

LOCAL GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Tuesday, 18th March 2025 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillors Will Fletcher, Duncan Haywood and Jeanne Raspin.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Natalie Etches (Head of Business Growth, Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Limited), Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Katie Walters (Property Services Manager), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, were Councillors Tom Munro, Portfolio Holder for Growth, and Tom Kirkham, Junior Portfolio Holder for Growth.

LOC42-24/25 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Moved by Councillor Will Fletcher and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin
RESOLVED that Councillor Duncan Haywood be elected as Chair for the meeting.

Councillor Duncan Haywood in the Chair

LOC43-24/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Sally Renshaw and John Ritchie (Portfolio Holder for Devolution).

LOC44-24/25 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

LOC45-24/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

LOC46-24/25 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Will Fletcher and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin
RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Local Growth Scrutiny Committee held on 21st January 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

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LOC47-24/25 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS

Members considered the updated List of Key Decisions provided at the meeting.

Moved by Councillor Jeanne Raspin and seconded by Councillor Will Fletcher

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

LOC48-24/25 REVIEW OF INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL VALUE TO BDC POLICY AND DELIVERY - POST-SCRUTINY MONITORING (FINAL REPORT)

The Scrutiny Officer presented the final progress report on a Review of Integration of Social Value to the Council's Policy and Delivery, which the Committee had undertaken as part of its Work Programme 2021/22.

In 2021/22 the Council had come under pressure to not only ensure value for money from investments, but also to secure additional benefits and impact from programmes and developments.

Members had welcomed the opportunity to work with the Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee in reviewing the Council's approach to how social value outcomes were evaluated.

The Committee had put together 6 recommendations which assisted in embedding social value into the wider policy structures and operational delivery of the Council.

To date all 6 recommendations had been achieved – 2 were achieved within the target date, 4 were achieved behind the target date during 2024.

Attached at Appendix 1 was the Executive's response to recommendations. Attached at Appendix 2 was the final report.

The Committee was required to make the report and findings public, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Moved by Councillor Jeanne Raspin and seconded by Councillor Will Fletcher

RESOLVED that: 1) Members note the completion of the review recommendations; and,

- 2) Members make its report and findings public, in accordance with Part 4.5.17(4) of the Council's Constitution.

LOC49-24/25 HOMES ENGLAND: COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT - 2024/25

The Head of Property Services presented the report to the Committee.

The Council had received funding from Homes England which contributed towards building the Bolsover Homes development of 7 homes at Moorfield Lane, Langwith – the layout plan was attached at Appendix 1.

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Homes England had carried out an audit to ensure funding requirements were complied with – this was attached at Appendix 2.

To conclude the audit there was a requirement to notify the Council it had taken place, its outcome was known (Green – Meets requirements) and confirm these statements had taken place to Homes England.

A Member praised the work achieved, noting that while the Green – Meets requirements classification permitted minor breaches, the Council had encountered none.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth added their congratulations to the Dragonfly Board and Dragonfly Development Ltd. in achieving the highest standard possible. It was stated that if such work was repeated in future, the Council would surely achieve the same result.

Moved by Councillor Will Fletcher and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin
RESOLVED that Members note the contents of the report.

The Head of Property Services left the meeting at 10:14 hours.

LOC50-24/25 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Head of Business Growth presented the final report on this round of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to the Committee (this fund expired 31st March 2025).

The UK Government had launched the UKSPF on 13th April 2022. The Council had received an allocation of £1,963,993 covering October 2022 – March 2025. £789,212 of this funding was allocated to 5 projects being delivered by the Economic Development Team.

