

EXTRAORDINARY EXECUTIVE

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Executive of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne, on Wednesday 5th November at 1105 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Jane Yates in the Chair

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

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) and Alison Bluff (Senior Governance Officer).

EX162-25/26.

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

EX163-25/26.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

KEY DECISION

EX164-25/26.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION PROPOSAL

Executive considered a detailed report, presented by the Leader, which sought Members approval for the submission of the Case for Change for Local Government Reorganisation in Derbyshire to Government and endorsement of formal support for Option A1. The report also sought Members approval for delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make any minor amendments to the Case for Change for Local Government Reorganisation in Derbyshire and associated appendices, prior to its submission to Government on or before 28th November 2025.

Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16th December 2024, all councils in Derbyshire had been invited to submit a proposal in relation to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The report presented to Members, summarised the Case for Change for Derbyshire, which had been developed in collaboration by all eight borough and district councils and Derby City Council, and was due to be submitted to Government on 28th November 2025, subject to Executive approval.

The Case for Change (Appendix A [within Appendix 1]) made the case for two unitary councils on a North/South geography, underpinned by a robust options appraisal and thorough financial analysis.

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At its Extraordinary meeting held on 5th November 2025, Council received a report from the Chief Executive and Leader setting out the Case for Change for Derbyshire. The report (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) summarised the Case for Change, which had been developed in collaboration by all eight borough and district councils and Derby City Council and was due to be submitted to Government on or before 28th November 2025.

Following the Council meeting, and any subsequent recommendations made by Council, Members of the Executive were requested to consider the Case for Change for Derbyshire as presented, and consider which of Options A, A1, B or B1 of the Case for Change to formally endorse as part of the submission to Government on or before 28th November 2025.

The Case for Change put forward an evidence-based case for the most effective local government reorganisation to meet the Government's criteria. This was based upon the formation of a northern unitary authority and a southern unitary authority that split the geographic boundary of Derbyshire.

Building upon the interim proposal, the Council's Case for Change was designed to meet the needs of local communities; the Council was proud to be one Derbyshire but with northern and southern areas that had distinct features, challenges, and opportunities. By establishing two unitary councils, the Council would combine the scale needed to deliver effective and efficient public services and reduce complexity while avoiding a 'one size fits all' model of local government.

The northern and southern unitary model was organised on sensible geographies that enabled housing markets to address local housing needs and enabled place and community-based solutions for critical issues such as homelessness, social care, and education. Functional economic geographies were reflected to drive inclusive economic growth with huge opportunities around tourism, minerals and extraction, railways, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, and clean energy. Engagement during proposal development highlighted real opportunities to build deeper connections with local businesses and support their ambitions for growth on a regional, national, and international stage.

Four possible options had been identified to shape the two new councils which were in accordance with Government criteria. The two options identified within the interim plan submitted to Government in March 2025, were based on whole district building blocks. Option A included Amber Valley in the northern unitary council and Option B included Amber Valley in the southern unitary council. The third Option (A1), which also formed part of the interim plan submission, proposed to split the district of Amber Valley using parish council boundaries between the northern and southern unitary councils. A further variance of the Amber Valley split had also been developed as Option B1.

Based upon the detailed analysis set out in the Case for Change and the accompanying Council report (attached at Appendix 1 to the report), Executive's attention was drawn to the Options Analysis at Section 4.0 and Options Appendix 3 of the Case for Change.

For the Council, the proposed Case for Change would see its district geography join the new northern unitary authority of Derbyshire. A two unitary Council structure would best meet the Government's criteria and provide the most effective solution for local government reorganisation in Derbyshire.

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Through careful consideration of the Options Analysis and Appendices, a unitary council split, established from base Option A but based upon the proposed boundary split of Amber Valley by parish council boundaries set out in Option A1, was the recommended option for Bolsover.

Option A1 continued to demonstrate financial sustainability and delivery of strong public services, however, it was a better fit to the Government's criteria because it built on the strengths of the base proposal Option A, whilst enhancing it further.

The key benefits of this modification included:

- The southern Unitary having less geographic constraint, with Derby City able to grow in all directions, particularly the north-western border.
- A better overall balance of population.
- An almost equal level of GVA (gross value added).
- A more balanced Council tax base.
- More balanced 65+ populations.

Along with the important metrics detailed above, Option A1 also recognised the experience of the people of Amber Valley, taking cognisance of community ties, their functionality, social connection, and integration. This option demonstrated a commitment to reflecting actual social and geographical realities, rather than relying solely on administrative convenience. Areas in southern Amber Valley shared stronger cultural, economic, and infrastructural links with what would become a southern unitary council. This modification helped to ensure that communities remained connected to the areas they naturally gravitated toward, preserving a sense of belonging and shared purpose into the future.

In response to a query from Councillor Rob Hiney-Saunders, the Interim Director Planning, Devolution & Corporate Policy, advised Members that in relation to an ICT implementation plan and phases being worked through, a dedicated ICT workstream was working towards the implementation projects as things moved forward; the Joint Assistant Director ICT was the lead for this workstream and it had been identified that ICT would be one of the biggest financial costs in terms of what would be needed and implemented going forward; the opportunities were there but caution would be needed.

Councillor Clive Moesby stated that he felt that Option A1 was the best fit for the Council and he was pleased for the consideration given to Amber Valley Borough Council as stated at paragraph 2.10 of the report. He thanked officers who had been involved in putting the proposal together for all their effort and hard work.

Councillor John Ritchie noted that vesting day was 1st April 2028, however, it would take around three to four years after this date to get the new Authority in place.

Councillor Phil Smith stated that he appreciated and thanked officers for the quality of work they had put into the proposal which had been carried out in addition to the day job.

The Leader echoed Councillor Smith's words, and she especially thanked the Chief Executive.

Moved by Councillor Jane Yates and seconded by Councillor John Ritchie

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RESOLVED that 1) the submission of the Case for Change for Local Government Reorganisation in Derbyshire to Government, be approved, and formal support for Option A1, be endorsed,

2) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make any minor amendments to the Case for Change for Local Government Reorganisation in Derbyshire and associated appendices, prior to its submission to Government on or before 28th November 2025.

Reasons for Recommendation

In line with the Government's criteria, modification to Option A to Option A1 represented the best balance of a council large enough to deliver high quality services and value for money, but small enough to be connected to the place and the needs of the people the council served. The Council would request the Secretary of State to make a modification to Option A involving the proposed boundary changes as shown in Option A1 in the proposal, using the modification powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as this represented a stronger case for change.

Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Do nothing had not been considered, as the Government had issued a statutory invitation for all councils affected.

All other options outlined within the Case for Change Options Analysis (Options A, B and B1) had been considered in detail, however, Option A1 was considered to be the most beneficial option for the residents and businesses of Bolsover for the reasons set out within the report.

The meeting concluded at 1114 hours.