

BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON THE 8TH JULY 2026

REPORT OF THE INTERIM STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

**OUTCOME OF REVIEW OF PROCEDURE FOR PUBLISHING DETAILS OF
PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED IN THE PRESS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Classification	This report is Public
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PURPOSE / SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report sets out the findings of a review undertaken between March and June 2026 into the Council's procedure for advertising planning applications in the press. The review was undertaken following a Planning Committee report on the 18 March 2026 which identified significant variation in practice across local planning authorities and the need to ensure that Bolsover District Council is making effective, cost-efficient use of its resources when publicising planning applications.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Explain the statutory requirements for placing advertisements in the press under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DMPO), specifically Article 15.
 - Set out the Council's current approach to advertising planning applications in the press.
 - Present the findings of the review, including information on costs and benchmarking with neighbouring authorities.
 - Assess alternative approaches to publication, including consolidated advertising and revised publication cycles.
 - Consider the role of third-party providers and partnership arrangements, including the Council's relationship with Derbyshire County Council (DCC).
 - Provide recommendations on potential changes to improve efficiency, reduce costs and support timely decision making.
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REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DMPO) sets out the minimum statutory requirements for publicity in respect of planning applications. Local planning authorities retain discretion as to how they publicise applications, provided these minimum requirements are met.
- 1.2 In relation to press advertisements, Article 15 requires that certain categories of planning application must be publicised by way of a notice published in a local newspaper circulating in the locality. These include applications which:
- Are accompanied by an Environmental Statement.
 - Constitute major development.¹
 - Represent a departure from the provisions of the development plan.
 - Affect a public right of way.
 - Affect the setting of a listed building.
 - Affect the character or appearance of a conservation area.

These requirements are mandatory and cannot be waived.

- 1.3 The Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2022) sets out how the authority will consult and engage with the public on planning matters. In relation to press notices, the SCI confirms that:
- All major planning applications will be publicised in accordance with national requirements; and
 - Press notices will also be used for certain other categories of development, including those affecting conservation areas or listed buildings.

The SCI therefore supplements the statutory requirements but does not extend them significantly beyond those set out in the DMPO.

2. Findings of Review

Current Approach

- 2.1 Currently, the Council publishes press notices for qualifying applications shortly after registration. Notices are placed in local newspapers depending on the location of the development, including the Derbyshire Times, Mansfield Chad and Worksop Guardian.
- 2.2 The process is administered via Derbyshire County Council, which arranges for notices to be placed on behalf of the District Council.

¹ Article 2 (interpretation) of the DMPO defines major development as residential development of between 10 or more dwellings, residential development on a site area of 0.5 ha or more where the number of dwellings is unknown, development comprising floorspace of 1,000 sq m or more or development on sites over 1 ha or more.

- 2.3 The Council allocates an annual budget of £36,000 for press advertisements. Each individual advertisement typically costs between £300 and £800, depending on the publication and the size of the advertisement.
- 2.4 During the 2025/26 financial year, £32,416.20 was spent on advertising planning applications in the press.
- 2.5 Analysis undertaken as part of the review identified that between 2023 and 2025 approximately 50 advertisements were placed in the press each calendar year. This relatively low volume reflects the limited number of applications that fall within the statutory categories requiring newspaper publication. It also highlights the potential inefficiency of the current approach, where often large and single notices are placed in the press.
- 2.6 The Local Planning Authority's current practice is to not advertise developments that represent a departure from the provisions of the development plan at the point of registration. Only where such development is likely to be supported or is approved at planning committee, would such publicity be undertaken. This can result in determination delays.

Benchmarking with Other Authorities

- 2.6 The review considered practices at neighbouring local planning authorities, including:
- Amber Valley District Council
 - Bassetlaw District Council
 - Chesterfield Borough Council
 - North East Derbyshire District Council
- 2.8 The analysis identified a consistent approach across these authorities, whereby multiple planning applications are consolidated into a single press advertisement, with a range of information provided from a simple list of applications received to details of the application reference, proposal, applicant and reasons for the notice, and in some cases advertisements are published on a two-week cycle rather than immediately following registration. This approach enables these authorities to significantly reduce advertising costs by maximising the use of available space within each notice.
- 2.9 Given the relatively low volume of applications requiring a press advertisement at Bolsover District Council, the adoption of a similar approach by reducing the amount of information published within a single notice and publishing on a two-week cycle would reduce the number of advertisements required annually, reduce the size and cost of individual advertisements and enable more efficient use of the allocated budget.
- 2.10 It is considered good practice and more transparent to include details of the applicant, application number, proposal and address in addition to the reason for the advert to alert the public to the particular environmental sensitivities.

