

Together let's deliver Bolsover District's ambitious future

In a speech earlier this year I said "I am not a big believer in setting strict and time-limited targets that restrict what we can do as a Council. We have to be more flexible and adaptable in our approach and not be limited by far-off targets". I have also said "I want staff to be set free to approach some of our functions and projects in an imaginative and creative way".

For this reason, we are not creating the normal Council or Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 but a series of ambitions for the next four years. This will be supported by annual reports of what we have achieved and what we would aim to do in the forthcoming year.

That's why this ambition is flexible and adaptable. It has the scope for new projects to be delivered whilst having the preparedness to address uncertainties such as reductions in funding and income we receive, changes in legislation that affect our services or influences that affect our local communities and their way of life.

However, Bolsover District Council is a publicly funded bureaucracy and the projects we implement to help us achieve this ambition must and will be subject to revision, scrutiny and audit as we continue to respond to the changing needs of our district.

The first change came in May 2019, at the local elections. This marked a significant political change for the Council meaning there is a much more diverse skill set, with councillors from a variety of backgrounds, both professionally and personally.

I have also said "*we must strive to be masters of our own destiny*". To do this we need to invest. Invest in our staff, invest in our services and invest in our district so we can make a real difference in Bolsover District for all our communities.

So, what is our ambition?

To become a dynamic, self-sufficient and flexible Council that delivers excellent services, whilst adapting to local aspirations and acting as the economic and environmental driver for Bolsover District.

To do this we need to change. Change the way we operate. Challenge what has always been the norm. Be more flexible. Be bold in our decision-making. Provide services that not only meet but exceed the expectations of our residents'.

The following are just some areas we will be focusing on up to 2024 to help us achieve this ambition.

- We need to deliver the services we say we will and not hide behind red-tape or legislation. By acting, and acting fast to deal with problems we will save both time and money and deliver good quality services.
- Our Transformation Programme is looking at how we provide these services and can they be better managed which will generate efficiencies both in terms

of money and service provision that can then be redeployed into providing better services to our communities.

- We have created a dedicated team of officers whose main aim is income generation. This aim will be a clear direction and be unfettered by other demands on their time and purpose. A directorate wholly employed by Bolsover District Council to develop an investment strategy that includes asset creation with a continuous revenue income. Rental income directly from residential and commercial property, indirectly through asset conversion sales etc, delivered either directly or indirectly through joint venture companies. This will, if successful, help secure the authority's future and protect staff from the vagaries of economic fluctuation and government diktat.
- We need to become more business-friendly. Support development opportunities that will help provide new jobs and increase the wealth of our local communities. To do this, we need to get into a business mind-set and have a positive approach that Bolsover District is the best place for available land, is the best place for the skills business need and is the best place for businesses to be based.
- We have some of the best tourist attractions in the country and we will be focusing on increasing the number of visitors who come to Bolsover District. This will be through closer working with the attractions, helping to promote what we have on offer by producing various publications and by working with town centre businesses to improve the offer to tourists, visitors and our residents.
- I am a great believer in diversifying our services and working collaboratively for the benefit of residents and therefore want to build upon our excellent partnership working to date and enhance the offer to wider sectors and organisations
- We need to protect the quality of life for residents and businesses across Bolsover District from the environmental challenges that we currently face, including, but not limited to the effects of climate change.

To do all this we need to be approachable, innovative and be able to deliver what we say we will for the benefit of our residents', businesses and partners. I believe that investing in our staff, our services and our communities, we can build a bright future for Bolsover District.

Steve Fritchley

Council Leader