

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing,
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By e-mail to productivityplans@levellingup.gov.uk

17th July 2024

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

Re: Productivity Plan for Bolsover District Council

Bolsover District Council was established in 1974 and over the last fifty years, officers and elected Members have worked together to operate a flexible, adaptable and efficient organisation with a keen focus on improving our services alongside developing our communities, enhancing our environment and delivering growth for both the business and visitor economy. This work means we are already a productive Council, but we are committed to achieving best value and continued improvement in everything we do.

Therefore, we are pleased to enclose a copy of the Council's Productivity Plan in response to the request made by the Minister for Local Government on 16 April 2024. Our Productivity Plan is also published on the Council's website alongside *The Council Plan - The Future 2024-2028 and Vision Bolsover District Part Two*, which are attached to the Productivity Plan to provide further details of what we have achieved over the last four years and our ambitions for the next four years.

We hope you will see that these documents and our Productivity Plan clearly illustrate how the Council is a forward-thinking, dynamic organisation that promotes and encourages innovation, has a positive approach to transformation and aspires to be a self-sustaining Council that delivers excellent services and is at the heart of a thriving and prosperous district. In addition, we hope you see how we are taking positive steps to work with our new regional Mayor and the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority.

However, our Productivity Plan also sets out some of the barriers faced by the Council and the prospect of further collaborative work on sharing best practice and further discussion of how the Government could better support the sector is welcome. Naturally, we would be happy to contribute to that discussion and we would be delighted to input into this work if there were any further opportunities for us to do so.

Yours sincerely,



Karen Hanson
Chief Executive Officer



Councillor Steve Fritchley
Leader of the Council



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Productivity Plan July 2024



1 How have you transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources.

Bolsover District Council (BDC) is a Council which looks to the future with a commitment of looking after our communities and businesses as outlined in our recently refreshed Corporate Plan – The Future 2024-2028, and Vision Bolsover District Part Two (both attached). The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's aims over a four-year period under four strategic themes: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing. Vision Bolsover sets out the Council's ambitions for the future. These strategic aims and ambitions enable the Council to direct the use of resources and describe how services are structured and managed, how we embrace new technologies and constantly strive to improve services for residents and businesses.

Every year in preparation for the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is taken through Executive and Council. This sets out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and outlines the various factors and influences that may impact on the Council over the next five years. The MTFS links our Corporate Plan and priorities with forecasted resources and budgets. It is then used as a framework for the detailed budget setting process to ensure that resources are effectively managed and are able to deliver the Council's key objectives.

The Council has explored options and implemented efficiencies in respect of staffing and shared services. This includes internal departmental restructures including senior management and providing shared services using external partners, including other Councils. Additional efficiencies have been achieved through good management practices, for example, the reviewing and changing of structures or posts when they become vacant.

Having established successful joint working with neighbouring authorities over the years, we have shared services in place which have benefitted the council. These services include ICT, Procurement, Environmental Health, Health and Safety and Corporate Performance. This continues to contribute to a reduction in costs while improving services. The Joint ICT Service has been fundamental in supporting and enabling many services to work remotely and in an agile manner which intensified following the pandemic. A key benefit of this is for services to be more resilient, efficient, and adaptable.

The introduction of technology, including Microsoft 365 and TEAMS continues to develop and support collaborative working, information sharing and improves document management further.

We pride ourselves on the delivery of excellent services. These include the delivery of our ambitious council house building schemes, our innovative Bolsover TV channel, excellent waste collection services and health and wellbeing programmes.

Where it has been appropriate, services are delivered with other councils and partners in shared service arrangements. An example is the Police being located within Bolsover Contact Centre leading to many benefits and improved outcomes for residents.

Examples of effective joint working include supporting residents with the cost of living, developing practical approaches to supporting communities such as foodbank access, advice and community services to meet residents' needs.

In the past year the Council has established a wholly owned company as a vehicle to address the local housing needs, support economic growth and generate income. The business of the company aligns with the Council's ambitions and benefits our local communities. The intention is to work with other Councils to deliver build programmes in a cost-effective way. The company has just completed its first year of trading and has already achieved a number of successful projects both internally for BDC and externally.

Service plans and corporate targets, driven by the Corporate Plan, together with financial performance reports are presented quarterly to Executive, Scrutiny Committees and the Senior Leadership Team.

The Council shares benchmarking information and regularly reviews best practice in service delivery to enhance performance management. The authority subscribes to organisations such as APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) comparing our performance with other public bodies. In recent years, the Council has received Finalist Awards in 'Winner', 'Best Performer' and 'Most Improved Performer' categories in waste collection, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and fleet transport service functions and recently (2023/24) won the 'Most Improved Performer' in Street Cleansing. Our recent success in reaching the final of the MJ Awards for two categories: "Digital Transformation" and "Whole Team Approach to Tackling Health Inequalities", shows a culture of high performance and celebrating success.





The Council welcomes technological opportunities which offer greater use of computer systems, software and hardware to enhance delivery of services and widen public accessibility. Technology has assisted the streamlining of processes internally and enables opportunities for wider public engagement. There are good examples across many of our services. This means we are able to utilise staffing resources, increase accessibility, make administration and stationery cost savings, and continue to explore ways to improve. Examples include:

- Vast improvements to our Planning process using the Prop Tech Engagement Fund, increasing the efficiency of our service, and providing a better service to our residents and businesses.
- Issuing housing officers with mobile technology which links into the Housing Management System. This enables repairs to be logged and actions updated whilst in the district and removes the need to attend the office, resulting in a reduction in travel time and mileage costs.
- An online Housing application form and portal which has significantly reduced printing and postage costs as well as officer time. However, the ease of being able to apply online meant a significant increase in the number of applications received.
- A mobile app for booking leisure activities which has improved both the visitor experience in the facility and improved the service. In addition, we have constructed a 3G Artificial Turf Pitch, which in turn has increased income levels in football activities by circa £60k per annum.
- A Multichannel Telephony System and call back facility, meeting contact volume targets and demand.
- Online Revenues and Benefits application forms. This is more convenient for the applicant as they can make the application at a time that suits them and means the form is automatically entered into our document management system.
- Online transactions within the Environmental Health service have grown significantly being 5 times higher than six years ago within contact centres.
- Online Council meeting agendas to make savings in the use of paper and cost of printing.

In many services we have been able to gradually reduce administrative tasks and have upskilled staff to add more value to the Council and make efficiencies where possible.

The Council has also built a new energy efficient leisure facility. We achieved carbon efficiency in the construction such as LED lighting, heat recovery units and variable speed drives to motors to ensure the building was efficient. More recently we have installed pool covers to the swimming pool to reduce evaporation and retain heat within the water. We've also successfully bid into the Swimming Pool Support Fund and are in the process of installing a combined heat and power unit.

Further improvements within the Council's services include waste collection and recycling which has been brought back in-house. By doing so, the Council has reduced the number of vehicles required in preparation for the 'Simpler Recycling' arrangements.

The Council also has plans for future opportunities across several services including:

- An electronic tenancy agreement, which can be signed on mobile devices. This will save in officer time as well as paper copies.
- A tenant portal so that we can send regular information via the portal as opposed to post.
- Move from a paper-based tenant's newsletter to an electronic newsletter.
- Real-time satisfaction surveys across all contact channels with a view to roll out to all service areas, rather than an annual or biannual survey.
- Review payment/ cash facilities offered by the Council to reduce transaction handling costs.
- Implement changes required by the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government Social Care Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.





The ICT service have plans in place to make full use of the Microsoft 365 licencing, to improve security, make efficiencies and improve productivity, these include:

- Rollout of Defender and Microsoft windows updates for business for improved support and security. Effects will be measured by monitoring number of support calls for these incidents, reduced time to apply updates.
- Move to SharePoint and Exchange online, to provide additional resilience, improved agile working, internal and partnership collaboration.
- Use of Microsoft Autopilot to make efficiencies to device builds. Time to build devices will be measured against current build.
- Employment of a Microsoft 365 engagement post to encourage better use of tools which will help services be more efficient and productive.
- Enhanced cloud-based Geographic Information System (GIS) solution providing customers and internal users with direct feed to graphical and textual location data.
- Continue with the automation of manual and/or repetitive processes.
- Review current customer relationship management tools.

Through effective treasury management, we have saved over £3m in debt charges by not borrowing to fund our capital programme, by making use of historic reserves built up but not spent. We have been building up reserves over a number of years, ready to fund the losses we will incur from the business rate changes as consulted on a number of years ago.

The Council has good examples of where capital has been used for transformational income-generating projects including a new 3G pitch; to create one of the best used facilities in Derbyshire which generates additional income to reinvest in service delivery. We have invested and continue to invest in capital projects that will generate income over the longer term including business centres and a new crematorium which is currently under construction.

The Council recently made a capital purchase of IT software for our housing arrears team. This enables a more focussed approach to debt collection due to the algorithms it contains. We are already seeing benefits of this in reduced arrears figures.

The Council has made significant investment in housing stock to improve the lives of our most vulnerable residents and increase our rental income. We have the ability to borrow for capital purposes, however, interest rates and associated costs are making it increasingly difficult for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan to remain sustainable over the 30-year time frame. Reviews on capital assets are completed frequently such as vehicles, to maximise their period of utilisation, spreading its cost over the longest viable period. Land is also assessed to see if we can build on it to create more rental income or sell it to generate capital receipts to fund capital schemes, if beneficial.

We have planned maintenance arrangements in place across our Council housing stock resulting in good standards of housing, reflecting high customer satisfactions (11% above the UK average) and low levels of complaint.

The establishment the new East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority opens up the opportunity for more cross-boundary working and the potential to consider different geographies and work with different partners across the region, to improve the sustainability and resilience of the Council.