The allocation of funding for each project, followed by an update of activity and expenditure which has taken place up to 31st December 2024 (Quarter 3 of 2024/25) was as followed:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	TOTAL
Tourism and Culture	£18,000	£25,000	£35,000	£78,000
Business Growth Grants Scheme	£0.00	£100,036	£128,176	£228,212
Net Zero Innovation programme	£60,000	£80,000	£160,000	£300,000
Small Business Support Scheme	£0.00	£45,000	£50,000	£95,000
Visitor Economy Business Support	£18,000	£35,000	£35,000	£88,000
TOTAL	£789,212			

A report presented to the Strategic Commissioning Board on 7th March 2025 confirmed a further allocation of £803,023 via the East Midlands Combined County Authority from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. The breakdown of the funding was £451,199 revenue and £351,824 capital spending.

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The new positive place narrative (and visual identity) continued to be used to support the new place led approach. This included: raising awareness and improving perceptions of the District; improving belief in and pride of place; identifying opportunities for collaboration; improving the impact of marketing; and attracting inward investment to improve the place offer.

“Dear Bolsover...” invited residents to send in notes, wishes and drawings about Bolsover (inspired by “A letter to Sheffield”).

“Bolsover through the Lens” had the Council working with the Bolsover Camera Club on a series of (monthly / quarterly) themed photo walks.

The Business Growth Grants Scheme offered 2 grants: the Growth Grant provided up to £10,000; the Strat-Up Grant provided up to £500. Promotion of these grants stopped in early September 2024 when the total applications received equalled the amount of funding available.

The result of the grants had seen an increased investment amount of £87,125.56.

The Net Zero Hyper Local Innovation Programme had seen 75 businesses attend a Carbon Management workshop. A further 6 businesses were registered for the March 2025 workshop at the time of the meeting.

The Hyper Local Business Support had proven very successful

Visitor Economy Business Support had 41 attendees and covered creative coaching, Show and Tell, and Creative Pop-Up shop focussed events. The fund had also sponsored Junction Arts’ Bright Winter Nights event, which had taken place as part of the Lantern Parade Festival weekend, with the Winter Nights ticketed event having attracted 1,300 attendees.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth commended the team and emphasized all ongoing work. The Committee were informed of a meeting taking place that weekend involving the team, the Portfolio Holder for Growth and possibly Bolsover’s MP who would meet at Creswell Crags Visitor Centre with the intention of boosting tourism to the site and encourage other tourist attractions to help raise the profile of the District.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth asked the Head of Business Growth to pass on a commendation of the work.

Moved by Councillor Jeanne Raspin and seconded by Councillor Will Fletcher
RESOLVED that Members note the content of the progress report.

LOC51-24/25 PLEASLEY VALE REGENERATION PROGRAMME - MONITORING UPDATE

The Head of Business Growth presented the report to the Committee.

P&D Environmental would start flood remediation works that week. Whilst this was later than anticipated, work would now commence as water levels were lower than before – the contract had been awarded at the right time.

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The Committee were informed the Business Estates Manager and Estates Officer had continued to:

- Bring in new tenants to the business park;
- Support those wanting additional accommodation to grow into new premises; and,
- Secure income through pro-active debt recovery.

4 new tenants had recently located to Mill One, taking up available office space on the fourth floor (which had been vacant for some time). A further 6 expressions of interest were being progressed through to leases.

These lettings would increase the occupancy rate from 13% to 45% just for the fourth floor of Mill 1.

The outturn financial position of the business park was positive, with the rental income already exceeding its forecast budget for the 2024/25 (as of 6th March 2025).

At its December 2024 meeting, the Council had approved funds for investment into Pleasley Vale for the schemes identified as well as additional repairs and works to the Mill buildings.

The Council had further approved a recommendation to delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to establish the post and budget of a Building Surveyor / Contractors Administrator into the Property Services Team of Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd.. This post would manage and oversee the building works and repairs at Pleasley Vale Business Park.

The first round of recruitment had proven unsuccessful, likely due to the Council going out to tender when the UK Government had just published its English Devolution White Paper (and likely dissuaded applicants from applying for a two-tiered local authority position). However, there was registered interest for this second round of recruitment.

