

FINANCE AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Thursday, 27th November 2025 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor David Bennett in the Chair

Councillors Duncan McGregor (Vice-Chair), Rowan Clarke, Steve Fritchley, Tom Kirkham, Sally Renshaw and Janet Tait.

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Theresa Fletcher (Section 151 Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Sarah Kay (Interim Director of Planning, Devolution and Corporate Policy), Karen Parker (Partnership Policy Officer), Coby Bunyan (Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

Also in attendance at the meeting, observing, were Councillors Clive Moesby (Portfolio Holder for Resources), Duncan Haywood (Junior Portfolio Holder for Resources) and Deborah Watson.

FCO13-25/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Lisa Powell.

FCO14-25/26 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to be considered at the meeting.

FCO15-25/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

FCO16-25/26 MINUTES

It was noted the financial situation of Pleasley Vale Business Park would be discussed at a closed stakeholder meeting of the Pleasley Vale Business Park Working Group December 2025, which all Members had been invited to attend.

More information on the Medium-Term Financial Plan would be provided to Members January 2026.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Sally Renshaw

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4th September 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

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FCO17-25/26 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Committee considered the updated List of Key Decisions and Items to be Considered in Private.

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

FCO18-25/26 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2 - JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2025/26

The Section 151 Officer presented the report to the Committee on the financial position of the Council following Quarter 2 2025/26's budget monitoring exercise for Dragonfly Management Ltd., the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and Treasury Management activity.

It was noted the Revised Budgets 2025/26 process was now complete and would provide the latest information. The Section 151 Officer asked if there were any questions and if none recommended the Committee proceed.

RESOVLED that: 1) the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee notes the monitoring position of the General Fund at the end of the second quarter as detailed on Appendix 1 (A net favourable variance of £2.477m against the profiled budget) and the key issues highlighted within this report; and,

2) the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee notes the position on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Capital Programme and Treasury Management at the end of the second quarter (Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6).

FCO19-25/26 REVISED BUDGETS 2025/26

The Section 151 Officer presented the report and a presentation to the Committee on the financial position of the Council following Quarter 2 2025/26's budget monitoring exercise for the General Fund (GF), the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Capital Programme and Treasury Management (TM) activity.

The services managed by Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd. (DML) were detailed in the report and continued to be funded in line with service level agreements. Charges to Dragonfly Development Ltd. for the support services provided by the Council (incl. Legal, Payroll, HR, Finance, and Audit) were made.

As noted in the previous item, the Revised Budgets 2025/26 process was now complete.

The GF Revenue Account summary was attached at Appendix 1. The revision showed that the Net Cost of Services had increased to £19.955m (£4.346m above original budget figures).

Considerable Section 106 expenditure budgets had also been added.

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Appendix 2 detailed the net cost of each cost centre by Directorate.

The original budget showed a balanced budget (neither a surplus nor deficit). The current budget position before changes from the Revised Budgets 2025/26 process were included was a surplus of £0.126m. This included the 2025/26 Council Tax increase of £0.142m.

Table 1 of the report showed the latest position of all years in the current MTFP:

	2025/26 Original Budget £'000	2025/26 Current Budget £'000	2025/26 Revised Budget £'000
Net Cost of Services	15,609	20,342	19,955
Net debt charges + investment interest	(1,635)	(1,635)	(1,787)
Net t/f to/(from) reserves + balances	1,209	(3,508)	(2,509)
Net t/f to/(from) NNDR Growth Protection Reserve	(49)	2,646	2,750
Parish precept	4,583	5,196	5,196
Funding from council tax, business rates and government grants	(19,717)	(23,167)	(23,605)
Use of GF balance	0	(126)	0

Table 2 of the report showed the main variances between the current and revised budget positions (£0.126m surplus and zero deficit or surplus). Explanations of each of the variances were detailed in the report.

The Council had not been successful in obtaining flood insurance cover at Pleasley Vale Business Park. The Council had established the Pleasley Vale Insurance Reserve with a value of £1m from 1st October 2024 (using £0.825m from Transformation Reserve schemes which did not go ahead, and £0.175m from General Reserve schemes on the same basis) to self-insure the site.

Members had been kept informed on the position of the reserve via Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Reports 2025/26. It was hoped work on flood mitigation practices would enable the Council to obtain flood insurance at the renewal (September 2025). However, insurance companies were still unwilling to insure Pleasley Vale Business Park when approached.