2 How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.

In addition to the points already outlined:

- Live chat options across our contact centres.
- Encourage involvement in planning consultations through game playing to engage more young people in this process.
- The Council also has access to Local Insight allowing service areas to access data and analytics in a streamlined and accessible way.
- Most service areas highlight further opportunities with Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital automation. AI has significant potential in enhancing citizen interactions.
- We are commissioning a full housing stock condition survey. The data from this will be received electronically, be continually updated to ensure 'Decent Homes Standards' compliance and also allow us to make decisions on the future capital programme with confidence and ease.
- In addition, the Council would like to look at how technology can capture the tenant led Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). A tenant portal would allow us to provide regular updates as well as TSM data, and complaints data which we need to publish.
- The Council continues to subscribe and submit to benchmarking groups (eg. the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE)) in measuring our performance against other Councils. This assists in identifying best practice. The Council also regularly undertakes a survey using our citizen panel and to share the outcomes with residents via our website and panel groups.
- We have made enhancements in procurement with the recent Social Value Policy and have developed skills and experience within the Council to support the delivery of social value recording and reporting.

The Council submits information annually to APSE with the outcomes shared with other local authorities within the family groups. The information has been very useful in identifying best practice.

Information is also shared with other authorities throughout the year, such as providing financial information to the Derbyshire Chief Executives meeting or Finance Officers group, on specific topics.

The Council is also exploring the potential of Artificial Intelligence in grant making and data analysis to inform commissioning and possibly where services need to be targeted so there are opportunities here which are not yet fully realised.

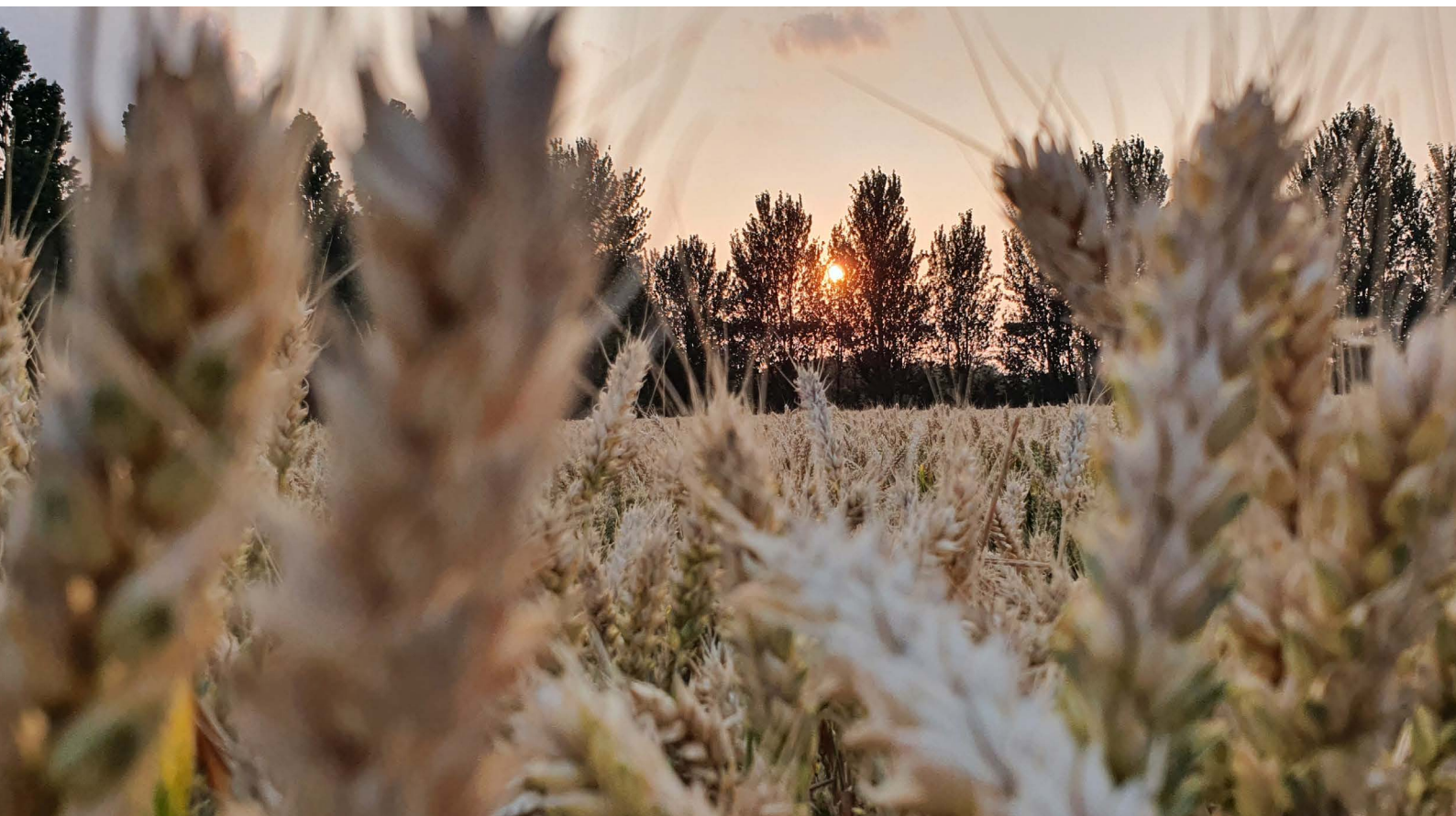
All departments continue to automate internal and external forms and processes wherever it is possible.

3 Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems.

For almost 20 years the Council has used electronic purchasing as part of its financial management system, no manual orders are allowed. To pay an invoice an electronic order must be placed against a budget; commitment accounting means the budget is immediately reduced as the order is placed ensuring overspends are kept to a minimum.

As part of the annual budget process, the finance team meet with all departments and undertake a line-by-line review of the budgets to ensure they are still justified. All year-end underspends are considered for a potential reduction in future budgets as part of this process. Where new spend is required our default position is always to try to find it within existing resources.

Performance, efficiency and effectiveness is measured by a number of factors, including our financial position. We have an embedded culture within the whole Council to think before we spend. We are a small District Council, and we embrace effective but appropriate, robust financial controls.





Over the same number of years, the Council has taken steps across the organisation to ensure efficiency. The Council is now lean in terms of staffing which does present capacity challenges at times, and in some cases we are having to put extra resource back into the establishment.

As previously mentioned we used reserves to fund the capital programme instead of undertaking planned borrowing which saved us £3m over the lifetime of the assets. We have previously undertaken many invest to save projects using our Transformation Reserve. Examples include:

- Purchase of swimming pool covers to reduce cost – annual savings of £9k from 2018/19.
- Purchase of governance software – annual savings on printing, postage, and paper.
- Setting up a procurement unit to provide services to others – savings from economies of scale and income from other Councils.
- Made changes to buildings to allow others to share the space – income generated.
- Replaced lighting in Council buildings – cost saving.
- Purchased online templates for payslips, benefit forms etc. – cost savings.
- Office use rationalisation and improvement – income generated from unused space.
- Sought external VAT advice and opted to tax our sporting service – increased income.

During 2022/23 we created our wholly owned company Dragonfly to take advantage of the Localism Act and undertake work for other Councils to provide opportunities for income generation.

The Council takes a proportionate approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and incorporates this function within a small multi-disciplinary team. Part of a post (0.3 FTE) is used to provide in-house equalities training to staff and Members. The emphasis is on the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

All new employees and Members are required to attend a one-hour briefing session and thereafter a refresh every two years. The Council produces an Equality Plan every four years in which it sets equality objectives as required under the PSED. Recently a Microsoft Teams channel has been created which has departmental representation to share learning and to promote equalities. External training is procured from time to time based on organisational need e.g., Autism training for Customer Advisors.

The Council has deliberately taken steps to reduce expenditure on agency staff and consultants in order to keep their use to a minimum but there are times when it is necessary. When new burdens require us to make big changes, having a lean work force means we do not always have the capacity to undertake the work immediately. In addition, when vacant posts cannot be filled after a prolonged period, we may need interim agency support, but this is kept to a minimum.

Some examples of our alternative arrangements are:

- The Joint ICT service has not employed consultants or agency staff for several years. Instead, a trainee approach has been used to fill these fixed term, temporary positions to assist with project work streams, rather than pay for more expensive agency staff. This enables the authority to maintain a skilled workforce covering a range of ICT skills, minimising spend on costly consultancy and outsourcing.
- The Planning Team invest in the use of apprentices and graduates to maintain service delivery as there is currently a national shortage of planning officers. Where consultants have been appointed, these have been secured on the back of Planning Performance Agreements to buy in additional capacity for specialised circumstances rather than day-to-day service provision or through specific grant funded projects.
- The Finance Team also use apprentices as part of succession planning as suitable experienced/qualified staff aren't easily attracted to a small district.

Based on the staff budget for 2024/25 the expenditure on agency staff is estimated to be 0.16% (£28,500) and 1.46% (£252,485) for consultants. As mentioned above, we have grant funding for a number of consultant posts during this period in planning and this budget also includes professional services budgets for a number of contentious planning applications we are currently processing.





The Council has a Cabinet structure with four Scrutiny committees and an Audit Committee. An Independent Member is the vice-chair of Audit to ensure we have sufficient oversight over risk, governance, and financial management.

The Council shares accommodation with a number of organisations including; other Councils, the police, the NHS, and businesses. This provides additional income and savings to the public purse.

The shared Joint ICT service has a presence at each of the three Councils, this provides the ability to have shared disaster recovery and backup sites, reducing infrastructure costs for each authority.

The Council has its own corporate training budget; however, on occasion jointly procures and delivers training with other partners. Costs are shared on a pro-rata head count basis.

The Council is actively engaging with the new East Midlands Mayor to identify opportunities for joint working, inward investment, and opportunities to promote growth, improve employment and skills, and increase productivity within the District.

The percentage of the 2024/25 pay bill spent on trade union facility time is 0.22% or £37,850.

4 The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

The lack of multi-year funding settlements is a real barrier to long-term planning and investment opportunities due to uncertainty. The high level of uncertainty means that the level of reserves set aside to manage risks is at a higher level than they would necessarily be, with greater certainty (as mentioned above).

Greater flexibility to decide how to raise and spend money locally would be beneficial. Raising our council tax by 2.99%, when we have a small tax base does not raise much per year (£130k). This does not go anywhere near covering the annual increased costs from the pay award or inflation.

