

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 3 MARCH 2025

Present:

Councillor Christine Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Graham Baxter MBE (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Frank Adlington-Stringer	Councillor Neil Baker
Councillor Nigel Barker	Councillor Jayne Barry
Councillor Richard Beech	Councillor Joseph Birkin
Councillor David Cheetham	Councillor Kathy Clegg
Councillor Stephen Clough	Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Suzy Cornwell	Councillor Charlotte Cupit
Councillor Alex Dale	Councillor Lilian Deighton
Councillor Michael Durrant	Councillor Stuart Fawcett
Councillor Clive Fletcher	Councillor Mark Foster
Councillor Christine Gare	Councillor Kevin Gillott
Councillor David Hancock	Councillor Lee Hartshorne
Councillor Daniel Higgon	Councillor Pam Jones
Councillor William Jones	Councillor Pat Kerry
Councillor Carol Lacey	Councillor Tony Lacey
Councillor Heather Liggett	Councillor Fran Petersen
Councillor Stephen Pickering	Councillor Stephen Reed
Councillor Kathy Rouse	Councillor Ross Shipman
Councillor Derrick Skinner	Councillor Caroline Smith
Councillor Mick Smith	Councillor Richard Spooner
Councillor Lee Stone	Councillor Richard Welton
Councillor Helen Wetherall	Councillor Pam Windley

Also Present:

L Hickin	Managing Director - Head of Paid Service
M Broughton	Director of Growth and Assets
J Dethick	Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer)
S Sternberg	Assistant Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)
A Smith	Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
A Bryan	Governance Manager

COU Apologies for Absence

/86/2

4-25 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Antcliff, P Elliott, M Emmens, D Higgon, N Morley, C Renwick, M Roe, J Stokes, K Tait, and M E Thacker MBE.

COU Declarations of Interest

/87/2

4-25 In respect of Item 7, Local Government Reorganisation Update, Councillors C Cupit, A Dale, M Foster, and K Gillott all declared that they were elected Members of Derbyshire County Council, which had taken a position on the matter. It was confirmed that as the item was a procedural update there was nothing to

stop the Members from participating in the item.

COU Minutes of Last Meeting

/88/2

4-25 RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 January 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

COU Chair of the Council's Announcements

/89/2

4-25 The Chair of the Council, Councillor Christine Smith, reported that she had been busy collecting raffle prizes for her Chair's Charity Raffle, for which tickets were now on sale. The Chair also reported that she had last week been shown round Clay Cross Active; the work was progressing very well and she thanked all those working on the project.

COU Leader of the Council's Announcements

/90/2

4-25 The Leader of the Council, Councillor N Barker, reported that he had met with the Citizens Advice Bureau and his meeting with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Integrated Care Board meeting had been postponed.

In respect of Local Government Reform, which was to be considered later in the meeting, Councillor N Barker wished to make it clear that there was no intention of any authority in Derbyshire wanting to go outside the established boundary of the County of Derbyshire. All the Districts and Boroughs and the City of Derby were committed to working together to develop options to create new unitary councils using the criteria set out by the Government and staying within the County footprint.

COU Public Participation

/91/2

4-25 No questions from the public had been received.

COU Local Government Reorganisation Update

/92/2

4-25 Council considered a report by the Managing Director which advised Council of the letter that had been received from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution and of emerging implications for the Council and North East Derbyshire in respect of Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor N Barker, Leader of the Council, stated that it had been very busy with lots of meetings regarding reorganisation since the last Council meeting. He stated that the report sought approval to engage with the conversations and to have input in the proposals being put forward, in order to best represent the people of North East Derbyshire.

Councillor N Barker moved, and Councillor P Kerry seconded, the recommendations in the report.

Councillor A Dale expressed concern that there was no proposal set out in the report and felt there was a lack of clarity. Councillor Dale spoke about the proposal put forward by Derbyshire County Council and that a North and South

option would involve duplication, which went against the ability to make savings which what was driving this.

Councillor A Dale did not believe that authority should be delegated to the Managing Director and moved an amendment to remove recommendation 2(b) and replace with 'organise an extraordinary full Council to enable discussions on any draft interim proposals prior to submission to MHCLG'. Councillor C Cupit seconded the amendment.

Councillors D Hancock, F Adlington-Stringer, R Shipman, and M Foster all spoke in support of the amendment.

