

The Council's Ambition

This working draft of Bolsover District Council's Growth Strategy focusses on how the Development Directorate will prioritise its own work and its work with internal and external partners to achieve the Council's ambition:

To become a dynamic, self-sufficient and flexible Council that delivers excellent services, whilst adapting to local aspirations and acting as the economic and environmental driver for Bolsover District

Priorities

To maintain focus on achieving the Council's ambition the strategy is organised around the Council's economic priorities:

1. Making the best use of our assets;
2. Ensuring financial sustainability and increasing revenue streams;
3. Unlocking Development Potential: unlocking the capacity of major employment sites;
4. Enabling Housing Growth: increasing the supply, quality and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population and support economic growth;
5. Working with partners to support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills; and
6. Promoting the District and working with partners to increase tourism

Building Back Better

This strategy also aligns with a shared ambition to 'build back better' and support cleaner and more inclusive growth following recovery from the pandemic. Therefore, this strategy also takes into account the Council's priorities for its customers and the environment including:

- Reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same;
- Enhancing biodiversity and developing attractive neighbourhoods that residents feel proud of and take responsibility for;
- Actively engaging with partners to benefit our communities;
- Promoting equality and diversity and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people;

- Providing good quality council housing where people choose to live; and
- Improving health, wellbeing and increasing participation in sport and leisure activities

Outputs

The actions set out in this strategy will support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills and makes the best use of our assets whilst supporting clean and inclusive economic growth.

The actions set out in this strategy have already contributed to generating income in excess of £1.5million the Council would not have normally achieved.

The actions set out in this strategy are projected to earn an additional £million of additional income for the Council if they were all to be successfully achieved.

The actions set out in this strategy are projected to earn an additional £million of additional income per annum for the Council if they were all to be successfully achieved

Council Plan Targets

The adoption of this Business Growth Strategy will achieve ECO.01 - Deliver a Business Growth Strategy by March 2021 that will support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills and makes the best use of our assets.

The actions set out in this strategy are intended to achieve the following corporate targets:

ECO.02 - Optimise business growth (as measured by gross Business Rates) by £2m by March 2023.

ECO.03 - Working with partners to bring forward employment and development opportunities at Coalite and Clowne Garden Village strategic sites by 2023.

ECO.05 - Annually review housing delivery in the district and facilitate delivery to meet the annual target of 272 new homes

ECO.07 - Deliver 150 new homes through the Bolsover Homes Programme by March 2024

ECO.10 - Working with partners to grow the visitor economy, the number of tourists and the amount of tourism spending in the District by 2023.

1. Making the best use of our assets

Amongst other things, making best use of our assets can help us to

- generate additional revenue for the Council;
- drive the local economy by creating jobs and business opportunities; and
- facilitate partnership working to support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills.

The key assets we could use to achieve these objectives include:

- Pleasley Vale Mills;
- The Tangent;
- Land off Portland Road, Shirebrook;
- Oxcroft House; and
- Under-utilised garage sites and other surplus Council-owned land.

Pleasley Vale Mills

The Council-owned mill buildings are used for a mixture of commercial uses and continue to be popular with tenants. However, income generated from these mills would not cover the long-term maintenance costs of the buildings.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider how this site can be prevented from becoming an expensive liability in the future and this seems most likely to be achieved by comprehensive redevelopment of the mill buildings.

What have we achieved to date?

We are currently going through procurement to commission hydraulic modelling of the site. This work will allow us to understand what scale of development would be possible at Pleasley Mills with regard to flood risk.

We are also updating the stand-alone website for the Pleasley Vale Mills to ensure that we are maximising income generation from the existing business centre by more effectively marketing vacant units.

The Tangent

The Tangent is a Council-owned business hub, giving small and medium sized businesses the opportunity to work in a professional business environment. The Tangent has already been expanded and there is scope to increase the amount of available floor space on Land off Portland Road, Shirebrook.

However, whilst industrial space remains in high demand, the pandemic has suppressed demand for physical office space.

What have we achieved to date?

We are currently costing up sub-dividing under-utilised office space at The Tangent to provide covid-secure work pods to support businesses that need desk space rather than a full office.

We are also updating the stand-alone website for The Tangent to ensure that we are maximising income generation by more effectively marketing vacant units.

In addition, we are working on identifying what type of units on Land off Portland Road would best meet market demand.

Land off Portland Drive, Shirebrook

The Council recently purchased 0.5 hectares of commercial land located off Portland Drive, Shirebrook. This land is allocated for employment use and it is intended to develop commercial units on this site.

What have we achieved to date?

