

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne, on Monday 28th July 2025 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Jane Yates in the Chair

Councillors Donna Hales, Rob Hiney Saunders, Clive Moesby, Tom Munro, John Ritchie and Phil Smith.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Monitoring Officer), Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Sarah Kay (Interim Director Planning, Devolution & Corporate Policy), Mark Giles (Assistant Director (Streetscene, Community Safety and Enforcement), Victoria Dawson (Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement), Jenny Williams (Head of Internal Audit Consortium), Thomas Dunne-Wragg (Scrutiny Officer) (to Minute No. EX130-25/26), and Alison Bluff (Senior Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting was Councillor Ashley Taylor for Minute No. EX130-25/26), and observing were, Councillors David Bennett and Sally Renshaw, and Liz Robinson (Unison Convenor).

EX124-25/26. APOLOGIES

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

EX125-25/26. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

EX126-25/26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

EX127-25/26. EXTRAORDINARY MINUTES – 16TH JUNE 2025

Moved by Councillor John Ritchie and seconded by Councillor Phil Smith

RESOLVED that the Minutes of an Extraordinary Executive meeting held on 16th June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

EX128-25/26. MINUTES – 23RD JUNE 2025

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders

RESOLVED that the Minutes of an Executive meeting held on 23rd June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

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NON KEY DECISIONS

EX129-25/26. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL DESPOILMENT EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Executive considered a detailed report presented by the Chair of the Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee, in relation to the Committee's review of the '*Council's Approach to Environmental Despoilment Education and Enforcement*'. The review was undertaken due to concerns raised around environmental despoilment in the District.

Environmental despoilment had increasingly become a focal point in national policy with the UK Government and environmental organisations highlighting the need for stronger action to reduce waste crime and promote cleaner, healthier environments.

Bolsover District faced unique challenges. Despite its natural beauty and rich heritage, the District had struggled with persistent environmental despoilment, especially when compared to neighbouring councils. This was a critical issue for the Council, as it aligned with both local priorities such as creating safer, cleaner neighbourhoods, and national objectives focused on waste reduction and environmental sustainability.

The aim of the review was that the Council reduced fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling to improve the aesthetical value of the District, to protect local wildlife and to reduce the cost of dealing with the unauthorised illegal depositing of waste by assessing the service's effectiveness in tackling environmental despoilment. Further, that the Council becomes an excellent authority at 'keeping the District clean' rather than 'cleaning the District'.

The objectives agreed and the key issues identified for investigation were set out in the report.

The Committee had put together 11 recommendations which would hopefully assist the Council in improving the effectiveness of its response to environmental despoilment across the District and these were set out in detail in the review report.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment noted the report was a good report which set out a number of opportunities for the Council to improve its performance in relation to environmental despoilment, and he praised both the Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Officer for their hard work in producing the review. He added that most of the actions could be implemented immediately and all within existing budgets.

Members welcomed the report and agreed it was a good report.

Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Tom Munro
RESOLVED that the recommendations of the review as outlined in section 2 of the report (Appendix 2) be endorsed,

2) for recommendations approved by Executive, monitoring of the recommendations by the Scrutiny Committee take place over a twelve-month period via post scrutiny monitoring reports with an update report to the Scrutiny Committee at the end of the monitoring period.

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Reasons for Recommendation

The Committee had put together 11 recommendations which would hopefully assist the Council in improving the effectiveness of its response to environmental despoilment across Bolsover District.

The key findings arising from the review were:

- Environmental despoilment, particularly fly-tipping, remained a significant and persistent issue across the District, impacting both the quality of the environment and residents' sense of place.
- Current enforcement outcomes were limited, with performance data showing a low percentage of reports leading to fixed penalty notices or prosecutions, particularly for fly-tipping, dog fouling and littering.
- The joint Environmental Health service with North East Derbyshire District Council offers a useful foundation, but there was a clear need to explore alternative models or tools that could enhance enforcement capability and effectiveness.
- Hotspot locations for fly-tipping required targeted action, including surveillance, signage, and operational task groups to focus efforts and improve accountability across departments.
- The coordination between departments—Streetscene, Community Safety and Environmental Health—must be strengthened through revived Corporate Enforcement Group meetings, structured evidence processes, and shared training opportunities.
- Public engagement and education were essential components of any long-term solution, with the Council needing to amplify its communications, provide clear guidance on waste disposal, and increase the visibility of enforcement actions to deter offending.
- Improved transparency and performance benchmarking through accessible, meaningful data and public updates would help build community trust and demonstrate the Council's commitment to tackling environmental offences.

The Committee recognised that a strategic and joined-up approach was required to deliver sustained improvements.

