

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne, on Monday 6th October 2025 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Jane Yates in the Chair

Councillors Mary Dooley, Donna Hales, Rob Hiney-Saunders, Clive Moesby and Tom Munro.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Jim Fieldsend (Monitoring Officer), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Mark Giles (Assistant Director Streetscene and Enforcement), Sarah Kay (Interim Director Planning, Devolution & Corporate Policy), Victoria Dawson (Assistant Director Housing Management and Enforcement), Deborah Whallet (Housing Services Manager), Jo Wilson (Housing Strategy and Development Officer) and Alison Bluff (Senior Governance Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, was Councillors Jeanne Raspin, Duncan McGregor and Cathy Jeffery.

EX144-25/26.

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor John Ritchie.

EX145-25/26.

URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

EX146-25/26.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EX147-25/26.

MINUTES – 8th SEPTEMBER 2025

Moved by Councillor Clive Moesby and seconded by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders
RESOLVED that the minutes of an Executive meeting held on 8th September 2025 be approved as a correct record.

EXECUTIVE

NON KEY DECISIONS

EX148-25/2.

WELFARE ADAPTATION POLICY

Executive considered a detailed report, introduced by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, in relation to the amended Welfare Adaption Policy.

The Welfare Adaptation Policy provided a framework for the provision of adaptations to the homes of the Council's tenants and referred to their current home or rehousing to suitable accommodation that may already be adapted and would meet their housing need.

For the purpose of this policy, an adaptation was alterations or additions to the property to make it safer and easier to move around the home and do everyday tasks.

The Housing Services Manager noted that the Welfare Adaptation Policy had been approved in May 2022 and set out who could apply for a welfare adaptation and the procedure the Council followed when considering requests. A tenant or a member of a tenant's household must be using the property as their permanent or principal home to be eligible for an adaptation.

As part of the review process, several sessions were held with various officers involved in the welfare adaptation process including a representative from Derbyshire County Council (DCC). The Housing Ombudsman Good Practice Guidance issued in February 2025, regarding disabled adaptations in social housing, was also taken into consideration.

In addition, several tenants who had been through the welfare adaptation process had been invited to form a working group to discuss their experience, make suggestions for improvement to the policy and process with the key theme being around improved communication during the process.

As a result of this an additional step had been implemented as part of the process where the applicant would be notified, in writing, about their application and also if their application were refused, the reasons for refusal, and details of who they were able to appeal the decision to. Other amendments to the policy were set out in detail in the report.

The amended policy had been reviewed by the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 29th September 2025 and the information regarding feedback from the working group would be provided to the Housing Regulator to show how tenants had been involved in the review.

In response to Members' questions, the Housing Services Manager advised that a panel sat each month to consider applications and DCC were part of this process. There were approximately 200-300 referrals received with some applications being for minor amendments and some major. The Council provided the funding for any adaptations, however, DCC funded any specialised equipment, for example, a specialised bath.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing noted that the Housing team had worked rigorously on the policy and changes made could be seen via tracked changes on the document.

EXECUTIVE

Moved by Councillor Phil Smith and seconded by Councillor Mary Dooley
RESOLVED that the amended Welfare Adaptations Policy be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation

It was considered good practice to have a policy which set out the Council's approach to welfare adaptations. Having a robust policy protected the Council, both when it made decisions to make adaptations and in those limited circumstances when there was no alternative but to refuse a request.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The policy was considered necessary so that members of the public were aware of the adaptations the Council was able to undertake, the process followed and an appeals process. The changes made were based on Ombudsman recommendations and comments from the Council's tenants.

EX149-25/26.

LOCAL RETROFIT STRATEGY

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Environment, which sought Members approval for the East Midlands Combined Counties Retrofit Strategy led by Bolsover District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) Foundation.

'Retrofit' referred to any improvement work on an existing building to improve its energy efficiency. It could include installing new smart meters, new heating systems, solar panel or external / internal wall insulation. Retrofitting homes made them easier to heat, more comfortable and cheaper to live in which massively improved people's lives.