We have started work on identifying what type of units on Land off Portland Road would best meet market demand and it is likely there would be significant demand for small lock up units with a single roller shutter door.

The next steps include identifying the costs for a building accommodating these types of units and then to determine whether this type of development would be viable.

Oxcroft House

This is a Council-owned building off Oxcroft Lane in Bolsover that is adjacent to Morrison's on the former Sherwood Lodge site. It has been marketed without success for a number of years.

What have we achieved to date?

We have refreshed the marketing for this building but separately, we have entered into discussions with an interested party. A valuation taking into account the costs of bring the building back into a reasonable state of repair is being prepared to move this on.

Surplus Council-owned Land

The Council is not land-rich but it does own a variety of un-used and under-utilised sites that are surplus to requirements and could be better used. The majority of this land has been used for HRA purposes.

What have we achieved to date?

All the HRA sites that have been earmarked for disposal have been assessed for their development potential and those that could accommodate residential development are now going to auction accompanied by a planning brief or 'deemed consent' for custom and self-build.

Two of these sites have now been sold generating income for the Council of just under £200,000. If all the sites achieve a similar value, the sale of these sites will generate income in the region of £1,000,000 for the Council.

We are now going through the process of looking at Council-owned land to identify potential sites for Bolsover Homes and/or Dragonfly, which should result in additional sites being ear marked for disposal.

2. Ensuring financial sustainability and increasing revenue streams

Ensuring financial sustainability is one of the key issues facing local authorities following a decade of austerity and the lack of certainty beyond the current financial year. These issues are exacerbated by the yet unknown impacts of Brexit and the ongoing impacts of the current pandemic.

Therefore, the Council needs to increase revenue streams to safeguard jobs and maintain the service we provide to visitors, our partner organisations, and the people who live and work in Bolsover District.

The following projects have significant potential to generate income for the Council either through increasing our own 'tax base' or through working with others to generate revenue streams.

- Pinxton Station and Maid Marion Line
- Shirebrook Crematorium
- Shirebrook Growth Corridor

Pinxton Station and Maid Marion Line

The Maid Marian Line is an existing freight-only line that connects the Robin Hood Line to the West of Pinxton and Erewash Valley Line to the East of Pinxton. If this line were to be re-opened to passenger trains, it could improve connectivity between the District, Nottingham and the proposed HS2 East Midlands Hub at Toton if the former train station at Selston were to be reinstated.

This additional connectivity could provide a boost to the local economy in its own right. However, a new road connection from the A38 or the M1 would be required to unlock any additional development potential in the local area and generate significant additional income for the Council.

What have we achieved to date?

The Department for Transport has recently granted funding of £50,000 to Ashfield District Council to fund a further feasibility study of re-opening the Maid Marion Line to passenger trains and re-instating a station in Selston.

This gives the District a fresh opportunity to make the case for a station at Pinxton because the railway is on the administrative boundary between Ashfield and Bolsover Districts and the former station in Selston has been converted into a restaurant.

In addition, a link from the M1 through land in Ashfield District would seem much easier to achieve than a link to the A38 through land in Bolsover District and provision of this link would provide the additional benefit of reducing pressure on J.28.

Shirebrook Crematorium

The Town Council own land adjacent to the cemetery and proposals for a crematorium on this land have been under consideration for some time noting the continued success of the crematorium at Brimington operated by this Council in partnership with North East Derbyshire and Chesterfield.

What have we achieved to date?

A feasibility study has been commissioned and the study concluded that a crematorium on this site could be viable. The next steps include commissioning a survey of the funeral directors working in the local area to determine whether there will be sufficient market demand to deliver a sustainable revenue stream based on the income projections in the feasibility study.

Shirebrook Growth Corridor

This is a major project based on the provision of a new road connecting J.29 of the M1 to Shirebrook. The new road would bypass Glapwell and New Houghton, improve connectivity from the M1 to Shirebrook and unlock a significant amount of development in this part of the District.

What have we achieved to date?

The County Council have now provided us with the high-level costs for the road. It is important to understand this figure to be able to work out a cost-benefit ratio that would underpin any bid for funding.

We are also in ongoing discussions with Homes England seeking to negotiate funding towards a feasibility study, which would also be required to support any bid for funding.

In the meantime, work is being carried out on land availability to provide a realistic and credible picture of what benefits could be achieved if the new road were to be provided.

From an initial review of the information from the 'call for sites' for the new Local Plan, we can identify enough available land to provide an additional 2,000 new homes.

