

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne, on Monday 24th June 2024, at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Steve Fritchley in the Chair

Councillors Anne Clarke, Duncan McGregor, Clive Moesby, Sandra Peake, and John Ritchie (to Minute No. EX16-24/25).

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Monitoring Officer), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Pam Brown (Service Director Executive, Corporate Services and Partnerships), Victoria Dawson (Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement), Joanne Wilson (Housing Strategy and Development Officer), Chris Fridlington (Director Economic Development), and Alison Bluff (Governance).

Also in attendance at the meeting observing, were Junior Cabinet Members, Councillors Duncan Haywood, Jeanne Raspin, and Phil Smith.

EX10-24/25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Mary Dooley.

EX11-24/25. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

EX12-24/25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Minute No.	Member	Level of Interest
EX19-24/25	Steve Fritchley	Other registerable interest due to being a Director of Dragonfly Development Ltd

EX13-24/25. CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair consented to a change in order of business to that stated on the agenda. Agenda item 7: Tax Site Gateway Policy for the East Midlands Investment Zone would be considered after the Minutes of the last meeting held on 20th May 2024.

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EX14-24/25. MINUTES – 20TH MAY 2024

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Sandra Peake
RESOLVED that the Minutes of an Executive meeting held on 20th May 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

NON KEY DECISIONS

EX15-24/25. TAX SITE GATEWAY POLICY FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS INVESTMENT ZONE

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Growth, which provided an update on the proposals for a Tax Site Gateway Policy for the East Midlands Investment Zone (EMIZ) in the context of proposals for a Tax Site within the Council's administrative boundary.

Following its formal constitution in March 2024, the East Midlands Mayoral County Combined Authority (EMMCCA) became the accountable body for the EMIZ and were the responsible body for obtaining Government approval for the EMIZ proposals.

In April 2024, Executive resolved to support the proposals for the East Midlands Investment Zone on behalf of the Council noting the opportunities that would arise from this significant amount of inward investment planned for the region.

The report allowed Members to consider whether the Council should approve, and thereby, become a signatory to the proposed Tax Site Gateway Policy to allow the Tax Site to proceed. It outlined how the draft Tax Site Gateway Policy ('the Policy') would be used to ensure that Tax Sites in the EMIZ and the associated tax incentives would promote and encourage the growth of the advance manufacturing sector and green industries within the region.

Moved by Councillor John Ritchie and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor
RESOLVED that the Tax Site Gateway Policy be approved and delegated authority be given to officers to sign the policy on behalf of the Council to allow the Tax Site within the District's administrative boundary to proceed.

Reasons for Recommendation

In summary, the report outlined how the draft Tax Site Gateway Policy ('the Policy') would be used to ensure that Tax Sites in the EMIZ and the associated tax incentives would promote and encourage the growth of the advance manufacturing sector and green industries within the region.

Therefore, the Policy was considered likely to facilitate the creation of higher skilled, higher paid jobs at two large employment sites within the local area with an associated rise in living standards and improved quality of life for those employees. Moreover, the Tax Site at Explore Park was already operational, had plans for further development in the near term and was closely related to settlements and housing allocations within the District.

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In those respects, the focus in the Policy on green industries and advance manufacturing at Explore Park supported the growth in the District's housing supply alongside the opportunity to transform the District's local economy through accelerating the growth of existing businesses in those sectors and by securing investment from those sectors to develop employment sites in the District to provide more high quality, high value jobs to local people.

As proposed, the draft Policy did not give rise to any significant costs to the Council and any future planning decisions or proposals for business rates relief and/or tax incentives, or any other scheme that had a material impact on the District's own statutory responsibilities would need the Council's prior approval.

As the billing authority, the Council would likely administer any business rates relief under the tax incentive policy at Explore Park if that were to be applied to any future occupants of any new buildings on the part of the site within Bolsover. Reliefs would be appropriately reimbursed by Government under a principle of no detriment.

Consequently, approval of the draft Policy would be highly unlikely to pose any significant negative risk to the Council's own interests or impact on service delivery but there was a positive risk that the EMIZ would benefit the District's local economy and its local residents.

