

Questions submitted to Council by Members of the Public 2024-2027

Question (minute) Reference	Date submitted to Council	Question and further information
CL33-25/26	08/10/25	<p>(1) Question submitted by Mr N Clarke to the Portfolio Holder for Environment:</p> <p>“In 2020 Councillors and Officers of BDC met with representatives of the Woodland Trust to negotiate funding for a tree planting project across the district of Bolsover.</p> <p>Funding of £250,000 was secured and with additional council funding a plan to plant a million trees over a 15 year period was made. Initial planting took place in 2021.</p> <p>I understand that according to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment that the tree planting programme no longer exists. He has stated:</p> <p><i>"That there is no district council tree planting programme. We don't actually have a woodland strategy. In the past there was a temporary tree planting programme which was funded by a grant from the Woodland Trust. This grant has now been spent."</i></p>

I would want to know why was this decision not made public?

I would also like to like to know why has the tree planting programme been discontinued when it is widely known that trees are a vital component in protecting against flooding and soil erosion and as we are experiencing climate change with ever increasing extreme weather events, the planting of trees are a major tool to combat the effects of climate change.

Therefore, my question is “Will the Council make genuine commitment to reintroducing the tree planting programme and provide additional funding to support the protection of the environment in the district of Bolsover?”

Councillor Hiney-Saunders provided the following response:

“Tree planting *can* be an effective tool in the fight against climate change whilst improving our local environment. However, it’s very important that we weigh up the costs and benefits against our other environmental commitments - like emptying the bins, fighting fly-tipping, maintaining our existing tree coverage etc.

As far as I am aware this council has never passed a resolution to permanently allocate funds to tree planting. The council did however have an ambition of planting up to one million trees. No permanent resources were allocated to turn this ambition into a programme.

What the council has done - and should be really proud of - is set up a vehicle called the Bolsover Community Woodlands project to spend a grant of £270k from the Woodland Trust received in 2021 to plant over 25,000 trees in the last four years. Trees have been planted in areas such Elmton-with-Creswell, Old Bolsover, Whitwell, Clowne (namely the Queen’s Green Canopy Orchard outside this building at the Arc), South Normanton, Langwith and Shirebrook.

However, at more than £10 a tree it’s going to cost the district over £10 million to deliver an ambition of planting 1 million trees, and which at that rate of progress will take 160 years. I have my doubts that that is the basis of a realistic programme. I’ve also not been able to locate the plan you refer to in your

preamble showing how this could have been achieved in 15 years but if there were such a document I'm sure the previous leadership would have called out that it was so badly off track.

So there has been no decision to halt any sort of permanently resourced programme. Temporary funding allocated to local tree planting has simply been spent.

Nevertheless, following the completion of the work funded by the Woodland Trust we have asked officers to prepare a *realistic* Tree and Woodland Strategy to carry forward the legacy of our positive work with the Bolsover Community Woodlands project. This preparation work has involved engagement with a number of external stakeholders, including our network of Parish and Town Councils, as we have sought to set an ambitious strategy that will continue the great work of the Bolsover Community Woodlands project and see further opportunities for tree planting across our District.

And I'm pleased to have the opportunity to announce to fellow Members that I'll be bringing a proposed Consultation Draft Tree and Woodland Strategy to our Executive meeting next month (3rd November 2025) for approval to go out to public consultation for a period of four weeks.

It is planned that the outcome of this consultation exercise and a final Tree and Woodland Strategy with realistic resourcing will be reported to Executive in January 2026 for approval and implementation.

So to answer your question with one word - maybe. You should know one way or the other when we vote on the issue at Executive early in the new year.

The leadership of the council won't be paying lip service to environmental issues. Nor will it be writing blank cheques with local people's money."

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.8 Mr N Clarke put the following supplementary question:

"I am not sure if you have grasped the urgency of climate change and the effects it will have on the environment and subsequently the population of not only the district of Bolsover, but the rest of the country and wider world.

“it is absolutely vital that local authorities including BDC fully understand the urgency before it’s too late and implement policies to address the effects caused by climate change, which is probably the most important issue facing the world today.

