

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, 8th July 2025 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Sally Renshaw in the Chair

Councillors Tom Kirkham (Vice-Chair), Justin Gilbody, Duncan Haywood, Jeanne Raspin and Jen Wilson.

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

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, were Councillors Rowan Clarke (Junior Portfolio Holder for Growth), Tom Munro (Portfolio Holder for Growth) and John Ritchie (Portfolio Holder for Devolution).

LOC1-25/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Will Fletcher.

LOC2-25/26 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

LOC3-25/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

LOC4-25/26 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Jeanne Raspin and seconded by Councillor Jen Wilson

RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Local Growth Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18th March 2025 and an Extraordinary Joint Scrutiny Committee (CSSC & LGSC) meeting held on 12th June 2025 be approved as true and correct records.

LOC5-25/26 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS

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

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To a question on the “Appointment of a Contractor to Complete Phase 2 of the Flood Defence Works at Pleasley Vale”, the Committee was informed the first phase was repairing the damn wall, with the second phase being to increase capacity via desilting the ponds along with the clearing of the culverts – this would increase water flow through the site.

To a question on the “Shirebrook Re:imagined – Update on Regeneration Funded Works”, the Committee was informed it had been approved by Shirebrook Town Council and a start date was estimated to be July / August 2025. It was expected completion would be before December 2025.

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

LOC6-25/26 BUSINESS GROWTH STRATEGY (DRAFT)

The Head of Business Growth presented the report to the Committee to update Members on the ongoing revision of the Business Growth Strategy (the ‘Strategy’) and action plan for 2025-29.

It was reiterated that the Strategy, attached at Appendix 1, was in draft form.

The Council’s previous Strategy covered 2020-24 and had focussed on how the Development Directorate had prioritised its work (and its work with internal and external partners) to achieve the Council’s ambitions over 2019-23.

In April 2024, the Council had launched the new Corporate Plan which had established a vision “to maximise [the Council’s] 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 [the] District”. It had been underpinned by four main aims: Customers; the Economy; the Environment; and Housing.

The creation of the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and subsequent changes to the funding structure had seen more devolved powers in areas including transport, regeneration and investment, housing, and skills be provided to EMCCA’s Mayor.

Therefore, the ‘Economy’ priority to drive growth, promote the District, and be business and visitor friendly should be underpinned by a clear strategy of how the Council would boost economic prosperity across the District, work to respond to the challenge of EMCCA, and maximise the opportunities as and when they emerged.

The Strategy had been refreshed to ensure that the ambitions and priorities reflected the new ‘Economy’ priority and recognised the emerging five strategic priorities of EMCCA and the D2 Economic Growth Strategy for Derbyshire (to best position the authority to respond to calls for funding and investment).

The 5 thematic areas of the Strategy had been established and were detailed in the report

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A working group involving officers from across the Council and both Dragonfly Companies had worked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the local economy as well identify and document all the different interventions taking place across the different disciplines (incl. regeneration, housing, net zero, planning, and business growth).

The draft document sought to address the economic, social, and environmental challenges the District faced through innovative and inclusive initiatives.

The Strategy would set out the ambition and objectives for a 4-year period, aligned to the Corporate Plan, and defined a clear action plan to achieve economic growth.

To a question on the Green Skills Hub, the Head of Business Growth informed West Notts. College had occupied a floor of Mill 3 and was operational.

To a follow up question on the status of the Shirebrook Net Zero Hub, the Head of Business Growth informed the Council was working with the contractor with work expected to begin September 2025.

A draft report had been prepared by Rider Levett Bucknall UK Ltd., which had invited a number of proposals from numerous organisations and the Council was working through the 7 submissions received to determine what the successful delivery model alongside its business plan.

To a question on the Shared Prosperity Fund, the Head of Business Growth informed the Council had received a year's extension and towards the end of 2025 confirmation of any future rounds of funding would be received through EMCCA / the UK Government.

For the business support programmes, these were operational and the Council had met the year's requirement in the first quarter.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Justin Gilbody

RESOLVED that Members of the Scrutiny Committee note the content of the draft document.

LOC7-25/26 PLEASLEY VALE REGENERATION PROGRAMME - MONITORING UPDATE

The Head of Business Growth presented the report to the Committee to update Members on activities which had been carried out at Pleasley Vale Business Park.

