

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Extraordinary Council of Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Wednesday, 5 November 2025 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Duncan Haywood in the Chair

Councillors Duncan McGregor (Vice-Chair), David Bennett, Anne Clarke, Rowan Clarke, Mary Dooley, Will Fletcher, Louise Fox, Steve Fritchley, Justin Gilbody, Donna Hales, Tom Munro, Rob Hiney-Saunders, Cathy Jeffery, Tom Kirkham, Clive Moesby, Sandra Peake, Lisa Powell, Jeanne Raspin, John Ritchie, Phil Smith, Janet Tait, Ashley Taylor, Catherine Tite, Vicky Waplington, Deborah Watson, Jen Wilson, Carol Wood and Jane Yates.

Officers:- Karen Hanson (Chief Executive), Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Theresa Fletcher (Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Sarah Kay (Interim Director of Planning, Devolution & Corporate Policy), Angelika Kaufhold (Governance and Civic Manager) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

CL43-25/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davis, Hinman, Kane, Renshaw, Stevenson and Turner.

CL44-25/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

CL45-25/26 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION PROPOSAL

Councillor Ritchie Portfolio Holder for Devolution introduced the item and expressed thanks to all officers who had been involved in developing the Case for Change but also their continued participation in the workstreams for planning and implementation.

Council considered a report of the Leader and joint presentation by the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and S151 Officer and the Interim Director, Planning, Devolution & Corporate Policy.

Members were reminded of the MHCLG criteria for evaluating the proposals as follows:

- Establishing a single tier of local government and the right size council of circa 500,000 population.
- Efficiency, capacity and ability to withstand shocks.
- High quality and sustainable public services.
- Working together and meeting local needs.

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- Supporting devolution arrangements.
- Stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment.

The Case for Change at Appendix A to the report included the unitary council options and how these had been assessed against the Government's criteria. The Case for Change had been developed in partnership with all eight district and borough council's and Derby City Council. It made the case for two unitary councils based on a North/South geography which was underpinned by robust evidence based options appraisal and thorough financial analysis.

The northern and southern unitary model was organised on sensible geographies that enabled housing markets to address local needs and 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 the proposal development had highlighted real opportunities to build deeper connections with local businesses and support their ambitions for growth on a regional, national and international stage.

Four options had been identified to shape the two new councils in accordance with Government criteria.

The options were:

Option A

Unitary Council 1 – to include Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Bolsover, Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire:

Population: 584,000

Area (sq.km): 2,103

Council tax base: 194,804

Unitary Council 2 – to include Derby City, South Derbyshire and Erewash:

Population: 494,000

Area (sq.km): 526

Council tax base: 147,434

Option B

Unitary Council 1 – High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield and Bolsover:

Population: 456,000

Area (sq.km): 1,838

Council tax base: 152,247

Unitary Council 2 – South Derbyshire, Erewash, Amber Valley and Derby City:

Population: 622,000

Area (sq.km): 791

Council tax base: 189,991

Option A1

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Unitary Council 1 – to include High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, Chesterfield and part of Amber Valley (parishes identified in the report):

Population: 567,000

Area (sq.km): 2,068

Council Tax Base: 187,572

Unitary Council 2 – to include Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire and part of Amber Valley (parishes identified in the report):

Population: 511,000

Area (sq.km): 560

Council tax base: 154,666

Option B1

Unitary Council 1 – to include High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, Chesterfield and part of Amber Valley (parishes detailed in the report):

Population: 539,000

Area (sq.km): 2,012

Council tax base: 180,133

Unitary Council 2 – to include Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire and part of Amber Valley (parishes detailed in the report):

Population: 538,000

Area (sq.km): 617

Council tax base: 162,105

The aim was to ensure strong democratic representation and maintain close ties to the community for North and South of Derbyshire. This was based on 2029 electoral estimates and resulted in a councillor to elector ratio of between 5,200 and 5,500. This would mean 162 councillors across the two new unitary councils.

The financial case was supported by robust evidence, detailed modelling and collaborative validation with projected substantial savings and manageable implementation costs as highlighted in paragraphs 2.13 to 2.15 of report.

The financial modelling for all options had indicated break-even would be achieved by 2030/31 with cumulative savings exceeding implementation costs which would support long-term resilience of the new unitary councils. It was anticipated that there would be reserves across Derbyshire which could be used to fund the implementation costs of the new unitary councils and help them to withstand future financial shocks. However, unanticipated funding and/or expenditure pressures could adversely affect this position before the new councils were created in 2028. Reserves which had been allocated for specific purposes and/or risks identified had been treated as unavailable since underlying commitments or risks would ultimately transfer to the new councils.

Extensive consultation and engagement had been carried out with stakeholders including residents, staff, elected members, the voluntary and community sectors, local businesses, community groups and councils as well as public sector providers.

It was confirmed that this was an Executive decision and an Extraordinary Executive meeting was taking place at the rising of today's Council meeting.

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During discussion the following comments and concerns were raised by Members:

- Local Government Reorganisation was meant to create savings but could result in potential increased costs for residents due to council tax harmonisation which the new unitary councils would have to carry out. It was confirmed that council tax harmonisation was not an option and this would be the responsibility of the new council.
- Councils which had previously delivered good services and maintained balanced budgets and had reserves would be subsidizing councils which were in financial distress as part of the reorganisation.
- The option of a single unitary encompassing the whole of Derbyshire and Derby City was an option possibly being considered by Derbyshire County Council.

Moved by Councillor Yates and seconded by Councillor Ritchie

RESOLVED that the Local Government Reorganisation Case for Change for Derbyshire as detailed in Appendix A be noted.

For the motion: 18

Against the motion: 11

The Leader placed on record her thanks to all officers who have been involved in the preparation and ongoing hard work for LGR.

CL46-25/26 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked all for their attendance.

The meeting concluded at 10:49 hours.