Tree planting is just one aspect that will help combat the impacts of climate change but planning policies need to be reviewed and co-ordinated with central government to ensure that future developments are compliant with the needs of the environment and ecosystems. Environmentally solutions need to be enforced and avaricious and unscrupulous developers need to be made aware in no uncertain terms that mass production developments can no longer be justified or tolerated. Unfettered construction is one of the biggest drivers of climate change and local authorities need to take action against harmful developments. If developers aren’t prepared to implement meaningful measures to help combat the effects of their construction on the environment, such as additional tree and hedgerow planting to compensate for any loss of trees and hedgerows, they need to be informed that planning permission is not a given They need to be aware that they have also a responsibility to the public, the environment and wildlife ecosystems and that the Council is not there to make their projects financially viable and if they try to argue that the costs will be prohibitive then they should be informed , that is tough!

BDC could also do more to alleviate the effects of climate change, one example would be the covering of car parks not only at the Arc, but throughout the district with solar panels. This was suggested by the Climate Change Scrutiny Committee over two years ago but it appears that no action has been taken as yet to implement this proposal.

“Will the Council therefore commit to taking steps to reduce greenhouse gases and budget not only for tree planting but also the meaningful reduction of carbon emissions throughout the District and not just offsetting?”

Councillor Hiney-Saunders confirmed that a written response would be provided to the supplementary question.

<p>CL34-25/26</p>	<p>31/07/25</p>	<p>Question submitted by Mr Webb to Councillor Tom Munro, Portfolio Holder for Growth</p> <p><i>“In light of the County Council’s Infrastructure Monitoring Reports and confirmation from a County Council planning officer that no SEND contributions were secured in the 2020/21 reporting year also, can the Council explain why it has not obtained any SEND contributions through planning developments in over five years and if this is a moral failure of the districts most vulnerable children?”</i></p> <p>Councillor Munro responded using Microsoft Powerpoint which included the following information:</p> <p><i>“The question posed by Mr Webb is a bit confusing as it specifically asks about the year 2020/2021, but then goes on to ask about the following five years and as it is framed assumes there are no further updates to the County’s infrastructure reports since the 2020/2021 he has made reference to Derbyshire County Council are required to produce an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) under the provisions of Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (CIL) 2010 (as amended).</i></p> <p><i>The last IFS that is available on DCC’s website is for the year 2022/2023, with superseding years also available to view.</i></p> <p><i>The IFS for 2021/2022 shows that DCC collected SEND contributions totalling £76,769.99 from only 1 of the 8 district and borough councils in the reporting period. That being as shown next Amber Valley Council</i></p>
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a) The amount of money to be provided under any planning obligation which was entered into during 2021/22

Purpose	Total £	Amber Valley	Bolsover	Chester-field	Derbyshire Dales	Erewash	High Peak	North East Derbyshire	South Derbyshire
Primary Education	£6,304,187.28	£2,161,402.10	£4,091,255.41	CIL	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£51,529.77
Secondary & Post16 Education	£6,113,623.70	£3,054,257.50	£2,694,816.46	CIL	£0.00	£0.00	£206,945.40	£0.00	£157,604.34
SEND	£76,769.99	£76,769.99	£0.00	CIL	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Highways	£571,340.00	£21,500.00	£544,840.00	CIL	£0.00	£0.00	£5,000.00	£0.00	£0.00
Travel & Transport	£34,815.00	£12,165.00	£12,500.00	CIL	£0.00	£0.00	£5,075.00	£5,075.00	£0.00
Libraries	£8,020.00	£8,020.00	£0.00	CIL	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Waste	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	CIL	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL	£13,108,755.97	£5,334,114.59	£7,343,411.87	CIL	£0.00	£0.00	£217,020.40	£5,075.00	£209,134.11

The IFS for 2022/2023 shows that DCC collected SEND contributions totalling £345,556.55 from only 2 of the 8 district and borough councils in this reporting period.

I can confirm that there were no SEND contributions collected specifically from Bolsover District Council in the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 periods published.

Notwithstanding this, the wider context of how, why and when SEND contributions are requested is important, as they are one of a number of S106 categories that the County Council seek from developers. DCC will only make requests for education contributions on major planning application categories for residential development, where there is an evidential need to do so. Similarly Bolsover DC will only consider these contributions in the planning balance when a specific request by DCC as the education authority is made

To determine whether Bolsover District Council have met with the requests sought by DCC in relation to education and SEND the question posed we should look at all planning permissions granted in the past 4 years, rather than simply relying on the 2020/2021 or 2021/2022 IFS published by DCC.