The reserve would be reviewed as part of the MTFP and brought before Members January 2026.

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The Committee was informed the bracketed numbers in the report and presentation highlighted additional reserves / income.

The transfer details of the: General Reserve; Legal Costs Reserve; Building, Repair and Renewal Reserve; and NNDR Growth Protection Reserve were highlighted during the presentation.

To a question on Pleasley Vale Business Park, the Strategic Director of Services informed the Council's current priority was to make safe and maintain the site through the flood mitigation works and the design and manufacture of support structure/s for Mill 1 (the latter the Council was awaiting financial figures for).

The Council had to focus on the most pressing matters first in the short-term before it could consider the long-term future of Pleasley Vale Business Park.

It was agreed the topic of Pleasley Vale Business Park could be questioned further at the closed stakeholder meeting of the Pleasley Vale Business Park Working Group 9th December 2025.

The Section 151 Officer informed the Building, Repair and Renewal Reserve could be used if Pleasley Vale Business Park required small, ongoing maintenance, but the Council would have to borrow to finance large scale capital works.

The HRA revision for 2025/26 was attached at Appendix 3. Details of the net cost of each cost centre within the HRA was attached at Appendix 4.

Expenditure showed a net decrease against current budgets of £0.015m.

There was a reduction in expenditure on Repairs and Maintenance of £0.053m (due to the recharge of DML's cost being less).

Some variances appeared on other parts of the service where staff salaries had been moved between sections (as staff roles changed).

The increase on the Corporate Management Expenses was correcting an omission from the original budget, where the pension adjustment to pay for DML was missed.

Dwelling rents had reduced by £0.140m (mainly due to the removal of the Briar Close, Blackwell properties). The revision had been set with an estimate for voids of 2.56% for the remainder of 2025/26 (based on the actual figure for 32 weeks).

Income from non-dwelling rents was also reduced as the budget for garage rents had been reduced by £0.038m. However, income for the Repairs and Maintenance part of the service had increased by £0.101m (largely due to an increase in the Travis Perkins profit share and extra anticipated income from the Right-to-Buy administration allowance).

The reduction in debt charges and investment interest had meant the Council was able to transfer £0.598m into the HRA Development Reserve (in readiness for future expenditure requirement).

The current budget for 2025/26 showed a balanced budget with neither a surplus nor

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deficit – the Council had ensured that the Revised Budget 2025/26 showed this would still be the case.

The Capital Programme was attached at Appendix 5. It had been updated from the original budgets to reflect approvals within 2025/26 and the profiling of the individual schemes following approved changes made by Members and from detailed discussions with budget officers.

As part of the revision process, the Council had estimated the likely level of spend in the current financial year, moving schemes to future years where they were not going to be spent during 2025/26. The proposed estimated outturn for 2025/26 was therefore a budget of £34.394m.

The changes shown in the revised Capital Programme meant that the financing was adjusted accordingly to meet the anticipated spend. There were no issues to report with regard to the financing of the 2025/26 Capital Programme. The MTFP would show where schemes had been moved to future years when it was reported in January 2026.

The reserves and balances of the: GF balance; HRA balance; Transformation Reserve (uncommitted amount); NNDR Growth Protection Reserve; and HRA Development Reserve were highlighted during the presentation.

The Section 151 Officer noted the Council's financial position was strong in the short-term, with a close eye required for the long-term.

The Fair funding Review 2.0 would affect 68 local authorities (which would need to manage larger losses than initially realised – the Council was one of them).

It was noted by a Member that Local Government Reorganisation would likely negate the need to find the future shortfall. However, the Section 151 Officer informed the Council had to continue as normal until the future unitary authority was created.

It was agreed the Growth Team would be contacted to provide information on current projects and their impact from Local Government Reorganisation.

The Section 151 Officer informed the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was revenue set aside to ensure the Council could afford to repay the borrowing it had undertaken to finance the capital programme – it was called the capital finance requirement.

It was noted the majority of the Council's debt, the HRA, was due to the purchase of its housing stock for £94m, which it had to pay to the Government to buy out of the national housing subsidy system in 2012/13, along with the other housing authorities in England.

It was asked if the current debt information of the other local authorities that would form a future North Derbyshire unitary authority (with the Council) could be made available – this information might provide a useful steer to the Council when it considered investment in sites / projects like Pleasley Vale Business Park. The Section 151 Officer, said it was difficult to make such a comparison, because not all authorities still had their housing stock, and their debt positions would vary depending on their assets.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources thanked the Section 151 Officer for the report and presentation and noted the Council had to follow the Government's prudential code when

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it came to its finances – it could only borrow what it could afford to repay.

