

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday 8th September 2024 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Jane Yates in the Chair

Councillors Donna Hales, Clive Moesby, John Ritchie and Phil Smith.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Jim Fieldsend (Monitoring Officer), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Sarah Kay (Interim Director Planning, Devolution & Corporate Policy), Victoria Dawson (Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement), Lesley Botham (Customer Service, Standards & Complaints Manager) (to Minute No. EX141-25/26), Cheryl Staples (Corporate Policy and Programme Officer) (to Minute No. EX139-25/26), Jessica Clayton (Programme and Major Projects Manager) (to Minute No. EX139-25/26), and Alison Bluff (Senior Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, were Councillors David Bennett and Duncan McGregor.

On behalf of everyone at the Council, the Chief Executive gave huge thanks and congratulations to Deborah Whallet, Housing & Enforcement Manager, who had today completed 45 years' service at the Authority. All of Deborah's work and positive impact on the Councils' tenants over these years was really appreciated.

EX134-25/26.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mary Dooley, Rob Hiney-Saunders and Tom Munro.

EX135-25/26.

URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

EX136-25/26.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EX137-25/26.

MINUTES – 28th JULY 2025

Moved by Councillor John Ritchie and seconded by Councillor Phil Smith

RESOLVED that the Minutes of an Executive meeting held on 28th July 2025 be approved as a correct record.

EXECUTIVE

EX138-25/26.

COUNCIL PLAN TARGETS PERFORMANCE REPORT APRIL 2025 TO JUNE 2025 (Q1)

Executive considered a report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Performance and Governance, which provided the 2025/26 Quarter 1 outturns for the Council Plan targets 2024-2028.

Out of the 33 targets, 25 (76%) were on track; one (3%) had been extended; three (9%) were not on track; three (9%) had been achieved, and one (3%) update had yet to be received.

Out of the 58 key performance indicators, 37 (64%) had a positive outturn; 10 (17%) had a negative outturn; seven (12%) indicators were withing target, and four (7%) were to be withdrawn or were no longer valid.

Dragonfly KPIs

Dragonfly, a company wholly owned by the Council, significantly contributed to the achievement of the Council's Plan. A summary of their performance against their key performance indicators was provided at Appendix 5 to the report.

The following was highlighted;

CUS.03 Work with stakeholders, regional and local partnerships to deliver shared strategies and priorities and publish an annual progress and evaluation report in respect of cross cutting themes (skills, aspiration, health, and local rail offer)

Rail Partnerships Project Update: It had been noted that both the Maid Marion and the Robin Hood Line required inclusion, and this would be looked at.

CUS.05 Explore running a residents' survey to gain resident feedback on place - based services and priorities for improvement by March 2025.

There had been issues with the distribution of the latest Council's In Touch magazine to residents in the District, which was being addressed; this had impacted on response rates for questionnaires which would hopefully be higher next time. As the Authority was now putting information out on Facebook, response rates should also increase.

HR01 Days sickness per full time employee

Sickness absence was the highest for the first time in three years in Quarter 1 and it would be looked at if more support could be given to staff.

ENV.05 - Carry out 155 targeted proactive littering dog fouling patrols per year

Staff shortages had affected this target.

ENV.06 - Reduce fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people in Bolsover District over the plan period

Members would be pleased to note that this target was on track.

EXECUTIVE

Our Housing by delivering social and private sector housing growth:

2 - Deliver 200 new homes through a new Bolsover Homes Programme using Dragonfly Development Ltd by March 2028

A final draft report was awaited from Dragonfly in relation to this target. In addition, pre construction works had started on Mill Lane, Bolsover.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources referred to the outturns for sickness absence and advised that the sickness absence policy was being followed for these cases.

The Leader noted that the long term sickness absence cases were pushing up the figures; she had requested HR carry out a piece of work to include local and national benchmarking for reassurance that the Council's figures were not adverse compared to other local authorities. The Council offered a lot of support to staff who were absent for sickness reasons including occupational health.

The Leader referred to *CSP 01 - % of Calls answered within 20 seconds* and noted the target had been reduced from 80% to 75% due to staff vacancies; she requested that this target be reinstated to 80% when the posts were filled. The Customer Service, Standards & Complaints Manager noted that this target would be reviewed on annual basis going forward.

The Strategic Director of Services referred to littering, dog fouling and fly tipping in the District, and advised that the Assistant Director of Streetscene, Community Safety and Enforcement, was preparing a report for a future meeting of Council to look at improvements around education and enforcement. With regard to the forthcoming food waste collection service, a report would be presented to Council in October.