Councillor H Wetherall asked a question regarding the costs of project managing this work, and whether an impact assessment had been carried out on the impact to North East Derbyshire residents. The Managing Director stated that the March deadline was just a gateway and a check-in, and no definitive proposal would be presented, so at this stage it was hard to know the full costs that would be encountered between now and the November 2025 deadline.

Councillor N Barker responded that the proposal would be brought back to Council before the November 2025 deadline.

Councillor A Dale stated that the views and input of Members was important and that is why the amendment was necessary.

The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

Councillor R Shipman expressed concerns that only the eight leaders of the Borough, Districts and City Councils had had input into the options.

Councillor J Birkin stated that one of the requirements of the letter from government was to show how it the Council had consulted on proposals. Councillor S Reed asked what form the consultation would take, and whether it would include Members of the Council. Councillor N Barker confirmed that there would be a consultation, and it would be brought back to Council for Members to comment.

The proposal was put to the vote.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) the letter and criteria set out by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution be noted.
- (2) authority be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with Cabinet members, to:
 - (a) Represent the Council in Derbyshire wide discussion and negotiations to develop a Derbyshire wide proposal(s) that meet the criteria set out by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution.
 - (b) Submit interim proposals to MHCLG in March to gain feedback on options being considered.

COU
/93/2
4-25

Level of Council Tax 2025/26

Councillor P Kerry, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced a report which set out the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, which required the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year. The approved demand on the Collection Fund in respect of this Council was one of £7,247,221. 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, and the relevant precept demands had all now been received.

It was noted that the information from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue had now been confirmed, so recommendation 2 was no longer required.

Councillor P Kerry and Councillor N Barker moved and seconded the recommendation in the report.

Councillor A Dale stated that he had not supported the previous decision taken regarding the level of Council Tax but noted that at this meeting it was a procedural matter.

The Motion was put to the vote and was agreed. As required by law a recorded vote was taken.

For: 43

Councillors F Adlington-Stringer, N Baker, N Barker, J Barry, G Baxter, R Beech, J Birkin, D Cheetham, K Clegg, A Cooper, S Clough, S Cornwell, C Cupit, A Dale, L Deighton, M Durrant, S Fawcett, C Fletcher, M Foster, C Gare, K Gillott, D Hancock, L Hartshorne, P Jones, W Jones, P Kerry, C Lacey, T Lacey, H Liggett, F Petersen, S Pickering, S Reed, K Rouse, R Shipman, D Skinner, Caroline Smith, Christine Smith, M Smith, R Spooner, L Stone, R Welton, P Windley, H Wetherall.

Against: 0

RESOLVED – That the Council Tax for the Financial Year 2025/26, as set out in the report, be approved.

COU
/94/2
4-25

Pay Policy Statement 2025-2026

The Managing Director and Head of Paid Service presented the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26. The pay policy statement set out the Council's policy on pay for senior managers and employees and was in accordance with the requirements of Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 and Supplementary Guidance 2013. The Annual Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

Councillor N Barker and P Kerry proposed and seconded the report recommendations to approve the pay policy statement.

RESOLVED – That the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 be supported and

approved.

COU Proportionality of the Council and Appointments to Committees

/95/2

4-25

The Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer presented a report on the proportionality of the Council and Appointments to Committees.

The political balance for the Council as a whole and the specific bodies covered by the political balance requirements were set out in the report. The current membership of Committees was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer reported that she had recently been informed that Councillor S Reed was no longer a member of the Conservative Group. The Conservative Group had therefore made the following nominations to fill the group's allocated places that had been vacated by Councillor S Reed:

Councillor A Dale was nominated to the Joint ICT Committee.

Councillor N Baker was nominated to the Business Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) the changes to the political make-up of the Council be noted and the proportional allocation of committee places as set out in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2, be agreed.
- (2) the proposed appointments to Committees, as reported at the meeting, be agreed.

COU To answer any questions from Members asked under Procedure Rule No 9.2

/96/2

4-25

The Chair confirmed that two questions had been received.

Questions A – Proposed by Councillor N Baker to Councillor J Barry, Portfolio Holder for Growth & Assets

Whilst it is appreciated that some decisions and discussions will be commercially sensitive and therefore confidential, given the significance of and public interest in some of the recent decisions taken by the Council's Asset Management Board, could the Leader of the Council commit to making the items being considered by this Board more accessible so, where it is reasonably possible to do so, the process is more open to members of the Council and local residents so they can have more input before a decision is taken and that they are able to access records of those decisions?