3. Unlocking Development Potential:

Whereas the Shirebrook Growth Corridor has the potential to unlock development potential over time, the recently adopted Bolsover District Local Plan identifies three strategic sites that could accommodate major employment uses in the near future:

- Clowne Garden Village
- Former Coalite Site; and
- Whitwell Tip

Unlocking the capacity of these major employment sites would be the most obvious way of encouraging new industries to enter the District because of their connectivity with the strategic road network and the amount of available land on each of these sites.

Clowne Garden Village

The masterplan for Clowne Garden Village includes 24 hectares of employment land and this land will come forward before the build out of most of the 1800 houses approved on this site.

The commercial uses will come first to provide the cash-flow necessary to kick start delivery of housing at scale on the wider site.

What have we achieved to date?

The Council has resolved to grant outline planning permission for the development proposals subject to completion of a s.106 legal agreement and subsequently, a workable design solution for highway improvements at the Treble Bob roundabout has been agreed with the County Council and Highways England.

We are now working on resurrecting the previously successful funding bid for these highway improvements with Homes England because they are required to unlock the development potential of the site.

Former Coalite Site

This site straddles the border between North East Derbyshire and Bolsover District and there is development potential for a range of commercial units with a cumulative floor area of just under 100,000m² on the part of the site within Bolsover.

What have we achieved to date?

The Council has granted reserved matters approval for buildings on all the plots in Bolsover District (plots 4-8) and helped the developer obtain c.£8,000,000 of funding to help pay for the remediation of the site, which should be completed in March-April 2021.

An independent study has also been commissioned that concludes this site could be viable for a range of Industrial 4.0 type uses and/or technology campus and there are continuing discussions with the developer around potential end-users.

However, the developer will continue to retain the final say on when and how to bring this site forward unless and until the Council has some 'skin in the game'.

Whitwell Tip

The Council has resolved to grant outline planning permission for Whitwell subject to completion of a s.106 legal agreement. The masterplan for redevelopment of the site includes c.6ha of employment land.

What have we achieved to date?

The development proposals were recently short-listed for funding from D2N2 with particular weight given to the potential for geo-thermal energy on this site. However, the funding opportunity was foregone because the site could not be guaranteed to be brought forward by the March 2022 deadline.

Further work is required on this bid to get the site back onto D2N2's pipeline for future funding and there is a potential partnership/investment opportunity for the Council linked to this funding bid which could involve bringing forward the employment land.

4. Enabling Housing Growth:

Clowne Garden Village and Whitwell Tip along with Bolsover North should provide the bulk of planned for housing growth within the District over the next ten to fifteen years. Cumulatively, these sites could provide over 3,000 new homes.

Therefore, work continues on promoting these sites for housing (alongside their potential for commercial developments) through the production of pitch books,

working up funding bids and engaging with key stakeholders including the developers, D2N2 and Homes England.

Beyond these strategic sites in the Local Plan, the Council has the opportunity to have a direct influence on housing delivery in the District through Bolsover Homes and Dragonfly to increase the supply, quality and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population and support economic growth.

Bolsover Homes

Bolsover Homes follows the success of the B@Homes programme, which delivered over 100 affordable homes. The ambition for Bolsover Homes is delivery of 400 affordable homes over the next four years and this will generate significant additional income for the Council over time.

What have we achieved to date?

Work has already commenced on the Whitwell Cluster and further sites have been identified for the next tranche of delivery. These sites are currently in the design process prior to submission of formal planning applications.

To date, the Council has used its own land for its home building programmes but it could consider whether there are opportunities to invest in stalled sites to accelerate delivery of its own programme and unlock the development potential of the wider site. This type of approach would also accelerate income generation.

Dragonfly Developments

This company is a joint venture between the Council and Woodheads Limited, which delivers a contemporary housing product for the private market. This company has the potential to create a sustained income stream for the Council.

What have we achieved to date?

The Meadow View development of ten homes has now sold out generating a capital receipt for the Council, which can be used to finance future capital schemes. Income from interest paid on the loan has also been received which is a benefit to the revenue accounts of the Council. Four other sites are being actively worked on prior to formal planning submissions and additional sites are being identified through the current review of land in Council ownership.

As with Bolsover Homes, the Council could consider whether there are opportunities to invest in privately owned sites to accelerate delivery of market housing through Dragonfly, which could then support accelerated delivery of its affordable housing programme and/or accelerate income generation.

