

## **BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Council on 29th July 2026**

#### **Staff Pressures**

#### **Report of the Leader of the Council**

|                                |                                                                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Classification</b>          | This report is Public.                                              |
| <b>Contact Officer</b>         | Chief Executive Officer.                                            |
| <b>Is this a Key Decision?</b> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

#### **PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To seek Council approval to make changes to the staffing establishment for a number of General Fund services within the Council and increase the budget accordingly.

#### **REPORT DETAILS**

##### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that we recently presented the Council's outturn position for the last financial year to Executive, and Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee, showing a Net Cost of Service underspend of £1.840m. The salary budget element of the underspend was £0.442m.
- 1.2 Salary variances arise for a number of reasons such as: posts become vacant after we have set the budget; unsuccessful planned recruitment; unpaid maternity/paternity leave; reductions in hours; purchase of additional annual leave; or as a result of restructures.
- 1.3 The salary variances for the last five financial years are shown below in **table 1**.

**Table 1**

| Financial Year | Salary Variance |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 2025/26        | £0.442m         |
| 2024/25        | £0.683m         |
| 2023/24        | £0.361m         |
| 2022/23        | £0.668m         |
| 2021/22        | £0.399m         |

- 1.4 As part of the various efficiency regimes, we have had to comply with over the last 10 – 15 years as part of securing our Government funding, we have reduced our staffing structure to be quite lean. However, with the extra workload caused by increased or changed regulation, the general increase in demand for our services, and the effect of preparing for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), some of the Council's services need additional staff.
- 1.5 When the Employment and Personnel Committee trial ended, it was removed from the Committee meeting cycle as it was felt there was duplication in time for both Members and Officers. However, it is thought by Officers that the process of grouping all the staff reports together to be presented to Members in one report, worked quite well as it allows Members to understand the position across the services as a whole.
- 1.6 This report covers five areas of the Council's General Fund services.

## **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

### Human Resources & Payroll

- 2.1 Within the next couple of months, the Employee Engagement Officer will be taking maternity leave. This post is heavily involved in the launch of the Council's new People Strategy, and engagement with staff around LGR and other Council policies will be essential. There is no spare capacity within the rest of the team to cover these duties in her absence.
- 2.2 The cost of covering the role on a temporary basis for a maximum of 39 weeks will be **£16,336**, which is net of the statutory maternity pay that we can reclaim from the Government of £8,904.

### Leisure

- 2.3 On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2027, the Physical Activity & Sports Development Officer retires from the Council after 24 years. Historically a full-time role, the post holder opted for flexible retirement a couple of years ago, reducing their working pattern to 3 days per week. There is a requirement to restore the role to full-time as it is essential in delivering the new 'On the move – 10-year Strategy for Active Wellbeing', supporting strategic delivery at scale across the district, and ensuring there are no gaps in service as we transition to the new authority under LGR.
- 2.4 The cost of adding 2 days per week back into this grade 7 post to make it full-time is **£20,378** per annum based on the 2025/26 pay scales which are subject to the Local Government Pay Award.

### Finance

- 2.5 The external auditor gave the capacity of the finance team as a significant deficiency in internal control 2 years' running in their Audit Completion Report. They recommended that the Council ensured the finance team had the necessary capacity to meet its responsibilities. A new Principal Accountant role received approval and was recruited to in May 2025. Unfortunately, the finance apprentice left for a permanent role in October 2025, but we did manage to obtain a temporary Income & Expenditure Officer for the section from January 2026. We now have a member of the team on long-term sick leave undergoing treatment for a serious illness.

- 2.6 It has therefore become crucial for us to obtain approval to make the temporary post permanent, so we are able to cope with the workload that comes with the final accounts and budget preparation process, as well as continue to provide information required for LGR. There is already 1 Information & Expenditure Officer within the Finance team, so there will be no need for this new role to be job evaluated. The cost of establishing this new full-time permanent position on a grade 5 is a maximum cost of **£41,287** per annum based on the 2025/26 pay scales which are subject to the Local Government Pay Award.