- 2.11 Introducing a two-week publication cycle would allow sufficient time to collate qualifying applications into a single condensed notice. Given the relatively low number of applications requiring publication, this will not result in significant delay to public consultation periods. However, it would deliver substantial cost efficiencies by reducing the size and frequency of advertisements, potentially halving the current costs (subject to the information publicised). Such savings, would enable developments that represent a departure from the provisions of the development plan to be advertised in the press at the point of registration. This will allow for the more efficient and timely determination of such applications, thereby improving service delivery.

Use of External Providers

- 2.12 The review considered the use of private marketing companies to manage press advertisements. These companies offer access to specialist software that optimises advert layout and size, reducing costs, established relationships with publishers and access to discounted rates and administrative support in preparing and placing notices.
- 2.13 An enquiry was made to a provider (TMP Worldwide) to explore potential services and costs. While such services may offer efficiency benefits, they also introduce an additional layer of cost and require details of current costs to be provided to establish whether they can offer a more competitive rate.
- 2.14 The District Council has an ongoing legacy arrangement with the County Council to organise the publication of applications received in the press on its behalf. By using the DCC the Council benefits from preferential rates. Discounts range from approximately 43% to nearly 58% depending on the publication. An 8% administration fee is applied to the discounted cost of each notice. These discounted rates represent a substantial financial benefit to the Council and help to mitigate overall advertising costs.
- 2.15 Maintaining the existing arrangement with Derbyshire County Council is advantageous as it enables access to significant discounts that may not be otherwise available and maintains established working relationships and administrative processes. Such arrangements also existing between other benchmarking authorities.
- 2.16 While private marketing companies may offer similar services, it is not clear that they would deliver comparable value once fees and charges are taken into account.

3. Outcome / Conclusion

- 3.1 The review has identified clear opportunities to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Council's approach to advertising planning applications in the press.
- 3.2 The review confirms that while the Council's current procedures comply with statutory requirements, there is significant scope to improve efficiency and reduce costs. By adopting similar approaches already in use by neighbouring

authorities and maintaining existing partnerships, the Council can deliver a more streamlined, cost-effective and responsive planning service.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Development Management Team:

1. Adopts a condensed but transparent and informative advertising approach, listing multiple planning applications within a single press notice as set out in Appendix 2.
2. Introduces a two-week publication cycle for press advertisements.
3. Includes applications that depart from the development plan in press notices at the point of registration, rather than retrospectively.
4. Continues to utilise Derbyshire County Council for the placement of press advertisements in order to benefit from discounted rates and maintain partnership working, and;
5. Keeps under review the potential use of external marketing companies, but only where clear financial or operational advantages can be demonstrated.

IMPLICATIONS:

<u>Finance and Risk</u> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Details: The findings of the review demonstrate that the current approach to press advertising is relatively costly when considered against the volume of applications requiring publication. Key financial observations include: An annual budget of £36,000 is in place, with near full utilisation in 2025/26. Only approximately 50 advertisements are placed in the press each calendar year. The introduction of consolidated advertisements and a two-week publication cycle would likely result in a significant reduction in total expenditure, potentially enabling the Council to deliver savings. Maintaining the DCC arrangement would further maximise value through continued access to discounted rates. On behalf of the Section 151 Officer		
<u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Details: No legal implications are anticipated to arise from this report. On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council		

Staffing Yes No

Details: There are no human resources implications arising from this report. It is recommended that the arrangements with DCC would remain.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

Equality and Diversity, and Consultation Yes No

Details: There are no specific direct or indirect negative impacts on any person with a protected characteristic or any group of people with a shared protected characteristic arising from this report.

Environment Yes No

Details:

N/A

DECISION INFORMATION:

Please indicate which threshold applies:

Is the decision a Key Decision?

A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:

Yes No

Revenue (a) Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or **(b)** Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.

(a) (b)

Capital (a) Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or **(b)** Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.

(a) (b)

District Wards Significantly Affected:

(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)

Please state below which wards are affected or tick **All** if all wards are affected:

All

Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If No, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation carried out: <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing
Customers: Improving customer contact and removing barriers to accessing information.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

Appendix No	Title
1	Example of Existing Press Notice
2	Example of Condensed Press Notice

Background Papers <i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>
None.