In that context, in the 4 years inc. 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024, and 2024/2025 there were 17 major planning applications for residential development determined by Bolsover District Council which may have generated a request from DCC for a SEND contribution.

2021/2022

1. 20/00166/FUL - DCC Ed response 14/05/2020 – no SEND contribution requested
2. 20/00185/OUT - DCC Ed response 22/06/2020 - no contributions sought
3. 20/00590/FUL – Conversion to 12 no. 1 bed flats - so no DCC Ed response invited
4. 20/00238/FUL - DCC Ed response 13/11/2020 – no SEND contribution requested
5. 21/00301/FUL - DCC Ed response 14/06/2021 – no contributions sought
6. 20/00259/FUL - DCC Ed response 28/07/2020 - no contributions sought
7. 21/00051/FUL - DCC Ed response 25/02/2021 - no contributions sought
8. 21/00421/FUL - DCC Ed response 09/08/2021 - no contributions sought
9. 21/00640/FUL - DCC Ed response 11/09/2021 - no SEND contribution requested

2022/2023

10. 21/00306/FUL - DCC Ed response 14/06/2021 - no SEND contribution requested
11. 21/00464/TDC - DCC Ed response 03/09/2021 - no SEND contribution requested
12. 21/00078/FUL - DCC Ed response 27/10/2021 - no SEND contribution requested
13. 18/00452/OUT- DCC Ed response 01/10/2018 - no SEND contribution requested

2023/2024

14. 22/00380/FUL - DCC Ed response 23/08/2022 - no SEND contribution requested
15. 22/00229/FUL - DCC Ed response 22/07/2022 - no SEND contribution requested

2024/2025

16. 22/00402/FUL – DCC Ed requested a SEND contribution of £119,316.42 on 02/05/2023 and this was secured as a contribution via S106 agreement dated 22/07/2024

17. 22/00485/FUL - DCC Ed response 17/10/2022 - no contributions sought

Therefore, as a direct response to the question the Council has not failed in their duty, as the decision to collect any education contributions have formed part of the planning balance for those decisions taken.

2025/2026 and any Planning App's pending

There are likely to be planning applications still pending where DCC Education contributions have been requested, and any decision on their collection will form part of the planning balance.

The enquirer will be aware of one such application, relating to Clowne Garden Village, where the contribution collection for SEND has been deferred in the associated S106 legal agreement.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.8 Mr Webb put the following supplementary question after being asked to refrain from making statements:

“Can the portfolio holder specify what actions Bolsover District Council will take independent of Derbyshire County Council to ensure future planning developments prioritise SEND contributions and will the Council support a vote to refer the matter to the Executive for a detailed report to be presented at a future meeting? The question is will you support a vote today – yes or no?”

Councillor Munro requested that for the sake of clarity Mr Webb forward his supplementary question and that a written response would be provided. On being challenged by Mr Webb it was confirmed that Councillor Munro could respond to the supplementary in writing and Mr Webb was asked to return to his seat.

<p>CL80-24/25</p>	<p>05/03/25</p>	<p>The following questions were submitted by Mr and Mrs Dell and in their absence Mr Webb ‘put’ the questions to Councillor Tom Munro, the Portfolio Holder for Growth.</p> <p>(a) Question submitted by Mr Dell to Councillor Tom Munro, Portfolio Holder for Growth</p> <p><i>“Recently Council publicity advised the public that finally the Council had secured £15 million. Would you please advise on what date the Memorandum of Understanding was signed and by whom?”</i></p> <p>Councillor Tom Munro responded to the question as follows:</p> <p><i>“Thank you for your question. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Section 151 Officer on the 25th of February 2025.”</i></p> <p>In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.8 Mr Webb put the following supplementary question on behalf of Mr Dell:</p> <p><i>“Everyone welcomes the collective efforts of Council officers and the previous and current MP and the many Councillors who secured the £15m. Mindful of the fragile balance sheets reflected in the soon to be published 31st March 2024 accounts for both Dragonfly companies, Dragonfly’s request at May’s upcoming full Council for additional funds for the crematorium and presumably their funding request or approval to complete the purchase of the £4 million listed Arromax land in Langwith the capital intensive nature of building development is evident, timescales slip and clearly so do budgets. Where Creswell have 50 years of multi-generational debt due to the rising cost of cement; to quote Councillor McGregor, officers will have been aware of the cost of cement 10 days ago when the MOU was signed. Therefore, construction materials, inflation, employers NI costs etc on the agreed projects are all known, and I am sure are factored into Dragonfly’s costings for each project. Can the Council therefore confirm that no parish or town council or in the case of Pinxton, Church Diocese will be required to secure funding to bridge any budget changes or slippage in any of the projects that the £15 million has been secured for?”</i></p> <p>Councillor Tom Munro responded to the question as follows:</p>
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“Thank you on behalf of myself to Mr Dell’s supplementary question a written response to the question will be forthcoming, if you can ensure we have a written copy of the question handed to one of our senior officers. Thank you very much indeed.”

