

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Wednesday, 4 March 2026 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Duncan Haywood in the Chair

Councillors Duncan McGregor (Vice-Chair), David Bennett, Anne Clarke, Rowan Clarke, Amanda Davis, Louise Fox, Steve Fritchley, Justin Gilbody, Donna Hales, Tom Munro, Mark Hinman, Cathy Jeffery, Chris Kane, Tom Kirkham, Clive Moesby, Sandra Peake, Lisa Powell, Jeanne Raspin, Sally Renshaw, John Ritchie, Phil Smith, Emma Stevenson, Janet Tait, Ashley Taylor, Catherine Tite, Rita Turner, Vicky Waplington, Deborah Watson, Jen Wilson and Jane Yates.

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Theresa Fletcher (Strategic Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer), Jim Fieldsend (Strategic Director of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Sarah Kay (Strategic Interim Director of Growth), Angelika Kaufhold (Governance and Civic Manager), and Coby Bunyan (Scrutiny Officer).

CL78-25/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dooley, Fletcher, Hiney-Saunders, and Wood.

CL79-25/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer reminded Members that they were likely to have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to the Level of Council Tax item as follows:

Any Councillor who was a resident of the District would need to declare an interest however there was an automatic dispensation to remain and to speak and vote on the item.

- Members in arrears of Council Tax of more than 2 months must not vote on a decision which might affect budget calculations, and they must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applied to them.
- A failure to comply with these requirements was a criminal offence under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The Monitoring Officer requested that Members indicate by a show of hands whether they were a resident of the District and all of those present bar Councillor Chris Kane indicated that was the case. As previously advised the automatic dispensation applied.

Councillor Chris Kane indicated that he was not a resident of the District and therefore was not required to declare in interest in this item.

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No Members indicated that they were 2 months or more in arrears with council tax which would preclude them from voting on the Level of Council Tax item.

There were no further declarations of interests in any of the remaining items of business.

CL80-25/26 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair, on behalf of the Council sent best wishes to Councillor Hiney-Saunders and his family.

CL81-25/26 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Haywood and seconded by Councillor Munro
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of Council held on 28th January 2026 be approved as a true and correct record.

CL82-25/26 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions were submitted to this meeting of Council under Rule 8 of the Council Procedure Rules.

CL83-25/26 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

No questions were submitted by Members of Council under Council Procedure Rule 9.

CL84-25/26 MOTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10 no Motions on Notice were submitted by Members for consideration.

CL85-25/26 PETITIONS OR DEPUTATIONS

No petitions or deputations were received.

CL86-25/26 CHANGE TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION - DEFINITION OF WORKING DAY

Council considered a report presented by Councillor Hales, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Corporate Governance which sought approval for a change to the Council's Constitution as recommended by the Standards Committee. It proposed the addition of the definition of Working Day to be included as follows:

“working day to mean Monday to Friday excluding weekends and bank/public holidays.”

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This definition was used in many pieces of legislation including the Companies Act 2006 and the Data Protection Act 2018 and recognised by organisations such as ACAS and HMRC.

Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Munro

RESOLVED that approval be given to amend the Constitution to include a definition of the term “working day” to mean Monday to Friday excluding weekends and bank/public holidays.

CL87-25/26 LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX 2026/27

Prior to consideration of the report the Section 151 Officer & Director of Finance provided an update to Members having received the final Local Government Settlement from Government which confirmed:

- The Council Tax report was based on the approval of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) report which was considered by Council in January 2026.
- The MTFP figures had been based on the Government’s provisional finance settlement and as Members were previously advised there was a chance that the government had made an error this year in relation to the business rates pooling income which would lead to a revision of income in the final settlement.
- This error was corrected by Government in the final settlement which meant a reduction in income for all years for Bolsover District Council.
- Government was providing a grant for 2026/2027 which compensated for the reductions in revenue support grant and income protection, but there was a loss of £725k in business rates which would not be compensated for.
- This compensatory grant would only apply for the 2026/2027 financial year, so the reductions in income for future years compared to what was originally in the MTFP would now be £2.1m for 2027/2028; £2.4m for 2028/2029 and £1.6m for 2029/2030.
- It was proposed to fund these losses from the National Non-Domestic Rates Growth Protection Reserve, so there would be no change overall to the bottom line of the MTFP.
- Previously, it was predicted that there would be a balance of £16.9m in the reserve by the end of this financial year, and in the original MTFP this figure would not have changed by the end of the final year of the plan. However, taking account of the changed Government settlement, these figures were updated and it meant that by the end of the MTFP a balance in the reserve of £9.1m was predicted. This may change next year if a further grant for 2027/2028 was announced as part of the 2027/2028 settlement.
- An updated MTFP report would be submitted to Council in May for approval.