It was therefore considered appropriate to recommend that the Executive endorse approval of the Tax Site Gateway Policy and for the Council to thereby become a signatory to the Policy and in doing so allow the Tax Site at Explore Park, Steetley to proceed

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The Executive could choose not to support the current Policy proposals and withdraw officers from any future involvement in its governance arrangements or decisions making. This option was rejected because of the potential benefits to the District of continued active involvement with EMMCCA and the EMIZ, the risk of not realising benefits for the District if officers disengaged from the process, and the disbenefits of the loss of inward investment should the Policy and associated Tax Sites fail to get approval.

Councillor John Ritchie left the meeting.

EX16-24/25. OUTSIDE BODIES APPOINTMENTS (EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS) 2024/25

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Performance and Governance, in relation to Executive Members representing the Council on external organisations (Outside Bodies) (Executive Functions) for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

The Leader of the Council had determined the appointments to the Outside Bodies, which were set out in an appendix to the report. The term of office for each appointment would be for the 2024/25 Municipal Year, unless otherwise specified by the Leader

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The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Performance and Governance advised the meeting that the Strategic Leadership Board would be added to the list of appointments and the Leader of the Council would be the representative on the Strategic Leadership Board.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Clive Moesby

RESOLVED that 1) the appointment of Executive Members to serve as representatives on the organisations (Outside Bodies) (Executive Functions) for the 2024/25 Municipal Year, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be received,

2) the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) be added to the list of Outside Bodies (Executive Functions) 2024/25, and that Councillor Steve Fritchley be the nominated representative on the SLB.

Reasons for Recommendation

To appoint representatives to ensure the effective representation of the Executive on external organisations (Outside Bodies) (Executive Functions) for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Executive could choose not to appoint to the Outside Bodies; however, this was not recommended as it would fail to provide a representative of the Executive to these organisations.

EX17-24/25. ANNUAL COMPLAINT HANDLING AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2023-2024

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, which provided an overview of the complaints received for the Housing Service during 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

The report also presented the Council's performance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code in the form of the Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report.

The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, after a period of consultation, became a statutory requirement from 1st April 2024, with the Housing Ombudsman having a duty to monitor compliance with the Code. In addition, the Regulator for Social Housing had also, after a period of consultation, published its new set of consumer standards and regulatory approach to deliver a "well-governed social housing sector", which provided quality homes and services for tenants, also effective from 1st April 2024. All Registered Providers were expected to meet the standards.

The Housing Ombudsman intended to monitor compliance with the Code by way of an annual submission. This would ensure that all landlords provided information in a consistent way that allowed effective analysis and insight into compliance with the Code.

The required documents needed to be submitted by 30th June 2024, and this date aligned with the Regulator of Social Housing's requirements for the publication and submission of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) outcomes, of which complaint handling was included.

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The Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023-2024, was attached as an appendix to the report and provided an analysis of the complaints and compliments received by the Housing Department for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 and included the services delivered on behalf of the Council by Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd. It also noted the performance against the Council's own Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy, which during 2023-24, had different time frames to the Ombudsman. This was updated in April 2024, so were both now aligned.

The Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement circulated a proposed 'Forward' to Members to be included in the Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023-2024.

Moved by Councillor Sandra Peake and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor **RESOLVED** that 1) the Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023-2024, and Annual Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code be approved,

2) the proposed 'Forward', circulated at the meeting, to be included in the Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report 2023-2024, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

It was a statutory requirement that the Council complied with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, and the requirements to provide an annual submission, including an Annual Complaint Handling and Service Improvement Report, and annual self-assessment.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

If the Council was unable to provide the annual submission by 30th June 2024, the Council may be issued with a Type 3 Complaint Handling Failure Order. If there was non-compliance with the order, the Housing Ombudsman had the option of making a referral to the governing body or the Regulator of Social Housing as required.

KEY DECISIONS

EX18-24/25. SALE OF PROPERTIES – COTTON STREET BOLSOVER

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, which sought Members' approval to sell 17 and 19 Cotton Street, Bolsover, by way of auction.

The two properties were of limestone construction under pitched pantile roofs. They were thought to have been built in the late 17th century with works carried out in 1762 and 1968.

These were general fund properties which had recently had some improvement works carried out, however, the properties were suffering from damp, needed significant investment to be made lettable, and given the age and conservation requirements, were likely to be an ongoing financial burden to the Council with little return.

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The Council's Housing Stock Management Group had recommended disposal of the properties which the Council's Assessment Management Group had considered and agreed with.

The Council's Valuer recommended that the guide price for 17 and 19 Cotton Street should be £60,000 and £70,000 respectively, with a reserve price to be as recommended by the Valuer.