#### Procurement

- 2.7 A recent draft internal audit report on procurement has made a number of recommendations which will put added pressure to an already stretched service. It has also been recognised from within the Procurement Team itself that the resources within the team are insufficient to provide the required support to client contracting officers.
- 2.8 The team currently consists of 1 full-time Manager, a part-time Procurement Assistant, and a full-time Procurement Officer.
- 2.9 From a service resource perspective, there is a clear requirement for additional resource, and this is recognised in the audit report. Additional staffing resource is required to enable the timely completion of critical administrative functions, including drafting award and standstill letters, preparing, and issuing comprehensive bidder feedback, managing tender processes, and administering the e-tendering portal. These activities are extremely time-consuming and currently divert the attention of the Procurement Manager from the more strategic and complex procurement activities that are essential to delivering a compliant and effective procurement service. For example, the Council needs to strengthen its approach to option appraisals and explore more innovative procurement solutions, including greater market engagement and multi-stage procurement approaches rather than relying solely on open and restricted procedures. In addition, a new Procurement Strategy needs to be developed, and procurement training needs to be provided
- 2.10 The proposal is to create a role who would undertake the non-strategic functions outlined above and work with the service areas to ensure the Council is fully complying with procurement regulations. In addition, the role would provide support by liaising with contractors and the service areas regarding contract completion, maintaining records, and proactively chasing outstanding actions. The role would also provide support to the service areas in completing standard JCT contracts which will also alleviate pressure from Legal Services.
- 2.11 In addition, it is proposed to increase the part time (0.5 FTE) Procurement Assistant role to a full-time position.
- 2.12 The Procurement Manager has benchmarked the procurement resources against her former employer, Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC). Bolsover currently manages approximately £40 million of annual expenditure, with this expected to increase substantially over the coming year due to regeneration programmes and grant-funded activity. By comparison, CBC manages approximately double that spend but currently has a procurement team comprising a Head of Procurement,

three Senior Procurement Officers (one of whom is interim but has been in post for almost two years), two Procurement Officers, one Procurement Support Officer, and one Data Analyst. This equates to eight full-time posts compared to Bolsover's current resource of 2.5 FTE.

- 2.13 The proposal is for a new permanent full-time post which is expected to be job evaluated at a grade 6/7 This would mean a maximum annual cost of **£50,945** (if it achieves a grade 7) per annum, based on the 2025/26 pay scales which are subject to the Local Government Pay Award.
- 2.14 The proposal to increase the Procurement Assistant post to a full-time post would cost an additional **£20,644** based on the 2025/26 pay scales which are subject to the Local Government Pay Award.

#### Information & Engagement

- 2.15 The joint team was split over the 2 Councils a couple of years ago and it has now become apparent that it doesn't have enough staff resource. It is felt there is insufficient resilience within the service to cope with the rise in demand in Freedom of Information Requests, Equality Impact Assessments, and Subject Access Requests. The appetite from other services for consultation support; statistical analysis; survey development and support, is also putting a strain on the team. Again, the team are struggling with capacity as they are involved in LGR across the County.
- 2.16 The proposal is for a new permanent full-time post which is expected to be job evaluated at a grade 5/6. This would mean a maximum annual cost of **£45,983** (if it achieves a grade 6) per annum, based on the 2025/26 pay scales which are subject to the Local Government Pay Award.
- 2.17 If the proposals within this report are approved, this will mean the following increase to the General Fund budgets:

**Table 2**

| General Fund Service            | Permanent Increase | Temporary Increase |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Human Resources & Payroll       | -                  | £16,336            |
| Leisure                         | £20,378            | -                  |
| Finance                         | £41,287            | -                  |
| Procurement                     | £71,589            | -                  |
| Information & Engagement        | £45,983            | -                  |
| <b>Total Increase per Annum</b> | <b>£179,237</b>    | <b>£16,336</b>     |

- 2.18 The cost of funding the increases in **table 2** will be a call on the General Fund. This will be offset by any future savings from changes to the establishment for General Fund services and ultimately be an increase in the use of the NNDR Growth Protection Reserve.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 It has become evident over the last few months that a number of services are short of capacity. Reports from External and Internal Audit have highlighted areas where capacity needs to be increased. In addition, imminent maternity leave in a service

has meant a need for temporary arrangements while LGR work is an important element of this post.