The recommendations in the report aimed to support that goal by enhancing enforcement activity, strengthening interdepartmental coordination, increasing public awareness, and improving the visibility and responsiveness of the Council's actions.

If implemented effectively, these measures would help reduce environmental crime, promote civic responsibility, and create a cleaner, safer Bolsover District for all residents.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Executive could choose not to endorse the recommendations of the review where they felt the course of action recommended was beyond the delivery capacity of the Authority.

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EX130-25/26. HOUSING SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2024-2025 (Q1 2025-2026)

Executive considered a detailed report, introduced by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, which provided Members with Housing Service performance information for (2024/2025) and for Q1 2025/2026.

The Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement presented the report and provided progress made in relation to the following topics;

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/2025
- Complaints Performance 2024/2025
- Q1 2025/2026 - Performance Data
- Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan
- Stock Condition Survey
- Awaab's Law
- Electrical Safety in the Social Rented Sector
- Decent Homes 2
- Competency Standards for Housing Managers
- Further Reforms to Right to Buy
- Easy read tenancy agreement

The Portfolio Holder noted that in relation to reporting the average time taken to re-let properties (*calendar days*), a meeting would be held with the Tenants Group to see how this could be presented in a better format which reflected the performance of the Housing team.

Moved by Councillor Phil Smith and seconded by Councillor Jane Yates

RESOLVED that the performance information and updates against the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan be noted.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Regulator for Social Housing had emphasised there needed to be greater oversight of the Housing Service by Executive. This was an information report to keep Members informed of the Housing Services performance information for 2024/2025 and Q1 2025/2026 to provide an update regarding actions under the Regulator for Social Housing Improvement Plan as well as an update on other key pieces of work of the Housing Service.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Not applicable to this report as providing an overview of performance and for information only.

EX131-25/26. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2024-2025

Executive considered a detailed report introduced by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, and presented by the Section 151 Officer, which provided the outturn position of the Council for the 2024/25 financial year. The report had been due to be presented to the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on 24th July 2025, but the

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meeting was inquorate, so will be presented at the next meeting on the 4th of September.

General Fund

The General Fund outturn position was summarised in Appendix 1 to the report. The appendix showed the current budget compared to the final outturn position. The main variances against the current budget were shown in table 1, with variances at service level shown in Appendix 2.

Financial Reserves

Transfers from Earmarked Reserves

The use of earmarked reserves in 2024/25 was £2.119m. This reflected the expenditure incurred on projects as of 31st March 2025, which had approval to use earmarked reserves.

Transfers to Reserves

At the end of the financial year, it had been necessary to agree transfers into reserves in preparation for future expenditure commitments, some from income received in 2024/25. Transfers to reserves totalled £5.773m which was £1.575m higher than originally forecast, reflecting the outturn shown in table 1.

The Section 151 Officer drew Members attention to a new appendix to the report being Appendix 7 – this was a table showing the Council's earmarked reserves position for both the HRA and the General Fund. After the transfers to reserves made as part of this report, the General Fund had total earmarked reserves of £24.673m, and the HRA had £3.396m, both as at 31st of March 2025. The total of £28.069m was shown in the Council's 2024/25 Statement of Accounts.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The Housing Revenue Account was provided in Appendix 3 and 4 to the report. The Housing Revenue Account position showed a number of variances during the year. The main expenditure under spends were in relation to staff related budgets £0.178m within various sections of the HRA, £0.401 increased income from services, and a combined saving of £0.275m against the stores-issues and sub-contractor cost budget. The overall expenditure position was £0.477m below the current budget. The overall income position was £0.376m above the current budget. This gave a net cost of services under spend of £0.853m, adjusting to £0.810m under spend after interest and depreciation.

Capital Investment Programme

Details of the capital expenditure incurred by the Council in 2024/25 on a scheme-by-scheme basis was provided in Appendix 5.

General Fund Schemes

In relation to the General Fund element of the Capital Programme during 2024/25, £8.535m was not undertaken. Shirebrook Crematorium, ICT infrastructure and Vehicle replacements were the main variances.

HRA Schemes

Within the HRA the variances showed that £7.286m of the total HRA programme had not been undertaken during the year. The New Build Properties category constituted

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the main variance. Appendix 5 also detailed the proposed carry forward amounts to 2025/26.

Capital Financing

Details of how the Capital Programme was financed was detailed at paragraph 2.20 of the report.

General Fund Capital Financing

Officers had financed the General Fund Capital Programme from a combination of capital receipts, reserve contributions, prudential borrowing, and external funding.

HRA Capital Financing

Officers had financed the HRA Capital Programme from a combination of capital receipts, reserve contributions, prudential borrowing, and external funding.