To questions on the appointment, the Head of Business Growth informed that: advertisements had been on the Council's, Dragonfly Development Ltd.'s, and Derbyshire County Council's websites; the work the new position would be undertaking was still being carried out by the team (this was only a short term solution); and that it was expected an applicant would start within 2-3 months of a successful recruitment (depending on the notice period required for their current employment).

A Member shared it was pleasing to see work was ongoing.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth stated it was delightful to see the site was in a good position and exceeding the expected rental income. It was excellent that businesses were being supported and that additional income was being generated.

Moved by Councillor Will Fletcher and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin
RESOLVED that members note the contents of the report.

LOC52-24/25 DRAGONFLY SHAREHOLDER BOARD UPDATE

The Chief Executive presented the report to the Committee.

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On the conversion of Dragonfly Development Ltd. (DDL) to a company 100% owned by the Council, and the creation of Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd., the Council had also formed the Dragonfly Shareholder Board (the 'Board'). The purpose of the Board was to act as a consultation group to consider issues relating to DDL and Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd..

At its meeting on 16th January 2024, the Board had agreed that its minutes would be made available to the Committee to review.

Attached at Appendixes 1-4 were the minutes of the Board from 17th October 2024 through to 11th February 2025. The minutes of a meeting held on 27th February 2025 would be brought to the Committee once approved as a true and correct record at the Board's next meeting.

Following consultation with the Dragonfly Board of Directors and Dragonfly Chief Executive, the Board had now formally agreed the scope of the independent review. This was attached at Appendix 5.

Regular auditing of the accounts would also provide regular financial updates from the Section 151 Officer.

The additional funding of the £15 million and DDL's role would also be provided.

To a question on SHBD29-24/25 and the minutes of the Joint Board Meeting held on 6th November 2024 not being "approved as a correct record and remained in a draft format", the Chief Executive informed the minutes had been written by the Dragonfly Board as it had been a meeting arranged by them and not the Council.

While the inaccuracies, typographical mistakes and omissions within the minutes were highlighted to the Dragonfly Board and subsequently resolved, the Chief Executive informed the minutes of this meeting would be approved as a true and correct and the Committee informed of this at the next meeting.

To a question on the start date of the independent review, the Chief Executive believed it to be April 2025, with the Monitoring Officer and Junior Portfolio Holder for Growth informing an initial (and open) meeting would be taking place on 28th March 2025.

A Member stated it was pleasing the independent review would be starting in April 2025. It was asked how long the review would take to complete and whether all stakeholders would be able to attend. The Chief Executive informed the independent review was expected to take 35 non-consecutive days to complete and confirmed all stakeholders would be involved.

The Monitoring Officer added, if stakeholders agreed, members of the public who had previously expressed interest in DDL could be invited to attend – they would be able to provide an informative external view. It was asked if Members knew of members of the public who would be interested, they could provide names to the Council for consideration.

To a question on making the findings of the independent review public, the Chief Executive confirmed a report could be made public, and so too could the action plan for any identified improvements (the Board and the Executive would confirm this).

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The Portfolio Holder for Growth added making action plans public was essential for any review, as it would provide a key driver when reaching targets. It would also ensure the Council and DDL were moving in the right direction.

A Member noted making reports and action plans public was increasingly the norm (e.g. Ofsted in the education sector).

Moved by Councillor Jeanne Raspin and seconded by Councillor Will Fletcher

RESOLVED that: 1) Members of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the minutes of the Shareholder Board; and,

- 2) Members of the Local Growth Scrutiny Committee note the final agreed scope for the independent review by Local Partnerships.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Junior Portfolio Holder for Growth left the meeting at 10:36 hours.

LOC53-24/25 WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

The Scrutiny Officer presented the last Work Programme of 2024/25 to the Committee, attached at Appendix 1.

At its next meeting the Committee would decide upon what work topics it would review for the following municipal year of 2025/26.

Moved by Councillor Will Fletcher and seconded by Councillor Jeanne Raspin

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

The meeting concluded at 10:37 hours.