Council officers had led the development of a Retrofit Strategy alongside staff from Nottinghamshire County Council and the MCS Foundation. This had involved being the primary local leads and coordinating three regional workshops attended by over 100 representatives of 58 different organisations all involved in retrofit.

Within the strategy were several goals, with each goal having a series of sub-goals and actions to deliver them. These goals aligned with the Council's corporate objectives and those of EMCCA:

- Increase awareness and confidence in all aspects of retrofit for all households and the retrofit industry,
- Deliver a cross-sector, long term regional (EMCC) collaborative partnership maintaining momentum for retrofit,
- Accelerate development of scalable solutions and sustainable, long-term financial resources for retrofit delivery for all,
- Ensure we have local/regional capacity and capabilities for Retrofit
- Ensure that retrofit enhances quality of life, and delivers healthier, future proofed homes and reduced fuel poverty

The actions within the strategy encouraged partners to work together to develop a more efficient approach to retrofit for the region and help overcome the problems faced by individual authorities working alone. As the strategy was being adopted by EMCCA the branding in the document would change but the strategy would remain the same.

EXECUTIVE

In response to a Member's question, the Portfolio Holder for Environment advised that the strategy did not commit the Council to any funding or budget.

Members welcomed the report and noted the excellent work of officers in producing the strategy and requested they receive six monthly updates on outcomes.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment advised that the strategy would be launched with the East Midlands Mayor, Claire Ward, and he would ensure the Comms team were involved.

Moved by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders and seconded by Councillor Phil Smith
RESOLVED that 1) the East Midlands Combined Counties Retrofit Strategy be endorsed,

2) Members receive six monthly updates on outcomes delivered via the strategy.

Reasons for Recommendation

Endorsing the strategy showed support to the officers from across the Council who had worked to develop it, and for working with regional councils, colleges & universities, local health services and businesses / organisations, to improve approaches to retrofit.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The Council could reject the endorsement of the strategy, but this would result in reputational damage for the Authority at a time where local councils were being encouraged to work together.

The Retrofit Strategy would be the basis for regional working and funding bids, a lack of endorsement would weaken any funding bids regionally that would then affect the Council's ability to support retrofit locally.

EX150-25/26.

ENGAGEMENT HUB – 8 COTTON STREET, BOLSOVER

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Growth, which sought Members' approval to utilise 8 Cotton Street, Bolsover, as a regeneration programme engagement hub for a minimum period of two years.

The Council-owned property became vacant on 21st June 2025, following the retirement of a long-standing tenant who had operated the premises as a café.

Given the property's location which was near to five major regeneration initiatives (the former Co-op site, former White Swan, 36/36a Market Place, the Public Realm Programme, and the Shop Front Improvements Scheme), a strategic proposal had been developed to repurpose 8 Cotton Street, Bolsover, as a regeneration engagement hub and 'show property' for the shopfront improvement scheme for a two-year period, foregoing rental income (estimated at £13,000).

The building would serve as a visible, accessible base for officers leading on the regeneration programme to engage directly with the public, enhancing transparency, positive engagement, and community trust.

EXECUTIVE

All necessary works, including internal upgrades and external façade improvements, as outlined in the contractor's submitted scope of works, would be fully funded through the regeneration programme. This investment would bring the property up to a high standard, suitable for public-facing use and future commercial letting.

Once refurbished, the building would act as a live demonstration of the Shop Front Improvements Scheme, showcasing design standards and encouraging wider participation from local businesses and property owners.

This approach had been presented to and was supported by both the Strategic Commissioning Board and the Asset Management Group.

The former use of 8 Cotton Street, as a café (Class E(b)) and its proposed use as an engagement hub (Class E(c)(iii)), both fell within Planning Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) and as such, no change of use planning application is required.

The Strategic Director of Services noted the property was ideally located for the projects and advised that it would be rented out as a commercial property after the two year period.