Treasury Management

Appendix 6 provided a brief report on the Treasury Management activity of the Council for 2024/25. In summary, the Council operated throughout 2024/25 within the Authorised and Operational Boundary limits approved in the Treasury Management Strategy as approved by the Council in January 2024.

In response to a Member's query in relation to Appendix 7 regarding the Council's borrowing requirements, the Section 151 Officer noted that it was difficult to compare the Council's level of borrowing with other neighbouring authorities as this depended on the amount of housing stock a council held. This was because the largest borrowing the Council had was related to when Councils had to buy themselves out of the Housing Subsidy system in 2012.

In response to another Member's query regarding the figures for recruitment drag, the Section 151 Officer felt that it was likely that departments had been over optimistic about how quickly they could get someone in post when the budget was set, which meant there was less budget used.

The Chief Executive referred to the income for Go Active which was £320k more than had been budgeted for and she wished to congratulate the Leisure Service.

The Chief Executive noted that as the Authority moved towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), a lot of work around recruitment and retention of staff would need to be undertaken. In other areas around the County, staff were shifting from one authority to another to better place themselves for the future. Use of temporary arrangements at Bolsover may need to be considered, though this wasn't something the Council had relied on in the past and wasn't ideal. Further to the recent results from the staff survey undertaken, a working group had been set up to look at terms and conditions, working with unions, to see what could be done to retain as many staff as possible in the future. Additional recruitment of staff may also be needed to see the Council through LGR, and updates would be provided to Members.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor Tom Munro

RESOLVED that 1) the outturn position in respect of the 2024/25 financial year, be noted,

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- 2) the transfers to general fund earmarked reserves of £1.575m as outlined in detail in paragraph 2.3 of the report be approved,
- 3) the transfers to HRA earmarked reserves of £0.810m as outlined in detail in paragraph 2.14 of the report be approved,
- 4) the proposed carry forward of capital budgets detailed in Appendix 5 to the report totalling £13.822m, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

General Fund

During 2024/25, the Council managed its budget effectively securing a favourable financial outturn. The Council was able to make contributions of £1.575m to reserves in preparation for future expenditure commitments. The Council's general fund earmarked reserves totalled £24.673m and had £20.718m committed against them, at the time of writing the report.

HRA

Again, effective budget management meant the Council was able to contribute £0.810m to the HRA Development Reserve in preparation for future expenditure commitments. The HRA continued to operate within the parameters set by the 30 Year Business Plan and the MTFP. Officers would be working to ensure that the Business Plan continued to reflect the impact of government legislation, that it was updated in response to the stock condition survey undertaken during 2024/25 and continued to be sustainable over the 30-year period of the Business Plan.

Capital Programme

The Capital Programme saw good progress on approved schemes during the 2024/25 financial year. There were, however, a number of schemes which were work in progress and this required that the associated expenditure and funding be carried forward into the 2025/26 financial year.

Capital Financing

Capital expenditure during 2024/25 had been fully financed in line with the approved programme. However, in some instances where schemes were funding from more than one source and ran over more than one year, funding used to finance expenditure in the current year may differ to originally planned in the MTFP. By the end of the project all financing would have been applied as originally approved.

Treasury Management

The Council operated in line with its agreed Treasury Management Strategy during the 2024/25 financial year. This ensured that lending and borrowing arrangements were prudent and sustainable, minimising the risk of financial loss to the Council. Effective management of these arrangements ensured that interest costs during the year were minimised in order to assist the Council's revenue position whilst interest receivable rose.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The financial outturn report for 2024/25 was primarily a factual report which detailed the outcome of previously approved budgets therefore there were no alternative options that needed to be considered.

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The allocation of resources to earmarked reserve accounts had been undertaken in line with the Council's policy and service delivery framework and in the light of the risks and issues facing the Council over the period of the current MTFP. If these risks did not materialise or were settled at a lower cost than anticipated, then the earmarked reserves would be reassessed and returned to balances where appropriate.

EX132-25/26. CORPORATE DEBT 2024-2025

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, in relation to a summary of the Council's corporate debt position as of 31st March 2025.

The main sources of income for the Council's General Fund were business rates, council tax, a small number of government grants and service-related income. The main source of income for the Council's Housing Revenue Account was dwelling rent, often referred to as 'housing rents'. Government grants were paid over to the Council on agreed dates directly into the Council's bank account so there was no need to include them on any debtor system. For most other sources of income, these had to be requested.

Overall, in 2024/25 £6.018m (net) more in income had been raised on the systems. Arrears had increased by £0.575m but if any reductions in arrears were excluded, the increase was £0.813m. The impairment allowances had been increased by £0.662m (net).