Staying abreast of all the legislative changes across the statutory planning function is challenging and these are a barrier to further / faster innovation.

The number and cost of funding bid-based schemes often focuses on a very narrow service area also mean that capacity is required to complete funding bids. The Council would ask these schemes move to a formula approach and for there to be an accessible way to be clear on the rationale behind the distribution of funding.

New and changing burdens need to be fully funded based on local need, rather than government assumption, for example, meeting the new burden of weekly food waste collections and increasing housing targets in meeting immigration. The Council asks that new burdens are fully funded to reflect local needs.

A pause on planning reform, or less ad hoc changes in favour of comprehensive reform that brings the service into the 21st Century and simplifies the scope of plan making, planning control and procedures that need to be followed.

This Council like many others, experiences acute pressures in areas like homelessness with costs increasing substantially.

The Council when compared to the private sector has uncompetitive pay levels. With fewer than ever candidates joining local government, having an ageing work force means recruitment and retention is an issue. Successive years of below inflation pay rises for local government staff has meant that retaining a fully resourced staffing structure is not easy. This is currently an issue across most of our professional posts.

Further areas where barriers currently exist are:

- Complicated, inconsistent, and misaligned processes for submitting data returns to central government. These add pressure on staff to meet deadlines that are often unrealistic.
- Numerous statutory requirements to place notices in newspapers or issue written copies of routine notices.
- The excessive amount of information that is required in the annual accounts or that has to be published under the transparency code.
- Statutory overrides such as the requirement to value assets for accounts every year.

There are a number of areas where we feel the government could assist by making changes to legislation quite easily:

- Closure of the loop hole that allows private landlords to set up, provide a 'support' service to their residents, charge them a very high rent and be able to claim it all back through the benefits system.
- Change the rules on Disabled Facilities Grants to allow expenditure on Council-owned properties as well as private. We struggle to spend the allocation on private sector enhancements but can't afford to carry out the work on our own stock.
- Unfreeze the cap on housing benefit subsidy for temporary accommodation to 90% of market rent.
- Support the Local Government Association (LGA) recommendations for councils to have greater power and flexibility to build more social homes and use receipt monies in a way that works best for their local areas.
- Allow Councils to make a charge for Freedom of Information Requests to stop the private sector using it for business purposes. The increases in the extra work required to meet these requests is becoming unmanageable.
- Allow the use of the apprenticeship levy to part fund the wages rather than just the training of the individual, and/or design a new government-funded apprenticeship scheme to help local government attract trainees.

Despite the above, and the ongoing pressures facing local government, we continue to be a flexible, positive and forward thinking, innovative Council, always looking to create growth through new developments, enabling skills and supporting local businesses.



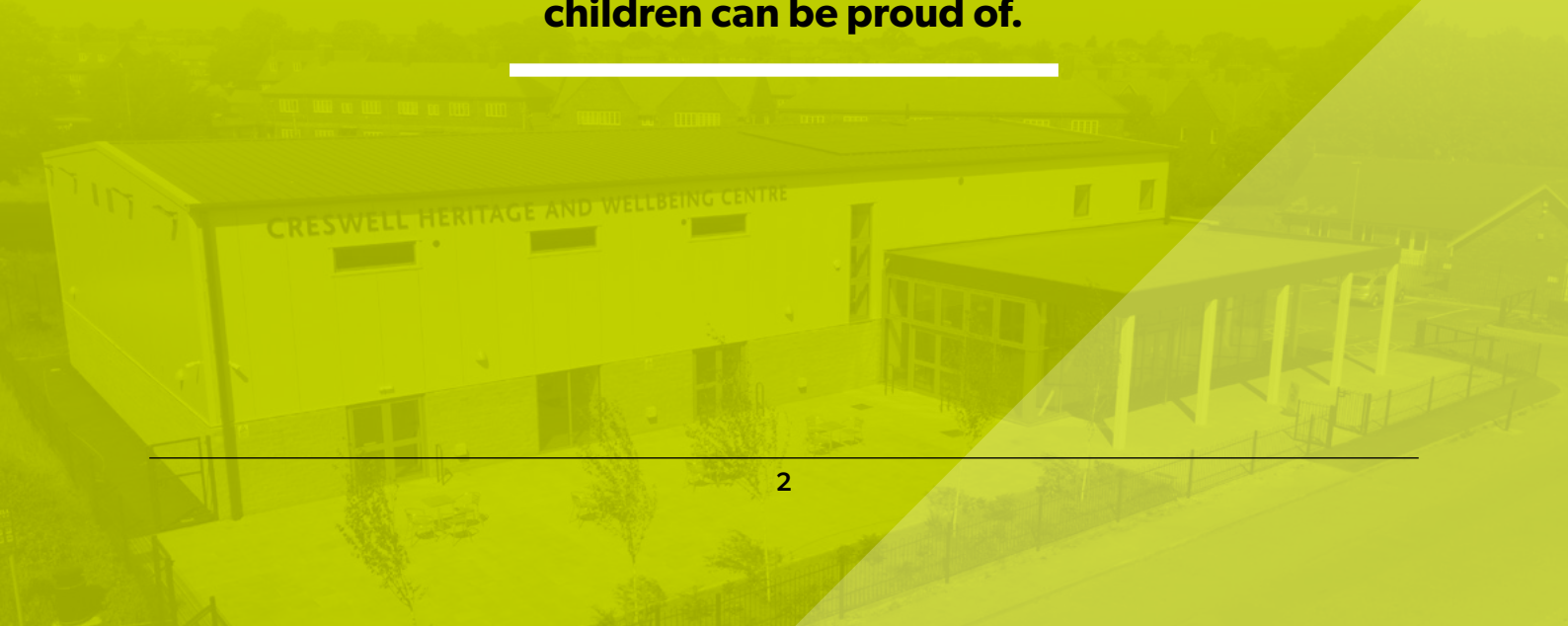
VISION BOLSOVER DISTRICT

PART TWO

Bolsover
District Council



**We need to create a thriving
and prosperous district
that our children and their
children can be proud of.**



By Steve Fritchley, Council Leader



In 2021 we produced our Vision Bolsover document and I felt it was time to update you on what had worked, what had not and what our plans for the future are.

When I became Leader of the authority in 2019, I said that we needed to be flexible and

adaptable with our ambitions. We needed scope to change, to allow new projects to be delivered, to address uncertainties such as reductions in funding and income we receive, changes in legislation that affect our services or influences that affect you, our local communities and your way of life.

The pandemic and continued restrictions in funding proved this to be true.

I also said that for the authority and the district to prosper we needed to challenge the norm and think about the long-term not just the short-term benefits. We need to create a thriving and prosperous district that our children and their children can be proud of.

I do not believe in self congratulation and never say 'we always do a great job', because no-one ever 'always does a great job'. Yes, the majority of what we do is good, but there are times when we don't live up to the standards you expect from us and there are times when we simply cannot deliver and we must accept this. But it is how we put things right that matters. It is how we deliver

on our promises and it is how we look after our communities and build our economies that matter.

Since I was re-elected as Leader of the Council in May 2023, I have been working with my colleagues and council officers to provide you with an update and an ambitious plan of projects that will span my second term in office.

I always prefer to look to the future and there are many challenges ahead of us, none more so than 'Devolution' or 'Local Government Reform'. With significant powers in housing, transport, skills, regeneration and economic development being handed to a newly elected East Midlands Mayor (elected May 2024), we must be at the forefront to ensure we get the best possible deals for Bolsover District.

This is a challenge that we are prepared for, and we have put into place teams and structures that have those all important 'shovel ready' projects on the table and ready to go once we know what funding is available.

Over the coming pages I will guide you through the past couple of years on what we have done as well as what some of our key ambitions for Bolsover District are.



*Pictured: new council housing
on Market Close, Shirebrook*

HOUSING

In 2019, one of the first things we did was commit to expanding on the success of our council house-building scheme. The four-year scheme had seen 108 new properties built across the district from Bolsover to Pinxton and Creswell to Blackwell.

We have always vehemently protected our housing stock and whilst other authorities were selling off or farming out their housing stock to arms lengths companies, we agreed to spend £36million to build up to 400 council properties across the district.

We did this because we want to provide good quality, modern homes for local people to live in and not have to move miles away from friends and family.

Work on the Bolsover Homes project started in Whitwell and saw 37 new properties built, 24 in Whaley Thorns (the first Future Homes site in the district) and 28 in Shirebrook with more to follow in Langwith, Pinxton and Blackwell.

In September 2022, we received the news that our contractor for the Bolsover Homes project, was going into administration.

We had to act quickly and decisively to ensure our assets were protected and we could continue to deliver what we had set out to do. We agreed to take over the joint venture called Dragonfly Development Limited so that it would become a council-owned company that would not only help us continue to build our council properties but also provide us with an income stream and safeguard jobs, all in line with market needs.

This is an important element of the company and because the Council owns it, we will reap all the profits and savings to support our expenditure and services.

Over the past few years we have also invested over £10million into refurbishing and redeveloping our Independent Living Schemes. Victoria House in Creswell, Parkfields in Clowne and Ashbourne Court

in Shirebrook have, or are undergoing transformations to bring the accommodation up to 21st century living standards and provide residents with energy efficient homes.

We are also working on getting our empty or 'void' properties (as they are known) back into circulation quicker. The longer a property is left empty and waiting for repairs to take place, the longer families are left on our waiting list and it is costing us money through no rent and having to pay Council Tax ourselves.

AMBITIONS

Dragonfly Development Limited and new housing

What is abundantly clear is that we have a growing population that need housing, but there is a shortage of housing nationally. I am not just talking about private developments, but social housing. The government are not meeting their target to build 300,000 new homes overall every year by the mid-2020s. Add in the Right to Buy legislation where tenants of council properties can purchase their home for a discounted rate after living in it for three-years and the problems with landlords issuing Section 21 notices – we clearly have a problem not of our own doing!

There are over 1,800 people on our housing register and we regularly receive up to 80 bids on a property when they become available. So, demand far outweighs the current supply and something needs to be done.