The Corporate Policy and Programme Officer advised that target *CUS.05 Explore running a residents' survey to gain resident feedback on place - based services and priorities for improvement by March 2025*, would be extended to March 2028 as the target was ongoing.

The Leader noted that she was pleased that customers who had stated they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied or had requested feedback; (*CSP 07 - % of External Satisfaction (Realtime)*), had been contacted to ascertain details to resolve their issue.

The Programme and Major Projects Manager added that she wanted to thank service areas for adapting to the new system of submitting performance information which was now done via Teams, and this had been a smooth transition.

Moved by Councillor Donna Hales and seconded by Councillor Phil Smith

RESOLVED that the quarterly outturns against the Council Plan 2024-2028 targets be noted.

Reasons for Recommendation

This was an information report to keep Members informed of progress against the Council Plan targets noting achievements and any areas of concern.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Not applicable to this report as providing an overview of performance against agreed targets.

EXECUTIVE

The Corporate Policy and Programme Officer and the Programme and Major Projects Manager left the meeting.

EX139-25/26.

ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN 2024/25

Executive considered a report, presented by Councillor Cathy Jeffery, Junior Portfolio Holder Partnerships, Health and Wellbeing. The report provided information regarding the Annual Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) 2024/25.

The Annual Letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) contained an annual summary of statistics on the complaints made against the Council for the financial year ending 31st March 2025. Members were asked to note that data provided by the LGSCO may not align with the Council's data because the LGSCO numbers included people who had been signposted back to the Council but then may have chosen not to pursue their complaint.

During the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025, the LGSCO had received nine enquiries and complaints. Of these, seven were closed after initial enquiries, and two were not for the LGSCO to investigate (Appendix 2).

Benchmarking information – (CIPFA) Nearest Neighbour: By way of background information, the LGSCO upheld 83% of complaints submitted to them in 2024/25 (up from 80% in 2023/24) with the average being 66% for similar authorities.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources noted the letter was an excellent letter and staff should be congratulated.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor Donna Hales
RESOLVED that the Annual Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman 2024/25, be noted.

Reasons for Recommendation

To note the overall performance, receive the report and the Annual Letter from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman 2024/25.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

None.

EX140-25/26.

ANNUAL HOUSING OMBUDSMAN REPORT INCLUDING SELF ASSESSMENT 2024/25

Executive considered a report presented by Councillor Cathy Jeffery, Junior Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Health and Wellbeing. The report sought Members' approval of the Council's Annual Housing Ombudsman Report (Appendix 1) and Self-Assessment 2024/2025 (Appendix 2), which required submission by 30th September 2025.

EXECUTIVE

The report provided information on the performance of the Council's complaint handling, in terms of the volume and timeliness of responses; it also identified themes and lessons learnt to drive improvements.

The Self-Assessment ensured the Council's Complaints and Standards department had reviewed and aligned its Policy and Procedures to meet the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code requirements for 2024/25. The report had been reviewed, noted and welcomed at the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee held on 19th August 2025.

The Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement noted this was the second year a report had been required to be submitted to the Housing Ombudsman. A tenant friendly version would also be produced.

Moved by Councillor Phil Smith and seconded by Councillor Clive Moesby
RESOLVED that the Housing Ombudsman Report and Self-Assessment 2024/25, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

To approve the content of the Annual Housing Ombudsman Complaints Report and Self-Assessment 2024/25 to ensure corporate compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and the Councils CCC Policy.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The Annual Housing Ombudsman Complaints Report and Self-Assessment 2024/25 was a requirement of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

The Customer Service, Standards & Complaints Manager left the meeting.

EX141-25/26.

BUDGET MONITORING REPORT Q1

Executive considered a report, presented by the Section 151 Officer. The report provided an update on the financial position of the Council following the first quarter's budget monitoring exercise for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital Programme and Treasury Management activity.

General Fund Revenue Account

The General Fund Revenue Account summary was shown in Appendix 1 to the report. The original budget for 2025/26 showed a contribution from the NNDR Growth Protection Reserve of £0.049m, a deficit in effect. The current budget now showed this to be a transfer to the reserve after adjustments had been made to the business rates figures for the actual 2025/26 NNDR1 return, and the estimated business rates surplus of £2.454m. After the Council tax increase and other small movements were included, the current budget overall was showing a surplus of £0.139m. As savings were identified and secured, they were moved into the relevant cost centres within the main General Fund Directorates. Appendix 2 detailed the net cost of each cost centre within the Directorates.