P&D Environmental had continued with flood remediation works – work to remove the trees and growth had been undertaken prior to the nesting season, and repairs to the dam wall were underway following the fabrication and installation of the access bridge in May 2025.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Wild Solutions team had been instructed to conduct a baseline Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment ahead of proposed tree removal and embankment / dam wall repair works. The Baseline Assessment had been undertaken February 2025 (ahead of planned works in March 2025).

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The assessment had been undertaken to gather the necessary data required by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tool – the overall baseline had been calculated at 4.92 Habitat Units.

In December 2024, the Council had approved funds for investment for identified schemes and additional repairs and works to the mill buildings. The Council had further approved a recommendation for Members to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to establish the post and budget of a Building Surveyor / Contractors Administrator into the Property Services Team of Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd. (DMBL), to be appointed to manage and oversee the building works and repairs.

Works had commenced under this programme of work – the Senior Engineer of DMBL had instructed a survey of the drains to identify defects, with a scope of systematically working through the site to carry out repairs on the critical lengths that served the current facilities.

Structural surveys had been commissioned for different buildings and structures which were showing signs of deterioration. Works had also commenced on surveying the roof of Mill 1, with a scope for further surveys to be undertaken summer 2025.

A Member appreciated the level of work involved and asked if the Council's tenants were comfortable with the current situation. The Head of Business Growth informed the Council maintained good relations with tenants and where tenants had to be relocated, the Council had only lost 2 tenants (due to the alternate accommodation proving unsuitable for those tenants).

With regards the temporary toilets being utilised (due to necessary repairs to waste systems), the Council was endeavouring to work quickly and financially efficiently to resolve the situation.

To a question on acquiring future tenants, the Head of Business Growth stated no tendering of available spaces was being made until the site's current situation had improved.

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

LOC8-25/26 DRAGONFLY SHAREHOLDER BOARD UPDATE (VERBAL)

The Chief Executive provided a verbal update on the Dragonfly Shareholder Board.

The Shareholder Board had been concentrating on and discussing the Review of Dragonfly Companies (the 'Review') and the proposed action plan at length.

At its Extraordinary meeting on 16th June 2025, the Executive had agreed to commence the process to dissolve the Dragonfly Board as recommended within the review and contained within the action plan.

The externally commissioned Review, conducted by Local Partnerships (experts in their field), had been accepted.

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All Dragonfly staff would be kept fully informed and the Council would continue to be fully committed to ongoing projects – work would continue.

The day following the Committee's meeting would see the Council meet to discuss the Review. Local Partnerships would be present to answer any questions. The Executive would meet on 28th July 2025 to consider the next steps.

The Committee was informed the Leader of the Council had invited all Dragonfly Companies staff to a meeting at The Arc, Clowne (and hosted online via Microsoft Teams) on 4th July 2025 to address any questions of the Review. A script of this meeting had been published afterwards on the Council's intranet, Eric.

The Committee were briefly informed of current work completed / undertaken at sites including Woburn, Blackwell and Alder Way, Shirebrook and the Council's Chief Executive informed fortnightly meetings with the Director of Property & Construction (Dragonfly) were taking place.

To a question on the White Swan, Bolsover, the Head of Business Growth informed a revised offer had been made with the Council seeking to close quicker than the owner was anticipating. Following officer inspections of the premises to better know of the premises current condition, the Council's offer was found appropriate.

To a question on the lack of a Delivery Update provided by Dragonfly Development Ltd. for the Committee's meeting, the Chief Executive reiterated the Review had required concentration, and while a version of the Delivery Update was at the Committee, the Director of Property & Construction (Dragonfly) had recently informed further updates were expected shortly – once available, the Delivery Update would be finalised and provided to Members after the meeting. Minutes of the Shareholder Board meetings would also be provided.

LOC9-25/26 AGREEMENT OF WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Work Programme 2025/26 to the Committee, attached at Appendix 1.

4 Quarterly meetings were scheduled for 2025/26.

Moved by Councillor Justin Gilbody and seconded by Councillor Jen Wilson

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 formal part of the meeting concluded at 10:35 hours and Members then met as a working party to continue their review work. The informal meeting closed at 11:13 hours.