- 3.2 To ensure we are able to maintain the high level of services we provide, it is considered necessary to increase capacity. Unfortunately, as mainly support services (apart from Leisure), there is no option to increase external income to cover the increased cost.

#### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 There is an option to do nothing, but this will not resolve the issue and increase capacity. External and Internal Audit may both look unfavourably on the Council if we ignored their recommendations/advice, and this might lead to adverse comments on future reports, threatening the Council's reputation.

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#### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

1. That Members approve the changes to the establishment and increase to budgets, as per the report.

Approved by Councillor Jane Yates, Leader of the Council

#### **IMPLICATIONS**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                   |
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| <b>A. Finance and Risk</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Details:</b><br>These are covered throughout the report, a summary is provided in paragraphs 2.17 and 2.18. The risks to the Council of not approving the changes are staff sickness, a reduction in the performance of services and potential criticism in future Audit reports. |                                                                                   |
| <b>On behalf of the Section Officer</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                   |

  

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| <b>B. Legal (including Data Protection)</b>                                                                                   | <b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Details:</b><br>Failure to adequately resource certain functions could result in non-compliance of statutory requirements. |                                                                                   |
| <b>On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council</b>                                                                              |                                                                                   |

  

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|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>C. Staffing</b>                                          | <b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Details:</b><br>These are covered throughout the report. |                                                                                   |
| <b>On behalf of the Head of Paid Service</b>                |                                                                                   |

**D. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Yes ☒ No ☐**

*Please identify (if applicable) how you have considered LGR impact in relation to this item.*

**Details:**

The implications for a new unitary are the same as for Bolsover District Council. There will be an increase in the cost of our General Fund services, but without them we risk taking underperforming services or staff sickness, into the new Council.

**E. Environment Yes ☐ No ☒**

*Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.*

**Details:****F. Equality and Diversity**

*You can assess the impact by considering whether the equality evidence indicates potential differential impact on each protected characteristic group or provides an opportunity to improve equality in an area.*

*We ask colleagues to do an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) when refreshing policies/guidance/plans or creating new ones.*

**Have you considered equality impacts in relation to the topic of this report?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

**If this is a new or refresh of a policy, guidance or plan, have you carried out an EIA?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

**DECISION INFORMATION****G. Is the decision a Key Decision?**

Yes ☐ No ☒

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 below thresholds: -

**☒ If the decision is a key decision, please indicate which threshold applies:**

**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)** ☐

|                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Capital (a)</b> Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or <b>(b)</b> Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more. | <b>(a)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>(b)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| <b>District Wards Significantly Affected:</b> <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i><br><br>Please state which wards are affected or tick <b>All</b> if all wards are affected. | <b>All</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br><b>Wards:</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|

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| <b><i>All key decisions are subject to Scrutiny call-in unless the call-in period is to be waived, however, exemption from call-in is only with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer.</i></b><br><br><b>Is this Key Decision subject to Scrutiny Call-In? (leave blank if not a key decision)</b><br><br><b>If No, has the Monitoring Officer agreed?</b> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/><br><br>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| <b>Consultation carried out:</b><br><i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i><br><br><b>Leader</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Deputy Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>SLT</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br><b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br><b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/><br><br><b>Details:</b> - Portfolio Holder for Resources and Statutory Officers. | <b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| <b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing</b> |
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## **DOCUMENT INFORMATION**

| Appendix No | Title |
|-------------|-------|
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| <b>Background Papers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <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> |
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