DRAGONFLY
DEVELOPMENT

Through Dragonfly Development Limited we aim to build new council housing in areas of need. We know where this need is through our housing register, and we will identify suitable land in that area to build whatever properties are needed. It could be bungalows, flats or three/four-bedroom family homes. The key is to make sure local people can live or can continue to live in an area they grew up in or want to live in.

The limit of our ambition does not stop at new builds though, as we are also looking to purchase housing on private development sites so we can rent them or buy existing homes that are on the open market to rent out – all of which will contribute to providing good quality homes for local people and help us attract more income to reinvest in our services.

Independent living accommodation

Looking after older or vulnerable people in our society is a top priority for us. We do not believe it is fair that when someone has lived in a particular area all of their life that they should have to move elsewhere just because there is no accommodation that meets their needs, or an 'authority' deems the building to be unfit and closes it down.

So, we will continue with our ambition to refurbish all of our Independent Living Centres (or sheltered accommodation) and extend them where appropriate to create more space and more homes.

A prime example of this is Ashbourne Court in Shirebrook where we had a waiting list for people to move into the property. In an effort to address this problem we completely refurbished the accommodation and communal living areas and also extended the property with an additional 14 units, all of which are now fully let.

We are continuing this trend by investing £5million on refurbishing both Jubilee Court in Pinxton and Valley View in Hillstown, with the plan to also build two bungalows to the rear of the latter to offer more accommodation.

Our ambition continues with the £9million redevelopment of Woburn House and nearby bungalows in Blackwell. This will see the construction of a 20-flat independent living building that meets modern living standards together with 15 bungalows and eight houses.

And we won't stop there. If there is an identified need to build additional Independent Living Centres or bungalows for our older or vulnerable residents, then we will continue to do so for their benefit.

Reducing void property re-let times

As mentioned, in addition to building and purchasing properties we also aim to reduce the amount of time void (empty) properties are left stood empty.

Dragonfly Development Limited are now responsible for managing and maintaining our properties and we aim to reduce the



amount of time a property is left empty to 20 calendar days.

As part of this process, we will review the lettable standard and voids specification we use to determine whether a property is suitable for letting and we will constantly review these so we can let our properties as soon as possible.

To help get the property up to our high re-let standards we have agreed a contract with Sweet Aroma who will clean our empty properties over a four-year period, up to June 2027.

Pictured: (above) new council housing on Sandy Lane, Whitwell, (below) Ashbourne Court in Shirebrook.





CUSTOMERS

It has become common parlance to refer to everyone as customers, but I believe it is more involved than that.

Customers are often pigeonholed as people who just receive a service from us, but I feel it's more. It's about our communities as a whole.

Residents, businesses, visitors, partners... they are all encompassed under this heading and classed as our customers.

We pride ourselves on providing good quality services that meet our customers' needs. We know we don't get it right all the time, but who does? So, what we need to do is focus on the positives, as they far outweigh the negatives, whilst still developing and improving what we do.

Bolsover District is a great place to live. We have historic town centres, some wonderful countryside, great connectivity and most

of all, we have hard working and creative residents.

This is an area that we are particularly keen to develop, protect and promote as our communities - with the skills they possess and the groups that exist within them - are the heartbeat of the district.

Community groups are an integral part of our social fabric and provide young people with skills for later life, whilst also giving enjoyment and comfort to those reaching their twilight years.

During COVID and the lockdown periods many of these groups dwindled and I was afraid of our elderly residents developing agoraphobia.



So, over the past few years, we have provided promotional and marketing assistance to community groups to help them grow and attract new members.

We established our Bolsover District Community Lottery Scheme to help provide essential funding for groups. 42 organisations are registered on the scheme, raising a total of approximately £16,000 per year. This is a good start, but I know more can be done to help our groups.

We also decided to introduce an annual grants scheme where each of the 37 councillors receive £1,000 to share and donate amongst clubs and groups in their specific wards to help them survive, develop and provide new activities and services.

Providing people with the necessary skills to gain further education or employment is vital if we are to create a diverse and multi-skilled population. We know there is a strong appetite for learning in the district from the audit of skills and employment survey we carried out in 2022.

What I want to do now is address this need and provide our local communities with the means to undertake new qualifications, re-train and upskill that will help improve their lives.

We have already helped scores of people gain new skills through our Apprenticeship

Programme in fields such as business, horticulture, finance and plumbing, but we need to expand this further and create a dedicated base for them to learn and get the relevant experience and knowledge.

Raising the aspirations of our children, young people and those wanting a career or life change is key to their future success.

Local government is often criticised for the services it provides. But if you look closer at what we do, we perform better than most private companies. Housing, planning, leisure, waste and recycling are all services that we provide to a consistently high standard.

We are one of the few authorities across the country who are continuing to build more new council homes, our planning team regularly receive accolades and win awards for the service we provide, we invest in our leisure services to provide you with opportunities to take part in sport, leisure and recreational activities and we provide a waste and recycling service which is regarded as amongst one of the best in the country.

We want you to feel connected to the Council, be able to talk to a person rather than a computer and access the information you want. That's why we continue to invest in our front line services and contact centres, putting you at the heart of what we do.

AMBITIONS

Technology and Skills Centre

We aim to develop a Technology and Skills Centre that can produce the next breed of entrepreneurs or the next big invention.

The centre would provide both educational and practical learning in a range of fields including electronics, medicine and communications, providing students and work placements from businesses access to the latest technology required by the sector and help fill any skills gaps required by businesses.

We have already seen the impact on young people who have access to this type of training.

The aim is to embrace new technology so it will open up a whole new world to school leavers, young people and anyone wanting to learn new skills or change their career path.

Go Kart track

We have seen an increase in people using our roads as racing tracks, so we want to take them off the road and into a safe environment where they can satisfy their need for speed.

I enjoy my motor racing and Go Karting is the most popular form of motorsport in the UK, providing the essential starting point to progress further into the sport as well as being a great recreational and social day out for family and friends.

We have already seen young people from Creswell and Bolsover doing well in the sport as well as Ben Barnicoat from Palterton who is a Lexus Racing USA factory racing driver. But their success could be replicated by countless more if only we had a Go Kart track in the District.

We want to create an environment to help budding motorsport stars of the future as well as providing enjoyment for motorsport

enthusiasts. Utilising Dragonfly Development Ltd to build the facility, we can incorporate green technology by using electric karts and offer training opportunities at the facility. The venue could provide multiple uses from corporate to private parties and racing leagues to pay as you go sessions as well as a café to provide hot and cold refreshments.

The nearest tracks to Bolsover District are in Sheffield and Sutton-in-Ashfield, so the addition of this leisure facility will only increase the attractiveness of the area and improve the leisure options available to our residents, whilst bringing in more visitors.

Just a thought, but we could produce the F1 drivers of the future.

Customer service

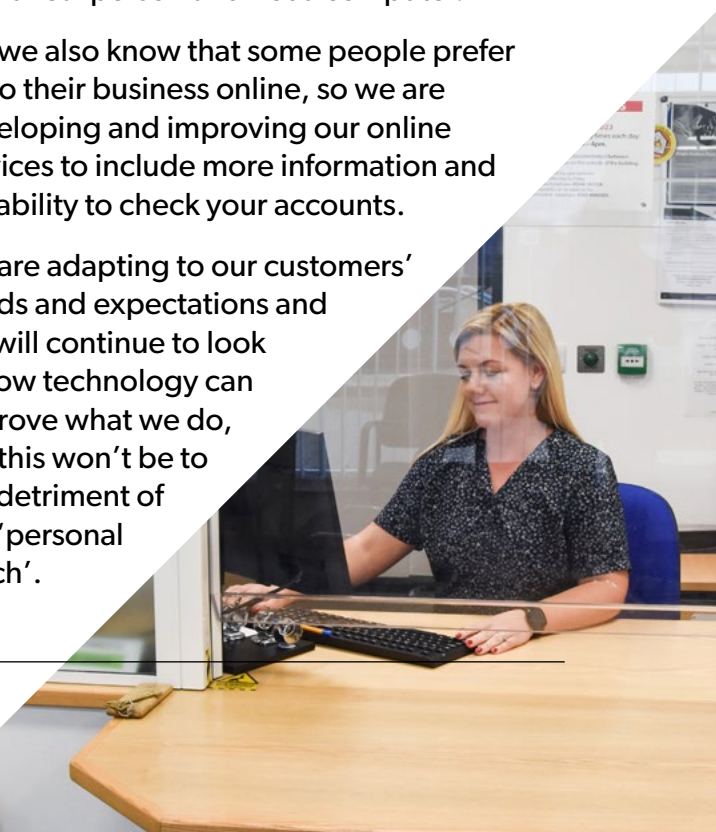
We know how important it is for us to be accessible, that's why we are continuing to invest in our four contact centres (based in Bolsover, Clowne, Shirebrook and South Normanton) and our customer services in general.

We want to make it easier for people to access council services and information rather than having to travel miles to do so.

We will continue to develop our four contact centres so our customers can report an issue, discuss their council business or pay a bill – all with a real person and not a computer.

But we also know that some people prefer to do their business online, so we are developing and improving our online services to include more information and the ability to check your accounts.

We are adapting to our customers' needs and expectations and we will continue to look at how technology can improve what we do, but this won't be to the detriment of the 'personal touch'.





*Pictured: Bolsover
Artisan Market*

ECONOMY

A strong, vibrant economy is key to making sure we have thriving town and village centres. But this cannot be done in isolation by just developing new premises or business accommodation, as it needs to have people with the relevant skills, new housing, community facilities and the infrastructure around it.

I want to make our town and village centres the focal points, the beating heart, and the places to go to for shopping, cultural experiences and socialising.

I believe we have one of the highest percentage of entrepreneurs in the country – a fact that I am very proud of and want to build upon.

The majority of our companies and businesses in our town and village centres are home-grown and we are continually seeing new businesses start-ups whether this is from people's homes or moving into commercial properties.

The pandemic did a lot of harm to many small and local businesses who struggled to survive. But the determination and creative thinking of our businesses to diversify or provide new ways of working, together with

the business support and grant funding we could offer, stood them in good stead.