Councillor J Barry stated that decisions taken at the Asset Management Board were within the Key Decision limit and delegated to officers as stated with Constitution, any Key Decisions were for the Cabinet to take. The Board was already accessible and was made up of two Cabinet members and senior officers from the Council and Rykneld. The Board did consult with local Members and comments received were considered before any final decision was taken.

Councillor Barry gave an example of the recent proposals for Wingerworth Lido, when local members had been asked for comment, but none had been received. Councillor Barry concluded that the Asset Management Board would continue to consult local Members but Members needed to stay alert, so they did not miss any requests.

Councillor N Baker provided information regarding the Wingerworth Lido. He asked for a meeting between local Members and the parish Council regarding the reasons for the decision. He also asked that agendas and minutes be published.

Councillor J Barry responded that the notes of the Board meeting were not published as it was not a formal meeting, but decisions were published as required by the Constitution. Councillor Barry would take Councillor Baker's request for a meeting regarding Wingerworth Lido back to the Board.

Question 'B' – Proposed by Cllr A Dale to Cllr P R Kerry

Can the deputy leader please confirm the full costs of the recent refurbishment of the reception area at Mill Lane and the sources and a breakdown of the funding?

Councillor P Kerry stated that the refurbishment of the reception area, which had included the refurbishment of the former HR office as a temporary reception area to maintain service delivery, had cost £150,000 determined through competitive tendering. The works were a contribution to the enabling works to relocate Rykneld Homes into Mill Lane, delivering year on year savings, of £85,000 (including the IT section moving into the old HR office). It had been 10 years since the reception had been refurbished and Councillor P Kerry listed the works that had been included in the project, which had been funded from the Capital Programme.

Councillor A Dale asked if Councillor P Kerry believed it offered good value for money and whether the intention had been for Rykneld to also be co-located in the reception area?

Councillor P Kerry stated how important it was to maintain assets.

COU To consider any Motions from Members under Procedure Rule No 10

/97/2

4-25 Motion A – Proposed by Councillor Stephen Reed

Future-Proofing Our Social Housing: A Policy Review

In light of recent developments and the evolving needs of our District, it is imperative that we review our social housing priority policy to ensure we are adequately prepared to meet future demands.

Council Notes;

- A. The excellent work being carried out by the officers of the Housing Strategy and Homeless Team, along with Rykneld, regarding social housing and addressing the needs of residents of North East Derbyshire.
- B. The ongoing debate on how the changes in the National Planning Policy

Framework (NPPF) will affect local authorities in meeting the demand from neighbouring authorities.

- C. The position in the District with regard to homelessness, the increasing demand on services, and emerging factors which may have an impact on the increased demand (such as over flow from neighbouring authorities and increasing asylum seekers numbers.)
- D. The necessity for a forward-looking social housing strategy that addresses future challenges and demands, ensuring fairness for all residents of North East Derbyshire.

Council resolves to refer to the Communities Scrutiny Committee to determine the following and report back to Full Council:

1. **Assess Impact of NPPF Changes:** Analyse the potential impact of the proposed NPPF changes on local housing policy and the likelihood of having to accommodate overflow demand from neighbouring authorities.
2. In collaboration with officers, Review the impacts of currently emerging factors - that may not have been reported at the time - against our current strategy.
3. **Review Current Social Housing Priority Bands:** Assess whether the current banding system adequately reflects the urgency and needs of different groups, especially considering the potential increased demand from points 1 and 2.
4. **Make Recommendations to Improve Policy for the Future:** Develop an action plan based on the findings of the review to ensure the social housing policy is fit for future needs.

Councillor S Reed moved the Motion and spoke about the need for this to be considered at Scrutiny.

Councillor C Cupit seconded the Motion. Councillor Cupit emphasised the review of social housing priority bands, and whether the option of sub-bands could be considered.

Councillor F Adlington-Stringer, M Durrant, N Barker and L Hartshorne, spoke against the Motion.

Councillor A Dale, D Hancock and R Shipman all spoke regarding the social housing priority banding and that it would be worth a review. Councillor A Dale also spoke about the need to discuss how the need for housing could be met.

Councillor M Foster, H Wetherall and K Gillott spoke to the Motion.

Councillor S Reed responded that these were important issues, that should be considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

The Motion was put to the vote and lost.

COU **Chair's Urgent Business**
/98/2
4-25 There was no urgent business.