The HRA had been a substantial financial outlay, but the Council was moving appropriately in the right direction. A Member agreed, it was important to save for the future. The Section 151 Officer was also thanked for the clear reports and updates the Committee received.

The Chair noted that the Council's fiscal responsibility when compared with other local authorities was a testament to the Council.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Steve Fritchley

RESOLVED that Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee note the report and make any comments that they believe to be appropriate to be given verbally at the Executive meeting on the 1st of December.

FCO20-25/26 SETTING OF COUNCIL TAX 2026/27

The Section 151 Officer provided a verbal update and presentation on the Setting of Council Tax 2026/27 to the Committee.

It was reiterated from earlier in the meeting that while the Medium-Term Financial Plan would be provided to Members in January 2026, this presentation would provide an indication of the likely level of council tax increases following the Council's strategic intentions.

Figures as always, were based on a Band D property.

The Council would seek the maximum 2.99% / £5 annual increase (whichever was highest) in line with the approved Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The figure of £596,356 by 2029/30 highlighted the additional income raised (if only 2026/27 saw the 2.99% / £5 increase).

The presentation would be published online after the meeting.

It was noted that while a Band D property was always used as an example (as the middle Council Tax Band), the majority of properties in the District were Band A.

Additionally, a Member commented, many properties were receiving the 25% single occupancy discount.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor David Bennett

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

FCO21-25/26 CORPORATE AMBITIONS PERFORMANCE UPDATE - JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2025 (Q2 - 2025/26)

The Interim Director of Planning, Devolution and Corporate Policy presented the report to the Committee.

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For Quarter 2 2025/26, out of the 33 targets:

- 20 (61%) targets are on track;
- 3 (9%) not on track;
- 3 (9%) achieved; and,
- 7 (21%) Quarter 2 2025/26 update yet to be received (all within Appendix 3, 'Our Economy').

Out of the 58 key performance indicators:

- 37 (68%) indicators have a positive outturn;
- 7 (13%) indicators have a negative outturn;
- 9 (17%) indicators are within target; and,
- 1 (2%) yet to be completed for Quarter 2 2025/26.

The Performance Summary for the Council's Customers, Performance Summary for Our Environment, Performance Summary for Our Economy, Performance Summary for Our Housing and Key Performance Indicators for the Dragonfly Companies were attached at Appendixes 1-5.

It was noted for ENV.05, "Carry out 155 targeted proactive littering dog fouling patrols per year", patrols had increased and work had concentrated on prosecutions and the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices. The team had continued to prioritise investigating incidents where offences had been witnessed and evidenced.

It was noted for ENV.06, "Reduce fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people in... [the] District over the plan period", while incidents were higher than the same period last year, positive action was taking place with new warning signage and investigations in known hotspots.

The performance figures detailed in Appendix 4 was also brought to the Committee's attention.

For the ECO.01-07 figures, the Head of Business Growth would provide updated figures after the meeting and this would be shared with Members in the following days.

Other performance updates (on Freedom of Information requests, Customer Services, etc.) were highlighted to Members at the meeting.

The Chair asked if additional information could be provided on the Dragonfly Companies' Key Performance Indicators (some targets were listed as "TBA" – to be announced).

To the enforcement actions taken by the Environmental Health Team, the Portfolio Holder for Resources added action had been and would continue to be taken, referring to several recent successful prosecutions in Court resulting in substantial fines to the defendants – if defendants were not willing to follow the law (e.g. pay Fixed Penalty Notices), the Council would pursue.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor David Bennett

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

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FCO22-25/26 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD STYLE MONITORING - FEEDBACK

The Interim Director of Planning, Devolution and Corporate Policy presented proposed amendments to the presentation of the Corporate Ambitions Performance Update data / reports to the Committee.

The Committee was asked for its feedback.

The Chair noted comparisons with the same quarter of the previous year remained useful (many issues were seasonal).

FCO23-25/26 FINANCE & CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

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

It was noted the Committee's Work Programme 2026/27 had been brought forward to March 2026 at the request of the Chair to permit additional time for review work consideration.

Moved by Councillor Duncan McGregor and seconded by Councillor Sally Renshaw
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 meeting concluded at 10:49 hours.