I want to nurture this drive and enthusiasm. Our offer to support and promote local businesses stands as we will continue to provide free advertising and promotion to businesses located within Bolsover District, through our marketing channels.

Regeneration is a key area and we have seen various schemes drawn up for our four main town centres over the years but very few have been successful in securing external funding to get the projects off the ground. But I am determined to put this right.

One of the key obstacles to the delivery of recent regeneration schemes has been the absence of worked up and 'shovel ready' proposals. So, working with our partners, we will look at each area and see what projects



we can deliver that will bring physical, environmental and economic benefits, whilst delivering cultural and social experiences as well.

An area that will help bring about a better economy is developing our infrastructure. We are still looking at ways of how we can implement the Shirebrook Link Road and make improvements to the Treble Bob Roundabout in Barlborough. And we are looking to extend the Robin Hood Line to Ollerton and re-introducing a passenger line on the Maid Marion line in Pinxton.

One of the biggest ways to attract new people into our district and town centres is through tourism. We have three major tourist attractions located in our district (Bolsover Castle, Creswell Crags and Hardwick Hall) but we have never successfully managed to link them with visits to our town and village centres. That's why we recently employed a Tourism and Place Manager to encourage people to stay longer, visit our towns and villages and other attractions and provide them with a full experience of our district.

But it's not solely about town centres or high streets. Our track record in providing good quality, bespoke commercial accommodation is excellent. You only have to look at the very popular Tangent Business Hub in Shirebrook for that and the many commercial units we provide in Pleasley Vale, Pinxton, Bolsover, South Normanton and Creswell. I want to continue providing this type of accommodation to help start-up businesses, those wanting to expand

or relocate to our district and we will do this through both new-build and purchasing existing properties for re-let.

AMBITIONS

Town centre development

Our town centres are facing challenges of changing and evolving retail patterns. Every other month there seems to be announcements of large high street giants going into administration. What we have in our favour is that the majority of our town centres are made up of small independent businesses who have built up that trust and relationship with their customers.

We want to shift the reliance from online shopping to provide a more enjoyable and diverse physical shopping experience by supporting and investing in our town centres so that they can become more sustainable and thriving places for communities to live, work and enjoy.

We want to create town centres that offer unique shopping experiences. By improving the physical appearance of high streets, increasing connectivity through better public transport and providing flexible space, we hope to create shopping havens, a café culture, community venues and cultural and leisure experiences that local communities and visitors can enjoy.



We will continue to work with our partners to develop proposals for each of our four town centres and we will continue to bid for external funding to help us realise our ambitions.

Commercial properties

Creating an environment for businesses to thrive is essential for a healthy economy.

Evidence indicates that there is a demand for commercial properties, so by using both Council-owned and private land, our Dragonfly Development Ltd company will use their skills to match land to meet demand and build bespoke commercial developments.

These will help create job opportunities, nurture new and growing businesses and help improve the local economy through enhancing skills and diversifying our business base.

In addition to building new commercial developments, I want to invest in commercial and retail properties throughout Bolsover District.

Through purchasing properties, we can have direct impact on improving local town and village centres and be able to positively influence the look and feel of them by

bringing back into use empty properties and identifying gaps in the market to help local high streets come alive again.

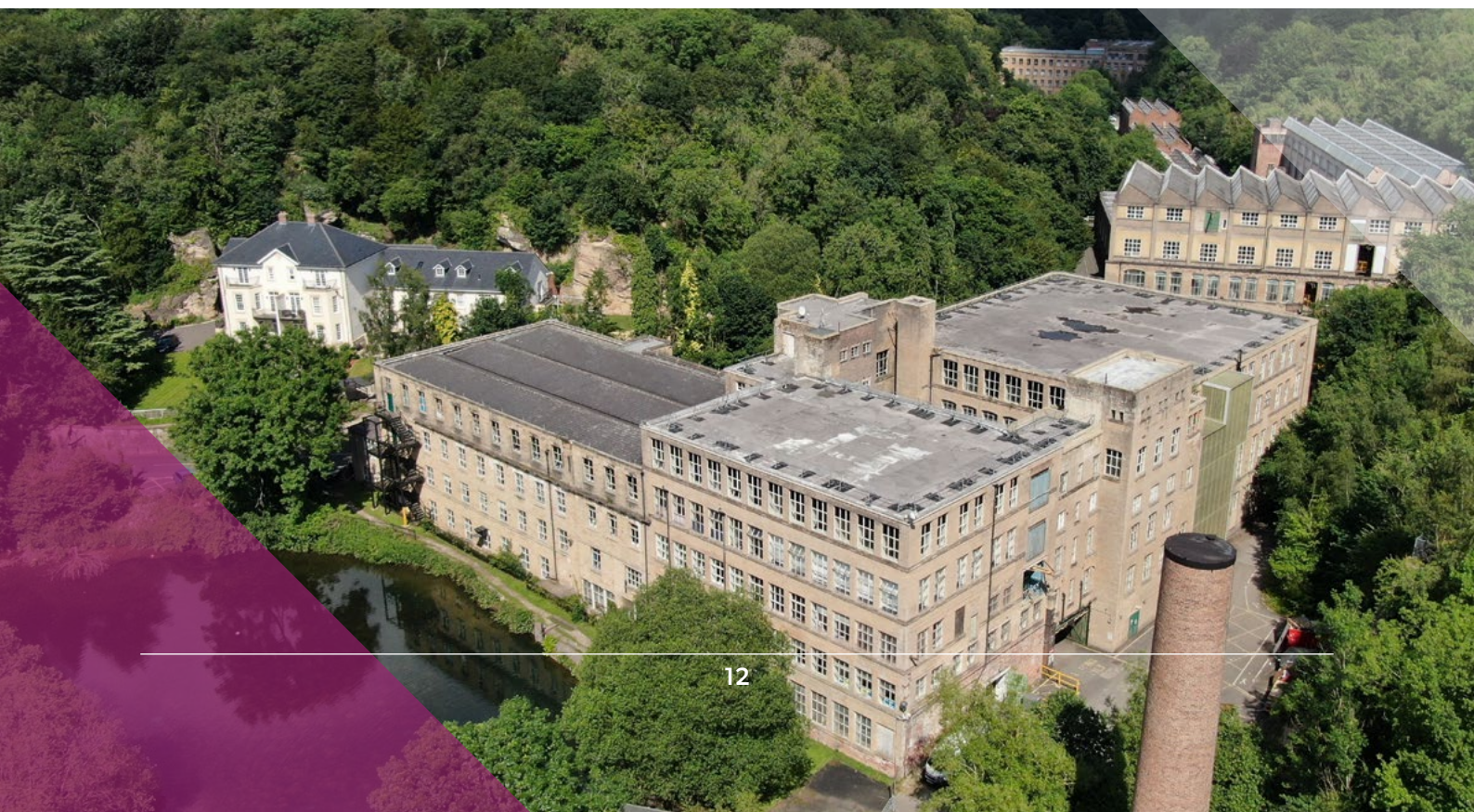
Pleasley Vale

I want to develop Pleasley Vale into a top quality venue that integrates business accommodation, leisure facilities, tourism experiences and accommodation, into one sustainable regeneration scheme.

The multi-million pound project would blend in seamlessly with its historic surroundings and natural environment to boast an unrivalled experience in the region.

The site is already home to numerous successful businesses and with careful planning we want to integrate this with the expansion of leisure facilities that utilise both the natural and built environment, the development of tourism facilities which showcase the history and heritage of the site and the potential to develop accommodation that will increase our visitor economy.

There are numerous regeneration options we are exploring, all of which will be assessed, finalising with a Masterplan that showcases the most viable and appropriate future for the site.





ENVIRONMENT

Improving our environment and what we are doing to tackle climate change is a key area for us.

Reducing our carbon emissions can be challenging, but by working together we can help create a district that is green, energy efficient and nurtures nature.

We know where the problems lie and what the potential solutions are and by working together, we can achieve much more.

The creation of open spaces, parks and woodlands. Protecting the flora and fauna. Encouraging nature and wildlife into our gardens and communities. These are all ways we can, and we have been helping improve our environment.

We have adjusted how we maintain and cut our grass verges and public open spaces to help allow for re-wilding and encouraging pollinators to do their work.

However, our maintenance regimes have to strike a balance between aesthetics, safety and the environment.

A big contributory factor in tackling climate change is trees. Trees are the ultimate carbon capture and storage machines. Like great carbon sinks, woods and forests

absorb atmospheric carbon and lock it up for centuries. That's why in 2020 we started our community woodland scheme where we aim to plant one million trees across the district.

This project is going well and has seen thousands of trees planted at Lark Rise Woods in Creswell as well as several community woodlands being created throughout the district. Not only does this contribute to tackling climate change but it provides welcoming and peaceful places for people to go and relax.

Reduce – Reuse – Recycle. We have all heard this phrase. Well, this is one area that we have continually improved over the years. Since bringing the collections of burgundy bins back in-house, (which saved 15 jobs) we have expanded the types of plastic you can recycle to include flexible plastics – a move which came five-years ahead of the government mandate to recycle this type of waste.

The flexible plastics include carrier bags, bubble wrap, confectionery wrappers and the film tops that come on products such

as grape and strawberry punnets. And in 2023, we made another improvement and asked residents to put their paper waste directly into the main body of the burgundy bin rather than segregate it into the caddy or hessian bag. Making it much easier for people to recycle.

The built environment is another area where we have been trying to make a difference. We have installed electric charging points in Clowne and Bolsover and made them as standard in our council properties at the Willows in Whaley Thorns and Shirebrook.

We are installing external wall insulation in council properties where other alternatives are not an option and where appropriate we are using air source heat pumps instead of using traditional heating methods.

We know we still have a lot to do in this area, but we are looking at using modern methods of construction on our new council house builds which will help reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency.

We are surrounded by beautiful countryside and nature, and the pandemic proved how much we value this type of freedom.

We have several country parks (Poulter, Doe Hill, Pleasley, Carr Vale and Peter Fidler) that provide places to exercise, socialise with family and friends or just enjoy the tranquillity and sounds of nature.