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Councillor Moesby, Portfolio Holder for Resources then presented the report which set out the proposed level of Council Tax for 2026/27. Members were reminded that the Bolsover District share of the Council Tax was agreed at the January 2026 meeting at the maximum allowed for a Band D property. This report included the increases for the remaining precepts for the Council Tax as detailed in the report.

The Localism Act 2011 required the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year. The approved demand on the Collection Fund for the Council should be £5,087,952. The Council had received all parish precept demands which totalled £5,395,398.45 so the total demand on the Collection Fund 2026/27 would be £10,483,350.45.

In order to calculate the Council Tax requirement for the area at the relevant bands, the demands of the County Council, Police Authority, Fire Authority, and Parish Councils also needed to be taken into account. The Council had received all the relevant precept demands from these other local authorities that precept upon the Council as the billing authority for Council Tax.

The following comments were made during discussion:

- Councillor Watson stated that she couldn't support the proposed increase in Council Tax when services were not being improved. The south of the district had no litter picking services and missed out on many improvements services and yet the Council wanted to increase the Council Tax. There didn't appear to be any legacy or benefits for Bolsover residents following on from Local Government Review (LGR) and she sought clarity from the Leader as to what was being done.
- Councillor Yates confirmed that a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) was being drawn up which would include all assets and an assessment of their condition including playgrounds, parks, and car parks. The aim was for these assets to be left in the best possible condition going into the new Unitary Authority following LGR. However, a lot of the reserves would be needed to upgrade Pleasley Vale Business Park. Members were also asked to share information on Council assets requiring improvement or upgrading within their wards which could then be added to the SAMP.
- The Section 151 Officer confirmed that there wouldn't be a definitive profit for Dragonfly until it has stopped trading after 2026/27.
- The Strategic Director of Services confirmed that remedial works were taking place on Mill Ponds 1 and 2 at Pleasley Vale Business Parks which included one of the culverts for health and safety reasons. Further works will be required in the future. The pond was drained as it needed to be desilted, so the water levels had to be lowered. Consultation had taken place with Derbyshire Wildlife Society and the Environment Agency to obtain the relevant permits. Media communications were due to be published to advise people of the works and reasons for it.

The Chair reminded Members that a recorded vote would need to be taken on this item as required by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

Moved by Councillor Moesby and seconded by Councillor Ritchie

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RESOLVED that (1) the Council Tax for the Financial Year 2026/27 as set out in the report be approved;

(2) authority be given to the officers as set out in section 1.6 of the report to undertake the identified duties in accordance with section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972, and delegated authority be given to the Council's Chief Financial Officer to authorise any amendments to the list of named officers that may prove necessary during the course of the financial year; and

(3) delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer to recalculate the figures within this report if the Fire Authority approve different figures than those provisionally received.

For the motion (24):

Councillors Bennett, A Clarke, R Clarke, Davis, Fritchley, Hales, Haywood, Hinman, Jeffery, Kirkham, McGregor, Moesby, Munro, Powell, Raspin, Renshaw, Ritchie, Smith, Tait, Taylor, Tite, Turner, Waplington, and Yates.

Against the motion (7):

Councillors Fox, Gilbody, Kane, Peake, Stevenson, Watson, and Wilson.

Abstentions: (0)

CL88-25/26 DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Consideration was given to a report presented by Councillor Moesby, Portfolio Holder for Resources which sought approval for the implementation of a Domestic Abuse Policy to ensure that Bolsover District Council provided a safe, inclusive, and responsive working environment for all employees. The policy formalised the Council's approach to recognising, responding to, and supporting those affected by domestic abuse – whether as victims or perpetrators.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a statutory definition of domestic abuse and a legal framework to better protect victims. Employers had a duty of care to safeguard their workforce, and this policy affirmed the Council's commitment to uphold this responsibility.

Moved by Councillor Moesby and seconded by Councillor Munro

RESOLVED that (1) the Domestic Abuse Policy at Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and

(2) that the HR Team take steps to raise awareness of the policy among staff and management and provide training on how to identify and respond to domestic abuse in the workplace.

CL89-25/26 FUTURE DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STOCK CONDITION SURVEY

Council considered a report presented by Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing which sought approval for the creation of a permanent Contract Administrator/Building Surveyor and a specialist Administrative Assistant to deliver the Housing Stock Condition

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Survey programme.

The Council has circa 5,000 residential properties and the additional posts would ensure that the Asset Management Team would have the capacity to deliver the stock condition surveys. The Council's aim was to carry out 1,000 stock condition surveys over a five-year period to maintain compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards and accurately report on the Decency Standard. The costs of contracting external contractors to undertake the surveys was too costly in comparison to delivering this in-house.