(b) Question submitted by Mrs Dell and put by Mr Webb to Councillor Tom Munro, Portfolio Holder for Growth

“Can the Council please list all economic development and/or regeneration projects that are planned for Clowne and/or Barlborough?”

Councillor Tom Munro responded to the question as follows:

“Thank you very much for your question, I have a great long list I will read them out as it is important that all members of the public hear it. Mrs Dell will receive a written copy of this list. So bear with me it is quite a long list. The list includes projects which specifically include Clowne or Barlborough or have a positive impact as part of the wider district is as follows:

- *Business Growth Grants*
- *Business Start-up Grants Programme*
- *Net Zero Innovation Programme*
- *Pre-start and Business Start Up support programme*
- *Women in Business Network*
- *Creative Women’s Network*
- *Business in Bolsover Business Networking Events*
- *Bolsover Place Programme and Campaigns*
- *Capital Investment in the Bolsover Loop, wayfinding and infrastructure*
- *Letting of Commercial Property within the area to growing businesses*
- *Supporting the Town Council for proposals*
- *The Anchor former public house*
- *Appraisal of land opportunities for BNG offsetting, that is bio net gain*

- *Bolsover Place Investment Prospectus*
- *Key Sites Prospectus*
- *To attend key inward investment events and raise awareness of opportunities*
- *Transformation AI digital opportunities district wide for both residents and businesses*
- *Place infrastructure and narrative embedding the new narrative and visual identity across the area including the full Bolsover Loop and Sculpture Trail*
- *EMIZ Sprint project to improve connectivity through sustainable travel along the Hartington Staveley investment corridor*
- *Digital Connect Strategy*
- *Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Project working with primary age school children and potentially parents and carers to deliver STEM themed projects*
- *Belong Campaign*
- *Homeowners Welcome Pack*
- *Young Ambassadors Programme*
- *Business Champion Network and Events*
- *The Bolsover Place Programme*
- *Business Roadshow at Barlborough Links hosted by Mortgage First. These provide advice to businesses locally and help to unlock funding across Barlborough Links and Clowne*
- *Visitor economy campaign highlighting Bolsover's hidden gems and best kept secrets."*

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.8 Mr Webb put the following supplementary question:

"When will you be able to provide a list of economic development or regeneration projects that are planned as per the question?"

Councillor Tom Munro responded to the question as follows:

"Thank you for the supplementary question I am going to invite the Head of Business Growth to address that question."

The Business Development Manager provided the following information:

		<p><i>“The list that you have been provided in response to the question is the list that includes planned projects that are proposed that directly impact on Clowne and Barlborough as asked by Mrs Dell. Thank you.”</i></p>
<p>CL67-24/25</p>	<p>29/01/2025</p>	<p>In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, members of the public were able to ask questions to an Executive Member about the Council’s activities.</p> <p>(A) Question submitted to Councillor Jane Yates, Leader of the Council by Ms Christine Hope:</p> <p><i>“When will Bolsover District Council be able to report fully to all elected members and the public on their involvement in the current multi million pound financial debt crisis at Elmton With Cresswell Parish Council?”</i></p> <p>Councillor Jane Yates responded to the question as follows:</p> <p><i>“Thank you for the question, Elmton with Cresswell Parish Council is being investigated by NALC, the National Association of Local Councils, so it is therefore inappropriate for Bolsover District Council to comment while the investigation was taking place. We don’t know how long the investigation is going to take so we can’t give a specific date as to when we can report on it. I do understand it is going to be probably by the end of this full year. So, I am sorry I can’t expand on that further.”</i></p> <p>In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.8 Ms Christine Hope put the following supplementary question:</p>