We are continually looking at ways we can improve access to the countryside whether this is through new trails, dedicated walks, open spaces or the chance to hire a bike and go further afield to explore what is on offer.

To help us achieve these aims we have employed two dedicated officers – Carbon Reduction Officer and Community Woodlands Officer – both of whom will help assist in our ambition to reduce our carbon footprint and enhance our local environment through more nature-friendly habitats.

AMBITIONS

Recycling food waste

One of the biggest ways we can help the environment is by recycling or composting more of our waste. You will have already read about how we have increased waste streams into our recycling efforts, but we feel more can be done.

25% of your black bin contains food waste that can be put into your green bin and sent to be composted.

So, as we strive to increase our recycling rates to 65%, we aim to introduce separate weekly household collections of food waste within the next couple of years.

By introducing this new service, your food waste can be recycled, which will help reduce our impact on the environment and help to tackle climate change.

Everything collected will be sent for processing where it can be recycled to create energy to power our homes or fertiliser to grow crops. This new service will contribute to our objective of becoming a net zero district.





Pictured: (above) Poulter Country Park, and (below left) Blackwell Trail

Roseland Park & Crematorium

The loss of a family member or friend can be deeply upsetting and the last thing anyone wants as you prepare to pay your respects to them is to be held up in traffic or feel rushed. So, after consulting with our local funeral directors we made a commitment to build a new crematorium facility in the heart of the district.

Local people currently have to travel to Mansfield or Chesterfield to say goodbye to loved ones, so through our company, Dragonfly Development Ltd, we have started work on the new £9.6m Roseland Park & Crematorium in Shirebrook, with the aim of it being fully operational by 2025. This facility will not only be local and easy to access, but it will also give you the time and space to celebrate the lives of your loved ones.

The land for the new facility has been made available by Shirebrook Town Council and the crematorium will include a main building, wake facility which will provide wake receptions, florist kiosk and take away refreshments, car parking and both formal memorial gardens and informal parkland which will grow into a beautiful landscape to enhance the biodiversity of the site.

Green and pleasant land

Whilst there is a demand to build more homes for local people to live in, create employment opportunities and improve our local infrastructure, we have to balance this with improving and nurturing our environment.

In his poem "Jerusalem" (1804), William Blake wrote of "England's green and pleasant land". And it is these words that are our driving force in striving to enhance and improve our local environment.

We have already made progress on this through our ambition to plant one million trees across Bolsover District. Our community woodland scheme has seen nearly 3,000 saplings planted at Creswell, Whitwell, Whaley, Bolsover, South Normanton and Pinxton.

But we know more can be done. We want to create landscapes that work for both wildlife and humans. Planting trees for climate change is vital, but how we plant those trees can re-establish the biodiversity of our landscapes.

We also want to create colour in the district through rewilding areas where wildlife can flourish and pollinators can go about their work. We want you to enjoy the local environment through the development and expansion of the many trails and footpaths that wind through our district and bring an array of colour to our seasons.

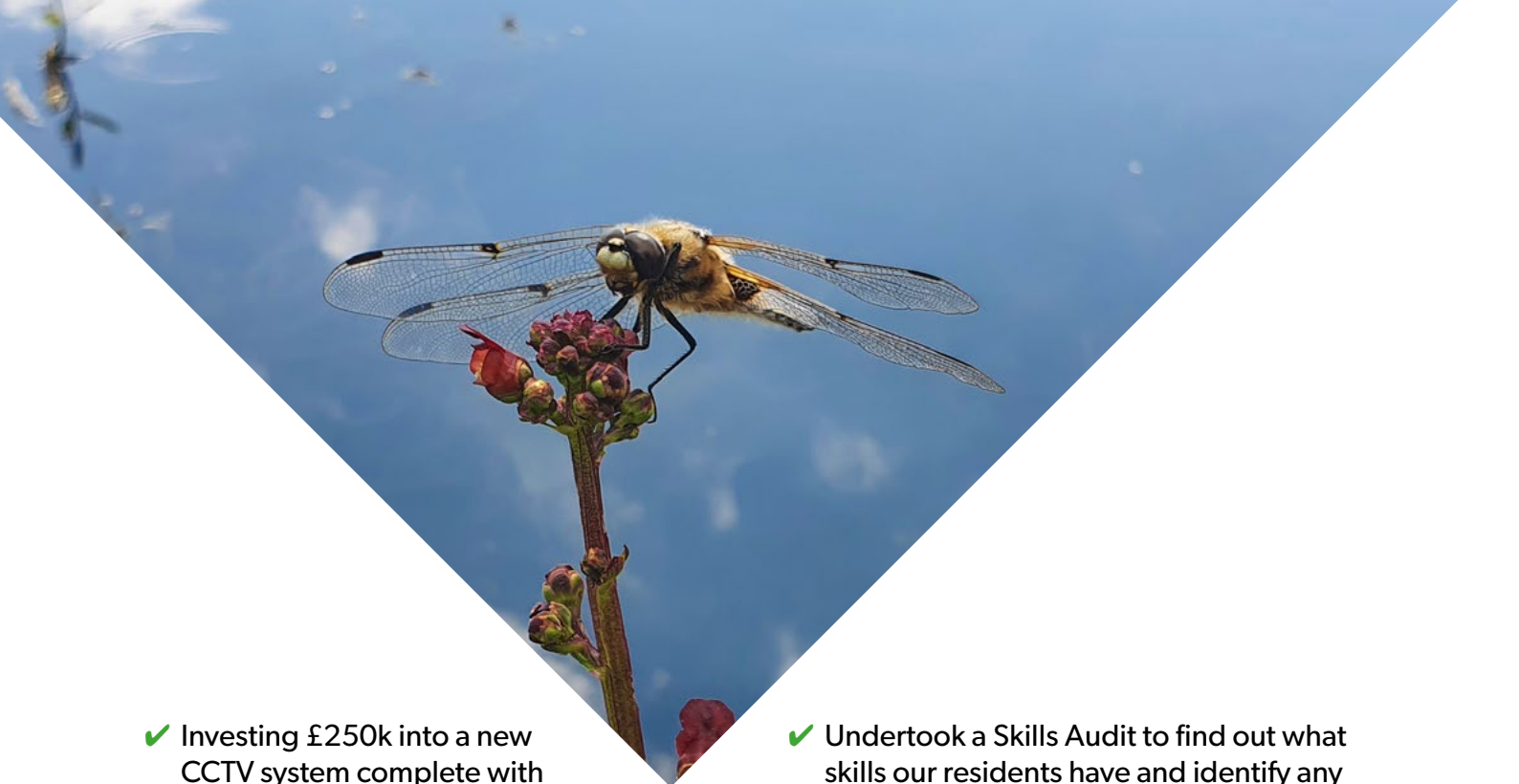
What we have achieved over the past four years

A global pandemic, continuous cuts in government funding, rising energy costs, dealing with what mother nature throws at us and increases in everyday household items.

The last four years have not been easy for anyone. But despite all these problems we have overcome them and continue to deliver services and projects on your behalf.

Here is a list of some of the larger schemes that I have not already talked about that we have achieved over the past four years.

- ✓ Launched Bolsover TV
- ✓ Led the way for Covid testing
- ✓ Provided energy efficient home improvement grants to households
- ✓ Spent £500k on the gym refurbishment at Go! Active in Clowne
- ✓ Received approval for the Bolsover District Local Plan
- ✓ Waste collection and street cleansing teams received regular awards from APSE
- ✓ Implemented a district wide Dog Public Spaces Protection Order
- ✓ Installed a new 3G pitch at Go! Active in Clowne
- ✓ Assisted with the building of the £3million Creswell Heritage and Wellbeing Centre
- ✓ Introduced a district wide Nuisance Vehicle Public Spaces Protection Order
- ✓ Made £150k available to help local businesses through our Economic Loan Fund
- ✓ Invested £900k to provide external wall insulation to council properties
- ✓ Introduced two new Growth Plans for Creswell and Shirebrook to foster growth in the areas.
- ✓ Lobbied and assisted action groups to get the HS2 project stopped
- ✓ Received the RoSPA Gold Health and Safety Award
- ✓ Transformed the former Whitwell Co-op into five apartments for local people to live in
- ✓ Launched a new Wellness Hub in Clowne and Tibshelf and expanded the services available in Bolsover, Whitwell, Pinxton, Creswell and Shirebrook.
- ✓ Used funding from the Sport England and the National Lottery's This Girl Can Community Fund to stage events for females in Whitwell
- ✓ Implemented mandatory CCTVs to be used in licensed taxis and private hire vehicles
- ✓ Improved our online payment system and webchat service
- ✓ Launched two grant schemes to help local businesses grow, create jobs or purchase much-needed equipment
- ✓ Invited to submit schemes up to the allocated £15million from the Levelling Up fund
- ✓ Secured funding for investment in digital planning through the PropTech Engagement Fund
- ✓ Launched a £427k programme to help rural business flourish as part of a Rural Fund Grant Scheme
- ✓ Spent £60k to purchase a new overt CCTV van that patrols the district
- ✓ Used £100k from the Safer Streets Fund towards a skate park in Bolsover.
- ✓ Received £100k to boost the general well-being of young people in Bolsover District
- ✓ Received three accolades from The Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust Architecture Awards, for the work we undertook at New Bolsover Model Village



- ✓ Investing £250k into a new CCTV system complete with central monitoring suite to help keep our communities safe and secure.
- ✓ Launched an e-newsletter service to keep you informed on what is happening
- ✓ Launched a Learning Charter with Unison to support employee development
- ✓ Took action against a rogue landlord for the state of his properties on the WestLea Estate in Clowne and he received a 10-month prison sentence
- ✓ Agreed to spend £4million on a new roofing replacement contract for council properties
- ✓ Received £1.9m over three years from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
- ✓ Launched and expanded the Shirebrook Shop Front Scheme
- ✓ Introduced the sign language interpretation service at our contact centres
- ✓ Secured public health funding for preventative health initiatives
- ✓ Invested over £600k in either new or refurbished play equipment or improvements to sports pitches across the district including South Normanton, Bolsover, Tibshelf and Pleasley
- ✓ Continuing to invest in leisure, social and community facilities as part of Section 106 agreements with private developers
- ✓ Undertook a Skills Audit to find out what skills our residents have and identify any gaps
- ✓ Provided sports and physical activity sessions for a range of ages and abilities across the district including social activity hubs, holiday programmes and targeted activities
- ✓ Implemented a new community enforcement team to help make the district safer and cleaner
- ✓ Launched the Creswell Craggs Rail Discovery Trail
- ✓ Installed Air Source Heat Pumps in council properties at Whaley Common
- ✓ Assisted communities with cost of living support
- ✓ Launched the PALS (Physical Activity and Lifestyle Support) scheme aimed at improving people's health and wellbeing
- ✓ Spent £1million on the extension of the popular Tangent Business Hub with seven new industrial units

These are just a sample of the many initiatives we have been involved in and there are many other examples of schemes and initiatives that we have undertaken for your benefit.