Councillor Davis left the meeting at 10.39 am.

Councillor Kirkham left the meeting at 10.40 am.

Councillor Davis returned at 10.41 am.

Moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Ritchie

RESOLVED that (1) approval be given for the creation of a new full-time permanent Contract Administrator/Building Surveyor (Grade 8 £52,903 to £59,308 including on costs) and a specialised Administrative Assistant post (Grade 5 (£37,841 to £41,287 including on costs), based on 2025/26 salary grades; and

(2) approval be given to fund these posts from the existing Housing Revenue Account budget.

CL90-25/26 FIRE DOOR SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Council considered a report presented by the Strategic Director of Services which sought Council approval to increase the Council's Health and Safety Team staffing level to establish resource capacity to undertake fire door safety inspections. It was confirmed that the Council had identified approximately 1,001 fire doors which required inspections twice each year. The proposal was to establish a Bolsover in-house service which could also be offered as a service to Parish and Town Councils for income generation.

The Council had a statutory duty under the Fire Safety Act 2021 to inspect fire safety doors. An assessment had been carried out which showed that the cost for this to be delivered by an external contractor was approximately £60,060 based on an annual inspection of 2,002 doors x £30 per door as compared to the in-house approach which was more economically advantageous at a reduced delivery cost of £11,669 based on 2025/26 salary costs.

Moved by Councillor Munro and seconded by Councillor Hales

RESOLVED that (1) approval be given to the budget of £48,391 for establishing fire door inspections;

(2) approves the establishment of an additional Health and Safety Advisor to the Health and Safety Team; and

(3) approval be given for the Health and Safety Apprentice's contract of employment to be established in the position of Health and Safety Advisor at Grade 7 (salary scale point 18).

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CL91-25/26 WHISTLEBLOWING UPDATE REPORT 2025

Council considered a report presented by Councillor Hales, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Corporate Governance which informed members of the use of the Whistleblowing Policy during 2025.

The Whistleblowing Policy was last reviewed by the Standards Committee on 10th November 2025 with the number of Whistleblowing instances being reported to the Committee on 9th February 2026.

It was confirmed that the two Whistleblowing instances had occurred and were included in Appendix 1 to the report. Due to the need to maintain confidentiality the whistleblowing complaints were anonymised and detailed so as not to reveal the identity of the complainant and member of staff complained about.

Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Moesby
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CL92-25/26 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

Council considered a report presented by Councillor Moesby, Portfolio Holder for Resources which detailed the Council's pay for senior managers and employees in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 and Supplementary Guidance 2013.

The Pay Policy Statement had to be approved by Council on an annual basis and reflected the current position based on decisions previously taken by Council.

Under the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 additional organisational information was required to be published annually on the website. This consisted of third tier organisation charts, senior salaries information, including functional responsibilities, budget amounts, and numbers of staff responsible for, together with details of trade union facility time.

Councillor Renshaw left the meeting at 10.51 am.

Moved by Councillor Moesby and seconded by Councillor Bennett
RESOLVED that the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 be approved.

CL93-25/26 CALENDAR OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2026/27

Council considered a report presented by Councillor Hales, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Corporate Governance which detailed the proposed Calendar of Council Meetings for 2026/27.

Each year the Council approves a calendar of meetings for the forthcoming year which meets the needs of Members and facilitates decision making in line with statutory deadlines.

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Moved by Councillor Hales and seconded by Councillor Smith

RESOLVED that the Calendar of Council Meetings for 2026/27 be approved.

CL94-25/26 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - UPDATE

The following update was provided for Members by the Interim Strategic Director of Economic Growth:

- The Government's Local Government Reorganisation Statutory Consultation ends 22nd March 2026.
- The Chief Executive has received an invitation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to discuss the proposals submitted.
- Derbyshire Chief Executive's continued to meet on a weekly basis and were considering the next steps with a report on proposed governance arrangements for the workstreams etc to be submitted to the next meeting of Derbyshire Strategic Leadership Board in March.
- Active engagement is now taking place with colleagues at Derbyshire County Council with fair representation across all of the Workstreams and working groups which were meeting.
- MHCLG has asked for each proposal put forward by Derbyshire (the four options of the North/South split supported by the Boroughs and Districts and Derby City Council). 'Listening' meetings were due to take place with each respective Chief Executive or group of Chief Executives meeting with MHCLG to 'pitch' the proposal that they supported.
- Government was still pushing forward at pace on the deadlines, and it was hoped that a decision for Derbyshire would be announced by June. This decision would kickstart a huge amount of work in the workstreams.

CL95-25/26 CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair thanked Members and the public for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 10:58 hours.