5. Working with partners to support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills

Partnership working is at the heart of the Council's ambition to be the economic and environmental driver for Bolsover District. Partnership working is also at the heart of the projects already described in this strategy document as well as the following range of projects that are intended to support enterprise, innovation, jobs and skills:

- Business Support
- Business Engagement
- Institute of Technology
- Kick Start
- MMC
- Social Value Index
- Town Centres

Business Support

The pandemic has meant that much of the work around business support over the past twelve months has been dominated by administering discretionary grant funding.

However, to ensure the long-term resilience of many of our businesses we need to encourage businesses to adopt modern technology, including improving their digital skills and connectivity, adopt new ways of working, or diversify their existing business models.

In addition, it is recognised that businesses based in Bolsover do not necessarily access their fair share of support from the wider range of organisations that provide support, training and funding at District, County and/or regional level.

What have we achieved to date?

We are working with the partnership team to actively promote the Bolsover Growth Fund, which offers grants of £2,000 - £10,000 to support business growth and a grant of up to £500 for start-up businesses.

We are working with the partnership team to launch the Economic Loan Fund, which will allow the Council to issue loans of up to £10,000 to local businesses as a 'lender of last resort', where necessary.

We are working to ensure that start-ups in Bolsover District will benefit from the DCC scheme allocating £800,000 and additional support from the business rate retention scheme for start-ups across the County.

We are working to create better links with the East Midlands Chambers, the Growth Hub and Derbyshire Economic Partnership to ensure businesses in

Bolsover District are better able to access training and support from these organisations.

Business Engagement

Following the first national lockdown, we have seen our relationships with businesses become stronger and our engagement and contacts with business have significantly increased.

This broader 'customer base' provides us with additional opportunities to promote and encourage businesses to grow through better engagement with this Council and partner organisations.

What have we achieved to date?

We are working on a draft business engagement strategy and this should be ready to go out for consultation by no later than the end of March 2021.

We have started work on creating an integrated CRM database that will allow us to manage our enquiries from and contacts with local businesses much more effectively.

It is also intended that this database will collect our own information on market demand for commercial units within the District, which can then better inform our planning when considering future commercial developments.

Institute of Technology

The proposals for an Institute of Technology centre on the potential for a new-build college delivering T-levels within the District. This building could form an anchor for an innovation centre / technology park on the former Coalite site for example.

This type of facility would help to address the issues around the absence of further and higher education within the District and help to address the well-documented skills gap that affects the employability of many local residents and the ability of the District to attract new industries.

What have we achieved to date?

A working group has been formed involving a range of stakeholders including Nottingham Trent University, Chesterfield College, Vision West Notts, North East Derbyshire and Nottingham College. This group is actively working on a future funding bid to either D2N2 and/or the Department for Education.

Additional work has been completed around employer engagement to identify what skills are needed to keep pace with Industry 4.0 and advances in AI and other forms of technology. The proposed skills audit will supplement this work.

Kick Start

This scheme is part-funded by the Government who are funding 25 hours per week at national minimum wage for a 6-month placement for job seekers at risk of long-term unemployment.

Internally, there is scope for placements in a number of service areas and potential pathways into apprenticeships with the Council.

What have we achieved to date?

We have worked up a support package that would add significant value to the skills gained in the work place through a six-month placement. We are looking to make another call for expressions of interest by the end of January 2021.

Modern Methods of Construction

The Council is currently working with Woodheads on an appropriate design for a range of modular construction homes with the aim of accelerating housing delivery within the District.

What have we achieved to date?

Following a funding bid to D2N2, proposals for a test-bed for proto-type modular construction homes have been included on D2N2's pipeline for future funding. A suitable site has been identified for the test bed and we are looking at whether this site can be granted 'permission in principle' to ensure this project is 'shovel ready' when funding becomes available.

Social Value Index

Indexing Social Value is a way of putting a value (including cash value) on socio-economic benefits of a development by providing local employment opportunities and/or use of the local supply chain for example.

This type of indexing is becoming increasingly important as securing public funding will increasingly be dependent on evidence that development proposals support 'inclusive growth'. Indexing Social Value can also be a means of promoting local businesses and local spend through procurement processes.

What have we achieved to date?

Work has started on guidance notes and the adoption of an appropriate method of calculating social value.

Town Centres

Re-opening high streets safely has been a major priority for economic recovery following the first national lockdown. This work remains relevant now we have entered into a third national lockdown and includes recruitment of covid information officers to provide on the ground support for local businesses.

Alongside these activities, there are a number of ongoing projects aimed at promoting and encouraging the future vitality and viability of our main town centres and local centres across the District.

This is important because local shops are at the heart of local communities and have played an invaluable role many times during the pandemic. In addition, maintaining a healthy high street offer can support the visitor economy, provide jobs and drive economic growth.

