subject to amendment but once completed, details of these accounts would be provided to Members for review.

The General Fund outturn position was summarised at the attached Appendix 1.

The main variances against the current budget were detailed in Table 1 of the report, with variances at service level attached at Appendix 2.

Variances of note were Go!Active and the ICT service. A Member noted the contribution to reserves of nearly £4 million was good though it was noted spending in many resources / departments had been considerably overestimated.

The use of earmarked reserves in 2025/26 was £1.096m – this reflected the expenditure incurred on projects at 31st March 2026 (which had approval to use earmarked reserves).

At the end of the 2025/26 financial year, it had been necessary to agree transfers into reserves in preparation for future expenditure commitments. Transfers to reserves totalled £9.036m – £3.863m higher than originally forecast. These consisted of the following:

- £0.100m contribution to the IT Reserve to fund future expenditure requirements;
- £0.100m contribution to the Legal Costs Reserve in preparation to fund future specialist legal advice;
- £0.100m contribution to the 3G Pitch Carpet Replacement Reserve, as a requirement of the grant conditions from an external funder;
- £1m transfer to the Transformation Reserve for potential ‘invest to save’ projects;
- £1.754m transfer to the National Non-Domestic Rates Growth Protection Reserve being the pooling income directly attributable to business rates;
- £0.700m contribution to the Local Government Reorganisation Reserve established; and,
- £0.109m transfer to the General Reserve as the remainder of the in-year surplus.

The General Fund Balances were considered to be at an acceptable level for a lower-tier local authority – £2.001m.

More information was requested on the spending of the £15 million Regeneration Fund granted by the UK Government. Concern was additionally raised on the Shirebrook Market spend of £2 million – was progress being made.

The Strategic Director of Legal, Governance and Monitoring Officer informed an email containing a report had been sent to the Audit Committee after its meeting on 16th July 2026, and a further report would be taken to the Audit Committee in due course to inform Members throughout the process. It was additionally noted currently no concerns were present on the spend with only a few legal issues to address – the Council had appointed external solicitors to address these issues.

A Member appreciated the answer – it remained important to review all spending of the £15 million Regeneration Fund.

The Deputy Leader of the Council noted the minutes of the Strategic Commissioning Board could be provided to future Committee meetings to inform of progress being made, and that Members were free to attend future meetings of the Strategic Commissioning Board if preferred.

The Strategic Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer continued, providing further details to the Committee on the Housing Revenue Account, Capital Expenditure, Treasury Management and Earmarked Reserves (with further information available within the report).

The Portfolio Holder for Resources noted the report provided great news on the Council's finances – while Council Tax Debts was a concern, adjustments could be made to support residents to clear their debts.

Savings across many businesses and departments at the Council was welcomed, enabling financial options / opportunities to be available.

The Council was progressing in the right direction and would provide both a legacy to the District and a strong starting position to the proposed unitary authority.

A Member not of the Committee raised concerns on the businesses and departments not spending what had been expected – it was asked if effective / appropriate services were still being provided to residents. The Portfolio Holder for Resources welcomed any meeting with Members to address / discuss any concerns held on this.

Moved by Councillor David Bennett and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that: 1) Members note the outturn position in respect of the 2025/26 financial year;

2) Members note the transfers to general fund earmarked reserves of £3.863m as outlined in detail in paragraph 2.3;

3) Members note the transfer to HRA earmarked reserves of £0.586m as outlined in detail in paragraph 2.16; and,

4) Members note the proposed carry forward of capital budgets detailed in Appendix 5 totalling £11.560m.

Councillor Clive Moesby left the meeting at 10:32 hours.

FCO15-26/27 BOLSOVER DISTRICT OUR LEGACY AMBITION 2024-2028: 2026 MID-TERM REVIEW

The Deputy Leader of the Council introduced and presented the report to the Committee, with the Major Projects and Programme Manager present to provide further details and a demonstration of the proposed virtual dashboard to review Council performance.

Bolsover – The Future 2024–2028 had established the Council's long-term vision across 4 strategic aims:

- Customers;
- Environment;
- Economy; and,
- Housing.

Progress had been consistently monitored and reported through quarterly governance processes, managed quarterly across 33 targets, 93 Key Performance Indicators and Service Plans.

Key achievements over the previous 2 years included:

- Customers (achieved a 97% or higher on-track completion rate for corporate plan targets and responded quickly to Freedom of Information Act requests and complaints);
- Economy (secured major funding packages, including a £15m regeneration boost and continued rollout of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding £2,767,016 to support local people, community groups, skills, and businesses);
- Environment (outperformed yearly targets for health intervention programmes, such as providing adults with personal exercise plans and successfully began weekly food waste collections); and,
- Housing (commissioned a Local Housing Needs study to better understand affordable housing requirements and consistently overachieved against homelessness targets on both preventing and relief cases).

A midterm structured review had taken place with details included in the report – the draft review was attached at Appendix 1. Members were asked to consider and provide feedback on the reviewed corporate plan, the Bolsover: ' Our Legacy Ambition'(2026–2028) proposed document, and the associated performance data.

The reviewed corporate plan would monitor 49 Targets, 95 Key Performance Indicators and 18 Service Plans.

It was noted the proposed virtual dashboard would aim in future to provide live performance information to all staff and Members of the Council. The Major Projects and Programme Manager confirmed comparison to previous years' data would also be available in the dashboard.

A Member noted it would be excellent for the Council to demonstrate the performance being achieved. The Roseland Park and Crematorium, Shirebrook had also proven excellent, as had the other housing developments carried out by the Council. In all, the Council would be able to bow out gracefully in 2028.

A Member noted it was an excellent report, residents would be able to see all the work being achieved and thanked the team for their work. The Chair echoed the Committee's thanks.

Moved by Councillor Steve Fritchley and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that: 1) the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee consider and provide feedback on the refreshed corporate plan, Bolsover: 'Our Legacy Ambition' (2026–2028) and associated performance framework, Targets and KPIs and contribution to the Local Outcomes Framework; and,

2) the use of the corporate dashboard as the primary mechanism for quarterly performance monitoring be supported and noted.

FCO16-26/27 FINANCE & CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2026/27

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Work Programme 2026/27, attached at Appendix 1, to the Committee.

Moved by Councillor David Bennett and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that Members review this report and the Programme attached at Appendix 1 for approval and amendment as required. All Members are advised to contact the Scrutiny Officer should they have any queries regarding future meetings.

The Chair thanked all those in attendance.

The meeting concluded at 10:49 hours.