EXECUTIVE

Government funding update – Fair Funding Review 2.0

On 20th June 2025, the government published a major consultation on the reform of local government funding. This was an 8-week consultation, running from 20th June to 15th August 2025. There would be a Policy Statement in the Autumn, which would set out the government's response to the consultation paper and outline its 'final policy positions.' The provisional local government finance settlement would be 'towards the end of the year.' The consultation was now referred to as the Fair Funding Review 2.0, emphasising the links between this consultation and the previous government's consultation in December 2018. The consultation stated that local authorities would receive a 3-year settlement covering 2026-27 to 2028-29.

Pleasley Vale Insurance Reserve

In the revised budget report of December 2024, the Section 151 Officer reported that due to being unable to obtain flood insurance cover, and large increases in excess levels for insurance cover on the park when we sought to renew policies, a decision had been taken to self-insure Pleasley Vale.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The Housing Revenue Account summary for the first quarter of 2025/26 was set out in Appendix 3 to the report. The original budget for 2025/26 showed a balanced budget, the current budget showed this to still be the case. Appendix 4 detailed the net cost of each cost centre within the HRA and gave some detail for the larger variances. The information on the HRA services transferred into Dragonfly Management was also provided.

Capital Programme

Capital Expenditure: The capital programme summary for the first quarter of 2025/26 was provided in Appendix 5 to the report.

Capital Resources: HRA - The Council had sufficient capital resources in place to finance the HRA actual expenditure and commitments at the end of the first quarter.

General Fund – The financing of the General Fund part of the capital programme was in line with the approved financing arrangements.

Treasury Management

The treasury management function covered the borrowing and investment of Council money. This included both the management of the Council's day to day cash balances and the management of its long-term debt. All transactions were conducted in accordance with the Council's approved strategy and the CIPFA Code of Practice. Good treasury management played an important role in the sound financial management of the Council's resources.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor

RESOLVED that 1) the monitoring position of the General Fund at the end of the first quarter as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report (net favourable variance of £0.903m against the profiled budget) and the key issues highlighted within the report, be noted,

2) the position on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Capital Programme and Treasury Management at the end of the first quarter (Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, be noted.

EXECUTIVE

Reasons for Recommendation

The report summarised the financial position of the Council following the first quarter's budget monitoring exercise for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and Treasury Management activity.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2025/26 – 2028/29 was approved in October 2024. It was the Section 151 Officer's intention to update the strategy on an annual basis for the implications of each finance settlement, to carry forward the assumptions for the new year of the MTFP and present it to Members for approval.

However, the uncertainty currently surrounding government funding and the Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation, meant the Section 151 Officer was not in a position to provide an update to the strategy at this time. Therefore, Members would be updated on the government funding implications for the Council and the MTFP, in the MTFP report in January 2026, and the MTFS would be updated as usual in September and October (2026).

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The Budget Monitoring report for 2025/26 is primarily a factual report which details progress against previously approved budgets. Accordingly, there are no alternative options to consider.

EX142-25/26.

MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATE DEBT – WRITE OFF OF OUTSTANDING AMOUNTS

Executive considered a report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, which sought Members approval to the proposed write-off of debts in respect of Sundry Debtors as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

If a tenant / tax payer's circumstances changed it could become difficult for them to keep paying their rent or council tax. Informing the Council of a change in personal circumstances late meant more benefit may be paid than entitled to; this meant a person became benefit overpayment debtors.

Circumstances could change quickly for people, and debtors could fall into arrears. It was common for local authorities to have arrears balances due to the vulnerable nature of some of its debtors. Debt management was how the Council managed its arrears and debtors.

When an amount of arrears becomes uncollectable, it was described as a bad debt. 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.

The Council's Constitution allowed the Director of Finance and 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.

The report recommended write-off of a number of individual debts which were above the limit of £2,500. The table in the report provided a summary of each class of write-off.

EXECUTIVE

This showed the amounts to be written off in 2025/26 as part of the report, and amounts written off in previous years, as a comparison.

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor John Ritchie

RESOLVED that the amounts included at paragraph 2.1 of the report (£22,662.68) and detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be written off.

Reasons for Recommendation

Given that all available options to recover the debt had been explored, it was important that the Council recognised the position and approved the write-off of the uncollectable debt.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

These are outlined in the main body of the report.

EX143-25/26.

8 COTTON STREET, BOLSOVER

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

The meeting concluded at 1030 hours.