Moved by Councillor Tom Munro and seconded by Councillor Mary Dooley

RESOLVED that 8 Cotton Street, Bolsover, be used as a regeneration engagement hub and 'show property' for a minimum period of two-years.

Reasons for Recommendation

Repurposing 8 Cotton Street, Bolsover as a regeneration engagement hub offered a unique opportunity to visibly demonstrate the Council's commitment to improving Bolsover's town centre.

The upgraded façade would serve not only as a visual enhancement but as a live example of what was possible through the Shop Front Improvements Scheme. This would inspire other property owners and businesses to participate, creating a ripple effect of improvement across the town centre.

Using this Council-owned asset to support the regeneration programme showed a practical and value-focused approach that benefitted the community.

By the end of the engagement period, the building would be upgraded and ready for open market letting. Marketing activity could also begin ahead of the engagement conclusion, helping to generate interest and ensure a smooth transition to future occupancy.

Using the property as a regeneration hub allowed the public to feel heard and involved. It created a space where people could engage with the programme, share views, and see progress first-hand, helping build trust, pride, and a sense of shared ownership in the town's future.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Do Nothing: Taking no action would avoid immediate costs but would leave the property in its current condition, making it unsuitable for public-facing use or commercial letting. This would also fail to support the Council's regeneration objectives.

EXECUTIVE

Commercial Letting: Once let, this would generate rental income, however, it would limit the Council's ability to use the site for strategic engagement and demonstration. It would also require immediate investment in repairs and upgrades.

Disposal: Selling the property would provide a one-off capital receipt, however, it would eliminate the Council's opportunity to use the site as a regeneration hub, or for future commercial letting.

EX151-25/26.

MILL LANE, BOLSOVER – PRE CONSTRUCTION FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, which sought Members' approval to reduce the level of dividend to be returned to the Council arising from Dragonfly Development Ltd (DDL) profit, achieved during the 2023\24 financial year, to fund pre-construction works at Mill Lane, Bolsover.

It was proposed that the development of Mill Lane Bolsover should be included within the Bolsover Homes pipeline, thus delivering approximately 38 further homes towards the 200 target. However, before this could be further considered for inclusion and submitted to Members for approval, viability of the scheme needed to be undertaken.

DDL's costing of pre-construction services was £275,362.13 excluding VAT, summarised as follows:

- RIBA Stage 2 Pre-Construction Services: £20,728.83
- RIBA Stage 3 Pre-Construction Services: £40,161.33
- RIBA Stage 4 & 5 Pre-Construction Services: £214,471.97

It was proposed that DDL fund pre-construction works for development at Mill Lane Bolsover, from their 2023\24 profit, which would result in any dividend returned to the Council being lowered.

The Council's Shareholder Agreement provided facility for the Council to agree the distribution of profit (i.e. dividend) it received from the Dragonfly companies.

Members noted the housing need in Bolsover and welcomed the report.

Moved by Councillor Phil Smith and seconded by Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders

RESOLVED that 1) the reduction in the dividend receivable from Dragonfly Development Ltd (DDL) for the 2023\24 financial year by £275,362.13, be used for pre-construction works at Mill Lane Bolsover, to be undertaken and paid for by the company,

- 2) A further report be submitted to Executive and Council to include Mill Lane, Bolsover within the Bolsover Homes funding pipeline, following viability of the scheme being established.

Reasons for Recommendation

To undertake pre-construction works for development at Mill Lane Bolsover, to assess viability of a scheme for inclusion in the Bolsover Homes pipeline, which would be subject to a further report to Council.

EXECUTIVE

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Members could choose not to consider Mill Lane Bolsover for inclusion in the Bolsover Homes envelope; however, this would mean that much needed housing would not be developed, undermining the potential to meet the Council's current strategic plan target, to increase the number of affordable social housing units by 200 during (The Future) 2024 to 2028 period.

The meeting concluded at 1030 hours.