**This careful fiscal management
has stood us in good stead as
we continue to deliver and
improve our services.**



If the past four years have taught us anything it is to be flexible.

In February 2024, a report stated that we were in the top ten councils for the reduction in our government funding. But, despite this, we continue to manage our finances well and consistently receive a clean bill of health from the auditors. This careful fiscal management has stood us in good stead as we continue to deliver and improve our services.

This can be put down to a close working relationship with my colleagues in the Council Chamber as well as an excellent workforce who are creative, free thinking and have the best interests of the district and our communities at heart, whilst doing their jobs. Their resilience, character and knowledge have stood us in good stead and will continue to as we strive to make the area a better place to live, work and play.

But we cannot do all of this alone. As I mentioned earlier, by working collaboratively with both public and private sector partners and the community and voluntary sectors, we can make sure our projects and services are being delivered effectively and efficiently and provide value for money. Something we have been doing for the past 25-years to ensure Bolsover District receives the best possible services and investment it deserves.

Generating new ways to attract income is essential if we are to fund our services and ensure any increasing costs are not passed onto local residents. That's one of the reasons why we set up Dragonfly Development Ltd. As we are the only shareholder, we are the ones that see the profits. Profits that can be ploughed back into service provision.

An area I feel we have improved upon is how we communicate and provide information and news to you on what we are doing. I regularly receive compliments about our InTouch publication, our District/Parish Gazettes, the fact we provide a weekly news update through Bolsover TV and generally

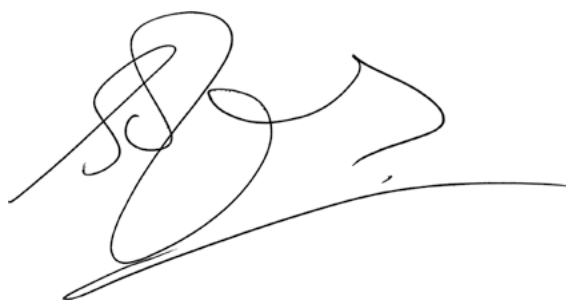
about how well informed people are. But we can still do better and over the next few years we will be looking to increase the reach of Bolsover TV and provide more regular updates on what we are doing on your behalf.

One of people's bug bears with local authorities is the red tape and unnecessary bureaucracy that exists. As a government organisation we have procedures and policies to follow, but we have streamlined our management and political structures meaning decisions are made much quicker and therefore benefitting you. I have encouraged our staff to be creative and more 'free-thinking' in their roles as they are the ones that know the service the best.

Of course, this booklet contains our high-level ambitions that we are striving to achieve and does not take into account the work we do on a daily basis such as waste and recycling collections, council house management, providing leisure and cultural opportunities, dealing with benefit enquiries and making the district safe and secure for you all.

I feel as an authority we have been successful and achieved a huge amount across a wide range of areas, despite everything that has been thrown at us.

Thank you for reading this booklet and I hope it has given you a flavour of what we are doing at Bolsover District Council.



Steve Fritchley, Council Leader



Bolsover

District Council

If you would like any further information or clarification on any of the issues or projects raised in this booklet please contact us on 01246 242424 or email enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk

Designed by Bolsover District Council 24-1513



BOLSOVER DISTRICT **THE FUTURE**

2024 – 2028





Our vision

Our vision is to maximise our influence and opportunities within the East Midlands Combined County Authority to drive the continued delivery of excellent services, maximise local aspirations and drive economic prosperity for Bolsover District.

Welcome

from the Council Leader

Local authorities play a pivotal and significant role in society.

Everything we do can be experienced on a daily basis. From looking after the parks and recreation grounds your children play in, to building new homes for local families to live in. From administering benefits and financial support to help those in need, to regenerating our towns and villages.

When I was first elected as Council Leader in 2019, I said we needed to become a more flexible and adaptable authority. It is no good setting stringent and rigid targets when powers outside of our control, influence what we want to do.

Establishing a set of priorities that allow us to change how we approach things, with the recognition that if we need to change then we can, will stand us in good stead for the future.

So, we have developed this new plan with two fundamental objectives in our mind.

The first is you, our communities.

You are the heart of everything we do. From how we deliver our services to how we design them for the future. From protecting people's jobs to helping



Councillor Steve Fritchley

Leader of the Council

people gain new skills. From delivering value for money projects to providing improved access to our services.

The second, is building resilience.

We need to have the ability to adapt and recover from outside disruptions and influences, ensuring that we can continue to deliver services as well as thrive in the long term.

Finance in local government has long been a discussion for debate. But whichever way you look at it, it is abundantly clear that it is never going to reach the same levels it was decades ago. So, we have put in place mechanisms to ensure we can become self-sufficient to provide the services to meet your needs.

One such mechanism is the establishment of our own company Dragonfly Development Ltd who will help us achieve a fair percentage of our ambitions such as building new council homes, regenerating our high streets and delivering projects like the Roseland Park & Crematorium near Shirebrook that will see income generated for the authority.

We are always striving for improvement. We are looking to improve our town and village high streets, increase the amount of sporting and cultural opportunities, improve the district's biodiversity, provide options to recycle more and build more council homes.

So, as you read through this document, you will see that our priorities and aims are flexible and adaptable so we can adapt to any changes that come our way.

Challenge

The introduction of the East Midlands Combined County Authority and elected mayor will bring significant changes as the mayor will hold devolved powers in areas such as transport, regeneration, housing and skills.

Opportunity

We have put in place structures and mechanisms to ensure we have 'shovel ready' projects to implement as and when any funding becomes available from the East Midlands Combined County Authority to ensure Bolsover District gets the best possible deal.

Introducing the plan

I am proud to be introducing the strategic plan for the Bolsover District for the next four years. At a time when many local councils are struggling to deliver services with limited budgets, it is more important than ever that we remain focused on continuous improvement, value for money and delivery of excellent services for our residents, businesses and visitors.

In developing this plan, we have worked with elected members, residents and staff to shape and focus our ambitions for the next four years. Priorities that focus on not only improving our services, but developing our communities, enhancing our environment and delivering growth for both the business and visitor economy. To deliver these ambitions we need skilled resources, and at Bolsover District Council, we employ over 500 dedicated and professional members of staff. From our refuse collectors to our housing and homelessness teams, all our staff are well trained and highly motivated to ensure we deliver the best we can for our communities.

This plan cannot possibly cover every service we provide or every ambition we want to achieve.



Ambitions

This plan responds to issues like the housing crisis, protecting our natural environment and helping young people meet their potential. It will help us meet our sustainability targets, including our commitment to achieving net-zero carbon status by 2050 and increasing our recycling and composting rates.



Karen Hanson

Chief Executive Officer

Instead, it tells you how we will work, what we will focus on and what our priorities are.

It responds to the short, medium and longer-term issues, like the national housing pressures, while protecting our natural environment and helping young people meet their potential for the long-term. It will help us meet our sustainability targets, including our commitment to achieving net-zero carbon status by 2050 and increasing our recycling and composting rates.

These are challenging times, but by working together we will continue to deliver and support stronger, healthier and more vibrant towns and communities.

I am looking forward to working with elected members and staff in delivering the next part of the Bolsover District journey.

The future 2024 - 2028

We are proud of Bolsover District. And we want to create a future where our children can grow up and thrive, where there is good quality, highly paid jobs available, where there is cultural and social activities to enjoy, where urban meets rural and the built environment complements the natural environment.

To do this we have developed four main aims:

Values

And to help us continue to be a flexible, adaptable and an efficient organisation we have adopted the following values. We:

- will show respect, honesty, care, and compassion in everything we do
- will challenge ourselves and change for the better
- will be open and transparent
- are proud and passionate about what we do
- will continue to work as a team and with partners to provide quality services.



Customers

Providing excellent and accessible services.



Economy

Driving growth, promoting the district and being business and visitor friendly.



Environment

Protecting the quality of life for residents and businesses, meeting environmental challenges, and enhancing biodiversity.



Housing

Delivering social and private sector housing growth.



Priority

Customers

providing excellent and accessible services



● Our priorities

We are committed to:

- Continuous improvement to service delivery through innovation, modernisation and listening to customers.
- Improving the customer

experience and removing barriers to accessing information and services.

- Having an agile working, responsive, skilled, and engaged workforce.
- Continuing to work with partners from all sectors, ensuring priorities are aligned to benefit the residents of Bolsover District.
- Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and supporting and involving vulnerable and disadvantaged people.
- Improving health, wellbeing and increasing participation in sport, leisure, and social activities.



We will use technology to improve our services, where appropriate, but not to the detriment of customer service

● Website

To help us improve the accessibility of our website we will talk to local organisations such as the Equalities Group to get their views and feedback.

● Sports participation

We will provide a more diverse range of activities, both in our leisure facilities and as part of our outreach programmes, to help increase participation in sport, leisure and social activities.



priorities and publish an annual progress and evaluation report in respect of cross cutting themes (skills, aspiration, health, and local rail offer).