Moved by Councillor Sandra Peake and seconded by Councillor Duncan McGregor **RESOLVED** that the sale of 17 and 19 Cotton Street Bolsover by auction be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

Significant investment was required to raise the properties to a lettable standard and given age and conservation requirements, were likely to be an ongoing financial burden to the Council with negligible return.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Not to sell 17 and 19 Cotton Street, Bolsover. This was rejected due to the significant investment required to make the properties lettable.

The Council could undertake extensive refurbishment works to the properties to raise them to a lettable standard. However, due to the age and type, further investment would be likely in a relatively short period of time and they may not be suitable to longer term tenancy.

EX19-24/25. UPDATE ON BOLSOVER DISTRICT REGENERATION FUND

The detailed report provided an update on the £15million Regeneration Fund allocation and sought Members approval for a range of recommendations regarding project management and delivery including the acquisition of properties within the proposals.

The Leader of the Council advised the meeting that the East Midlands Mayor, Claire Ward, had been clear that district authorities would be the delivery mechanism for EMMCCA.

The Leader advised the meeting that he had recently resigned as a Director of Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd and Dragonfly Development Ltd. and would soon be making changes to Executive Members' portfolios.

At this point, as his resignation was very recent, the Leader declared an interest in this item and left the meeting.

Councillor Duncan McGregor in the Chair

The Regeneration Fund was allocated to the Council in the Autumn Statement of 2023. The Government guidance was received on 16th January 2024, requesting an initial outline of projects be submitted by 31st January 2024, and an initial Investment Plan was submitted to DLUHC in accordance with this deadline.

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On 27th February 2024, positive feedback was received from DLUHC and this contained additional, more comprehensive guidance. It also requested that further extensive project information be submitted by 29th March 2024, to set out how the Fund would be directed to best meet the strategic priorities for regeneration of the place across the District.

Following extensive correspondence and discussions with the Levelling Up Team at DLUHC, the MP for Bolsover and the Minister for Levelling Up, the Council's submission was finally approved on 22nd May 2024.

The Council was currently awaiting the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in relation to the administration of the Fund, however, further to enquiries made, the Chief Executive had been advised that this was being looked into by the Funding Team at DLUHC.

In response to Members' questions, the Chief Executive advised the meeting that the Council would be the Accountable Body for the funding and would remain responsible for meeting all the outcomes and reporting back to Council. The recommendations would enable Dragonfly to deliver the required outcomes on the Council's behalf via a service level agreement. The Monitoring Officer added that Dragonfly Management already provided services to the Council via a service level agreement and the arrangement would be looked at to ensure it was appropriate to deal with the funding. The Deputy Leader further added that the time factors were crucial and update reports would be presented to Members as the schemes progressed. If some projects were unable to be carried out in time, the Chief Executive advised Members that the Council would discuss this with DLUHC. She added that an internal commissioning group had been set up to monitor the arrangements and there was also Scrutiny and the Shareholder Board to provide performance information to Members.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Sandra Peake
RESOLVED that 1) the update on the £15million Regeneration Fund provided within the report be noted,

2) receipt of the Regeneration Fund by the Council (subject to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding) be approved,

3) responsibility for any amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding be delegated to the Council's Chief Executive,

4) that the Council is the 'Accountable Body' for the Regeneration Fund in accordance with the requirements of the Fund, be noted,

5) that the Council's wholly owned company, Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd can deliver the required outcomes of the Regeneration Fund on the Council's behalf, be approved,

6) that Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd, acting on the Council's behalf, will procure a range of contractors and suppliers, including Dragonfly Development Ltd to deliver the required outcomes of the Regeneration Fund, be approved,

7) the purchase of the three properties outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the report, following receipt of the Memorandum of Understanding, within the funding limits for each project and subject to appropriate valuations, value for money and conditions of the Regeneration Fund, be approved,

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8) that responsibility for the negotiations for the purchase of the three properties outlined in paragraph 2.3 of this report, be delegated to the Council's Chief Executive.

Reasons for Recommendation

The purpose of the report was to update Members on the delivery of the £15million Regeneration Fund and seek appropriate approvals to deliver the projects within the tight timescales stipulated by DLUHC for the Fund.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Members could decide not to proceed with the approvals and property acquisitions outlined within this report, however, this could jeopardise delivery of the projects and ultimately, receipt of the Fund by the Council

The meeting concluded at 1035 hours.