		<p><i>“Given the supposed extent of the supposed involvement of council and officers are the council prepared to assist the NALC appointed investigative team, Derbyshire Association of Local Councils who are also involved and the Local Government Association who are all now actively together involved in that investigation of Elmtton with Cresswell Parish Council?”</i></p> <p>Councillor Jane Yates provided the following response:</p> <p><i>“Yes, obviously we will be contributing to the investigation as and when we are asked. That is why we can’t comment further on it at the moment and we can’t compromise the investigation by commenting. But we will be co-operating with it.”</i></p>
<p>CL55-24/25</p>	<p>04/12/2024</p>	<p>Question submitted to Councillor John Ritchie, Portfolio Holder Growth by Mr Dominic Webb:</p> <p>“Do the Dragonfly Group of Companies, individually or together, present a material risk to the Council either financially or reputationally?”</p> <p>Councillor John Ritchie responded to the question as follows:</p> <p>“I thank Mr Webb for his question to Council on the possibility of any risks being posed to Bolsover District Council by its wholly owned companies, Dragonfly Development Limited and Dragonfly Management Limited.</p> <p>As a responsible authority we take seriously our duty in protecting the Council’s interests in everything we do and looking after our wholly owned companies are no different. Indeed given what has happened in Croydon, Thurrock and Nottingham City to mention just three, we are even more on the ball.</p> <p>The Council manages risk in everything it does. Indeed, there is a Risk Management Strategy and Risk Management Group which oversees the continuous assessment of corporate strategic risks. The Council is also required to publish its Annual Governance Statement and work closely with its external auditors who scrutinise the Council’s finances, governance and decision making very closely.</p>

	<p>Full governance arrangements for the Council’s companies are in place and the Council sought expert advice when setting these up to ensure they are fit for purpose. A Shareholder Agreement has been developed and signed, together with a Service Level Agreement. Dragonfly has in place the required Board of Directors for both companies and the Council has the Shareholder Board. The Shareholder Board looks after the Council’s interests and that of our residents because the Council is sole shareholder, it figures that all our residents are also shareholders, with a small ‘s’ if you like.</p> <p>The Shareholder Board has a role to ensure everything is all right and training has taken place.</p> <p>Various documents like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bolsover District Council and Dragonfly Shareholder Agreement and Service Level Agreement. • The initial Business Case which was prepared to enable the companies to be established. • The CEO Blueprint on having a wholly owned Company within the authority. • The Local Authority Company Guidance Review. • The Council Governance arrangements. • The Nolan Principles. • The Cadbury Review. • The Higgs Review. • The Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. • Guidance checklist for elected Members on the Shareholder Function. These are all learning points for the Shareholder Board to make sure they are doing exactly what they need to be doing. <p>The Shareholder Board has a responsibility to ensure the right decisions are being made and the right scrutiny is undertaken, and it is with this in mind that the Shareholder Board have agreed an overarching independent review of the Council’s arrangements and interactions with the wholly owned companies.</p> <p>It should stop questions like this to Council because you can rest assured, we want Dragonfly to succeed and as the custodian of the two Companies, it would be irresponsible to see it cause financial problems for the authority and ultimately the taxpayer. We would be asleep on the job should that occur and I can tell you Mr Webb that is certainly not the case. Thank you Chair.”</p>
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		<p>Mr Dominic Webb put the following supplementary question:</p> <p>“Thank you for that answer it was a lengthy answer I think the question needed just a simple yes or no of which I note you actually didn’t say yes or no but reminding myself I am meant to be asking a question. You mentioned that there is to be a review into the Dragonfly arrangements. On the 4th October the Monitoring Officer confirmed to me that the scope of the review had still not been defined but that the intention was to instruct an independent body to undertake the review and in light of the council now, and I am thankful that the council have published as such all the board minutes for both Dragonfly companies it is clear that there is conflict between the Council and the Dragonfly Directors over whether this review should be independent or should be internal. Will the Council commit today that the review into Dragonfly will be done by an independent third party and when will those results be made available to the public?”</p> <p>Councillor John Ritchie, Portfolio Holder for Growth made the following response:</p> <p>“I can answer today because I have answered already that there will be an overarching independent review of the interaction between the Council and the companies. When exactly that will happen, it will be after Christmas now obviously but it will be an independent overarching review.”</p>