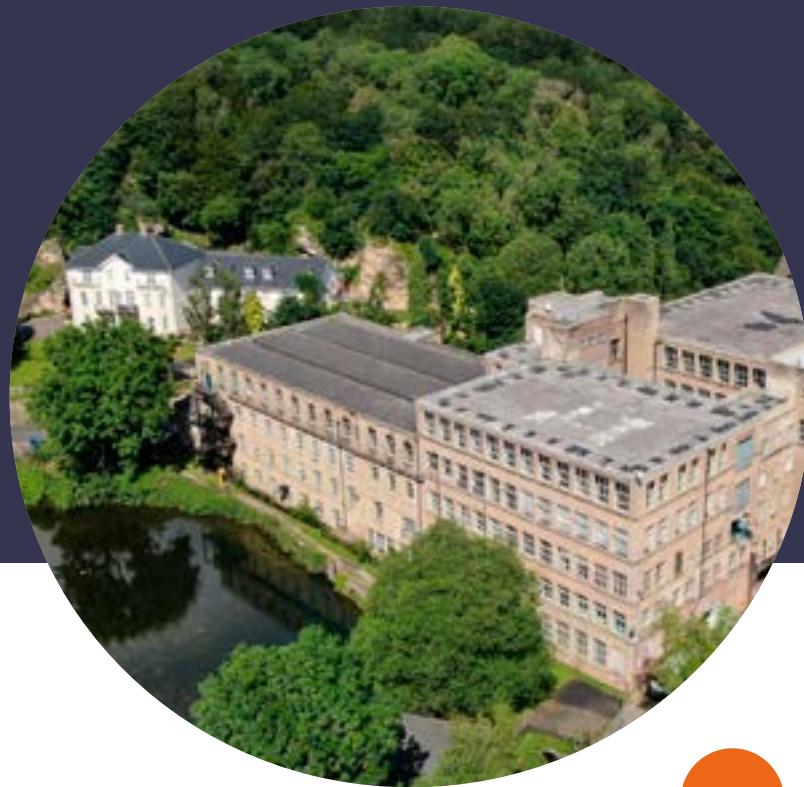
Some of the initiatives that will help us achieve our priorities over the next four years include:

- Developing real time customer satisfaction measurement for services provided through our contact centres.
- Achieving a score of 90% or above based on user experience including accessibility for our website.
- Developing further our customer and resident insight work.
- Working with stakeholders, regional and local partnerships to deliver shared strategies and
- Monitoring progress against the Equality Plan and objectives for 2023–2027 and publishing information annually.
- Increasing participation in sport, leisure, and social activities, by 3,000 attendances per year.
- Delivering a health intervention programme which provides 500 adults per year with a personal exercise plan via the exercise referral scheme and aims to retain at least 50% into continued exercise after 12 weeks.
- Improving employee engagement and feedback to enable us to develop a fully inclusive People Strategy by March 2025.

Priority

Economy

Drive growth, promote the district and be business and visitor friendly



● Our priorities

We are committed to:

- Actively working with partners to support enterprise, innovation, jobs, and skills.
- Unlocking regeneration and development potential



It's important that we are flexible and adaptable to help meet our business goals and grow the local economy

of long-term vacant land and buildings, and stalled sites and deliver income-generating capital projects.

- Ensuring financial sustainability, increasing revenue streams, achieving best value, and making the best use of our assets.
- Promoting the district and working with partners to increase and support the creative, cultural and tourism sector.
- Maximising our influence and opportunities within the East Midlands Combined County Authority to collectively ensure our citizens have the opportunity to develop key skills and access opportunities to work well, and help create a strong and sustainable local economy.

● Place narrative

To help us attract more visitors and inward investment to the area our focus for a new place narrative will centre around three priority areas: your visitor experience all packaged up; experience our great value living location; and we've made it our business to reach out.

● Pleasley Vale

We will work with existing businesses to develop the site into a unique business, leisure and visitor experience where the past meets the future and tradition meets innovation.



key heritage assets and grow the visitor economy, the number of tourists and the amount of tourism spending in the district by 2025.

- Working with partners to develop innovation and growth in our cultural and creative sectors through active support of an investment in a creative's network, cultural corridor, and maker's hub.
- Working with higher education and further education providers and other partners to develop post 16 provision within the district to enable and empower more of our local workforce to find better paid, skilled jobs.
- Securing investment in improvement of our existing business estate and delivery of new commercial space, including regeneration of Pleasley Mills, to meet the needs of local business, encourage inward investment and support growth throughout the local economy.
- Delivering a fully operational crematorium and managing this facility to generate income from 2025.
- Reviewing procurement rules to meet public procurement regulations and social value requirements.

Some of the initiatives that will help us achieve our priorities over the next four years include:

- Refreshing our Business Growth Strategy to enable and empower Dragonfly Development Ltd to support us in making the best use of our assets, support growth in the local economy, attract inward investment to the district and maximise the district's share of potential funding streams from the Government and the East Midlands Combined County Authority.
- Working with partners to develop a place-based narrative to encourage inward investment, increase engagement with our

Priority

Environment

Protect the quality of life for residents and businesses, meet environmental challenges and enhance biodiversity



● Our priorities

We are committed to:

- Maximising our influence and opportunities within the East Midlands Combined County Authority to collectively lead the way in moving from fossil to fusion and play our part in



We have to find a way to make sure what we do complements how nature works and how people think

achieving our national ambition to achieve net zero by 2050.

- Reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same.
- Increasing recycling.
- Enhancing biodiversity across the district.
- Working with stakeholders, regional and local partnerships to deliver shared strategies and priorities that support the local environment.
- Ensuring all areas, neighbourhoods, and streets in the district, irrespective of housing tenure or type, are places where people want to live, feel safe, and are proud to live.

● Recycling

To help us achieve a better rate of recycling across the district, more targeted promotion will be undertaken to help educate people on the benefits of recycling.

● Tree planting

We will continue with our tree planting schemes to help reduce the impact on the environment and increase the biodiversity of our district.



Some of the initiatives that will help us achieve our priorities over the next four years include:

- Updating our Carbon Reduction plan to deliver Net Zero 2050 and publish an annual progress and evaluation report.
- Increasing the combined recycling and composting rate to meet government's 65% target by 2035.
- Implementing Government Waste Consistency requirements for commercial waste by ending March 2025 and household waste by ending March 2026.
- Introducing separate weekly collection of food waste by March 2026.

- Carrying out 155 targeted proactive littering/dog fouling patrols per year (in 2023/24 and review number for 2024/25).
- Reducing fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people in Bolsover District over the plan period (baseline to be established and targets set each year).
- Achieving minimum quality standards of 60% for green spaces based on criteria and identified in the Local Plan for Bolsover District (baseline to be established and targets set each year).
- Annually monitoring the condition of Local Wildlife Sites across the district and take steps if required to enhance biodiversity and local nature recovery.
- Supporting developers and local organisations to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain across our urban and rural environments, realising future opportunities that support and deliver our Local Nature Recovery action plan.

Priority

Housing

Deliver social and private sector housing growth



● Our priorities

We are committed to:

- Enabling housing growth by increasing the supply, quality, and range of housing to meet the needs of the growing population.



We are determined to solve the local housing crisis, one brick at a time

- Building more, good quality, affordable housing, and being a decent landlord.
- Preventing and responding to homelessness through early intervention and personalised solutions.
- Maintaining and improving property and housing management standards and ensuring that standards and living conditions in the district contribute towards better health outcomes for all.
- Maximising our influence and opportunities within the East Midlands Combined County Authority to create affordable, good quality housing options and to retrofit existing homes to be more environmentally sustainable.



● New council homes

We will continue with our Bolsover Homes programme by building new council properties where there is an identified demand, and it meets the needs of the local community.

● Private sector housing

We will adopt a new private sector housing strategy to help us work with landlords to improve the condition and quality of properties and develop good management practices, ultimately reducing homelessness.



Some of the initiatives that will help us achieve our priorities over the next four years include:

- Working towards compliance with the Social Housing Consumer Standards, ensuring tenants' voice is key when developing new council housing policies, procedures, and improvements.
- Commissioning and completing an appropriate council housing stock condition survey by April 2025, upon completion developing an improved rolling programme of stock inspections to inform future repairs and maintenance programme.
- Annually monitoring housing delivery in the district and taking steps if required to continue to meet the annual target of 272 new homes set out in the Local Plan for Bolsover District.
- Commissioning and completing local housing needs evidence by August 2024 to better understand the district's affordable housing needs.
- Working with partners to increase the supply, quality, and range of affordable housing to meet identified local needs.
- Developing strategies to support the private rented sector in supporting change to our duties.
- Delivering the actions within our Homelessness Strategy by December 2027.
- Preparing and adopting a new Housing Strategy by October 2024.
- Delivering 200 new homes through the Bolsover Homes Programme using Dragonfly Development Ltd by March 2028.
- Maintaining high levels of tenant satisfaction with council housing and associated services as assessed under the annual tenant satisfaction measures (TSM) with the aim to be above the national average.



Monitoring and review

We will carry out regular monitoring and reporting of our council plan progress.

We will ensure we are transparent with the key performance measures we put in place to measure outputs and outcomes. Each year we will undertake an annual review on our delivery of the plan and present a report for consideration by elected members.

Information will also be published on our



website and in our InTouch magazine for our residents and customers.

The plan will be monitored through our performance management framework in several ways:

CABINET MEMBERS

Cabinet members will oversee performance for their areas of responsibility.

SCRUTINY MEMBERS

Scrutiny members will review performance through quarterly reports including high level targets and key performance indicators.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Senior leadership team and service managers will oversee performance for their areas of responsibility and collectively through quarterly reporting, cabinet member briefings, appraisals, team meetings and one to one meetings.

AUDIT

Sample targets and performance indicators will be audited to ensure data quality.

Equalities Statement

Bolsover District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community.

The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

Access for All statement

You can request this document or information in another format such as **large print** or **language** or contact us by:

- **Phone** - 01246 242424
- **Email** – enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk
- **BSL Video Call** – a three way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call the Council with **Sign Solutions** or call into one of our Contact Centres.
- Call with **Relay UK** via textphone or app on **0800 500 888** - a free phone service.
- **Visiting** one of our **offices** at Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton.





Bolsover District Council,
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For further information about this
plan or any of our services, please
telephone 01246 242424, email
enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk or visit
www.bolsover.gov.uk