International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 9 – Financial Instruments, required the Council to write-off debt as soon as it was deemed uncollectable. This was to ensure the correct value of arrears was included on the Council's balance sheet on 31st March each year.

The Council's Constitution allowed the Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer, after consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to authorise the write-off of bad debts up to an approval limit of £2,500.

Executive approved the write-off of bad debts which were individually over £2,500 on receipt of a report, during the year. Table 5 in the report, showed the value of bad debts written off over the last financial year (2024/25). In all cases, every attempt was made by the Council and agencies working with the Council, to collect the outstanding debt before write-off was proposed. Should any chance to collect the debt occur in the future, the debts could be written back on to the relevant system. Writing-off amounts which were no longer collectable was an essential part of the debt management process. It ensured that a focus was maintained on those amounts which were collectable, thus maximising overall levels of collection.

Compared to last year, £0.087m more had been written off during 2024/25. This was mainly for business rates and council tax debt. This debt was proving more difficult to collect as some individuals and businesses changed location and country more so now than a few years ago, making them harder to trace.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor Tom Munro

RESOLVED that the report concerning the Council's Corporate Debt as of 31st March 2025, be noted.

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Reasons for Recommendation

To ensure that Executive were informed of the latest position concerning the Council's debt.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

This report is for information only.

KEY DECISION

EX133-25/26. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S DRAGONFLY'S COMPANIES

The Leader presented a report which sought Member's further consideration of the Local Partnerships' review of the Council's Dragonfly companies, and the options appraisal, in order to establish whether the services provided by the Council's Dragonfly companies should be transferred to the Council.

On 30th May 2025, the Council received a report from Local Partnerships following its review of Dragonfly Development Limited and Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Limited ("the Dragonfly companies"). On 2nd June 2025, the report was circulated to all Councillors and made available for all staff and the general public. The report had also been presented to the Executive on 16th June and Extraordinary Council on 9th July 2025.

At the Council meeting on 9th July Local Partnerships were in attendance and presented their findings and a copy of the presentation was attached at appendix 1 to the report.

The options presented had been scored against five criteria: risk mitigation, ability to continue commercial activity, positive impact on finance/value for money, ease/speed of implementation and strategic influence/control. The scores could be seen in the appendix.

In summary, bringing Dragonfly Management back in-house (retaining Dragonfly Development Ltd) scored 19 and bringing both companies into the Council scored 19.5 - these two options were the highest scoring within the appraisal.

In the options appraisal, Local Partnerships identified bringing both companies back in house as the option most likely to bring benefits to the Council.

The next steps, as advised by Local Partnerships, was for the Council to agree the preferred option followed by a process of due diligence including a programme of work to ensure a managed transfer of services and staff was undertaken

The Leader noted that she felt the companies had been set up for the right reasons at the time but with most of the work being completed for the Council and not externally, there hadn't been much opportunity for profit from external projects which has meant that most of the profit has been the Council's funds being returned to the Council less tax. The Leader added that Dragonfly had built some excellent quality social housing, and this could not be disputed. The issue was around value for money and bringing Dragonfly back in house the Council could continue to build but at cost price. This would help keep rents more affordable for residents.

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Councillors Ritchie and Hiney-Saunders echoed the Leader's comments and noted the benefits of bringing Dragonfly back in house.

Councillor Moesby also echoed these comments and requested it be put on record that Members thanked Dragonfly staff for the quality of work and the effort staff had put in over the last few years.

The Leader added that there were no anticipated job losses, and it would be a simple case of moving the companies in house and this would be done in a managed way with support of an external consultant and consultation with the unions.

The Chief Executive noted that in terms of time scales, if the recommendations were approved, it was anticipated that it would take up to December 2025 with a back stop of 31st March 2026.

The Leader thanked Executive Members and officers for their support whilst this review and consultation had been taking place.

Moved by Councillor Jane Yates and seconded by Councillor John Ritchie

RESOLVED that 1) the services and staff within the Council's wholly owned companies; Dragonfly Development Limited and Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Limited are brought in-house (within Bolsover District Council),

2) a comprehensive process of due diligence as outlined within the report, be undertaken to ensure a managed transfer of services and staff was undertaken.

Reasons for Recommendation

It was necessary for Executive to decide which was the preferred option for the way forward. This would enable the Council to establish the necessary programme to work toward the desired outcome.

The Local Partnerships' Options Appraisal recommended that bringing both companies back in-house would be the most beneficial for the Council.

In addition, bringing the companies back in house would enable the Council to concentrate on the challenges of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

To continue with the current governance set up for the Dragonfly companies. This was rejected as the Local Partnership's review showed that changes were needed.

To retain one or both of the companies. This was rejected as bringing the companies back in-house was the most beneficial option outlined in the review.

The meeting concluded at 1055 hours.