Therefore, the future of our town centres and local high streets warrants particular attention and remains a focus of much partnership working.

What have we achieved to date?

A relatively large number of businesses have signed up to the shopappy website following our active promotion of the County Council-sponsored offer of free membership. This website hosts virtual High Streets and allows businesses to offer internet shopping and click and collect.

The Shirebrook Shutter Artwork project has been completed and we continue to help businesses in Shirebrook access the shop fronts grant, which is helping to improve the environmental quality of the Market Square.

Consultation has been carried out on granting 'permission in principle' for further re-development of the Market Square in Shirebrook and further work is continuing on a funding bid to support these proposals.

In addition, we are pursuing funding opportunities to introduce wi-fi to the District's main town centres, we have progressed work on identifying vacant premises and bringing them back into use and we are in discussions with various stakeholders about introducing a market on Mill Street in Clowne and town centre improvements in South Normanton.

6. Promoting the District and working with partners to increase tourism

In a single year prior to the pandemic, tourism generated around £139,000,000 of expenditure within the local economy. This input could have been even bigger if more visitors had stayed overnight within the District.

Therefore, a main theme running through the draft tourism strategy is around promoting the District and working with partners not just to encourage more visitors to the District but also generate more overnight stays.

Although it is true to say the pandemic has thoroughly disrupted the visitor economy, it has also demonstrated the popularity of staycations and the amount of pent up demand for travel and tourism that has been severely restricted throughout much of the year.

Therefore, the work completed on the draft tourism strategy remains relevant and will support the growth of the local visitor economy when current restrictions are relaxed.

What have we achieved to date?

The draft tourism has been out for consultation and has been revised to include more work on accessibility. The revised strategy will be out for a final round of consultation by no later than the end of February 2021.

Alongside the tourism strategy, a cycling infrastructure strategy has been produced and this is currently out for consultation. This piece of work is aligned with the walkable communities work and audit of green spaces that we are carrying out to form the basis of an 'active' holiday offer. In the present times, this work would also allow the District to market its tourism offer as a 'covid-safe' holiday offer.

In addition, this work will support our proposals to create locally distinctive walking and cycling routes that we can publish online in a similar manner to many other organisations who use this material to promote their tourism and leisure offers to a wider audience.

This work should also benefit our local communities by improving public open space and providing more opportunities for leisure, active travel and a healthier lifestyle.

7. Building Back Better

The previous actions set out a range of projects that have been designed to individually and collectively allow us to:

- Actively engage with partners to benefit our communities;
- Promote equality and diversity and where practicable: support vulnerable and disadvantaged people;
- Provide good quality council housing where people choose to live;
- Develop attractive neighbourhoods that residents feel proud of and take responsibility for; and
- Improve health, wellbeing and increase participation in sport and leisure activities

The following projects show our commitment to enhancing biodiversity and reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same:

- Community Woodlands;
- Electric Charging Points;
- Geothermal Energy; and
- Nature Recovery Network.

Community Woodlands

This project reflects the Council's ambition to plant as many as 1,000,000 trees across the District.

What have we achieved to date?

A funding bid for £280,000 has been submitted to Woodland Trust and a formal announcement is pending. However, the indications are that this bid has been successful.

Electric Charging Points

This project was initiated to take advantage of a funding from OZEV (the Office for Zero-Emission Vehicles) to allow us to install electric vehicle charging points in three Council-owned car parks.

What have we achieved to date?

Although two of the three schemes were eventually ruled out by site constraints, funding has been approved for four double charging points, which will be installed in the Middle Street car park in Bolsover by March 2021.

A further funding bid has been submitted with partners to initiate a feasibility study around providing more rapid chargers within Bolsover. This project would be aligned with promoting and encouraging visitors to the District alongside our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same.

Geothermal Energy

There are significant opportunities across the District to utilise mine-water to produce energy savings especially where geothermal energy can be utilised within large residential and commercial development proposals.

What have we achieved to date?

We are intending to partner with Welbeck Estates to commission the Coal Authority to provide two feasibility studies relating to the use of geothermal energy at Creswell and Whitwell Tip.

Nature Recovery Network

The first step in the development of this work will be an audit of the areas of importance for biodiversity in the District and their condition. The resulting biodiversity strategy will map the most valuable existing habitat for nature, and include specific proposals for creating or improving habitats and increasing biodiversity, including where improvements to connectivity would be useful to wildlife.

What have we achieved to date?

We are currently in discussions with both the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust regarding scope of project, potential match funding and officer recruitment. We have already secured funding for a temporary post to support this work.

draft