

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 19 MAY 2025

Present:

Councillor Lee Hartshorne (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Graham Baxter MBE (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Frank Adlington-Stringer	Councillor Pat Antcliff
Councillor Neil Baker	Councillor Nigel Barker
Councillor Jayne Barry	Councillor Richard Beech
Councillor David Cheetham	Councillor Kathy Clegg
Councillor Stephen Clough	Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Suzy Cornwell	Councillor Alex Dale
Councillor Lilian Deighton	Councillor Michael Durrant
Councillor Peter Elliott	Councillor Clive Fletcher
Councillor Mark Foster	Councillor Christine Gare
Councillor Kevin Gillott	Councillor David Hancock
Councillor Pam Jones	Councillor William Jones
Councillor Pat Kerry	Councillor Carol Lacey
Councillor Tony Lacey	Councillor Heather Liggett
Councillor Nicki Morley	Councillor Fran Petersen
Councillor Stephen Pickering	Councillor Stephen Reed
Councillor Carolyn Renwick	Councillor Kathy Rouse
Councillor Ross Shipman	Councillor Derrick Skinner
Councillor Caroline Smith	Councillor Christine Smith
Councillor Richard Spooner	Councillor Jessica Stokes
Councillor Lee Stone	Councillor Martin E Thacker MBE JP
Councillor Richard Welton	Councillor Helen Wetherall

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
M E Derbyshire	Members ICT & Training Officer
T Bamford	Civic Administration Assistant

COU Apologies for Absence

/17/2

5-26 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Birkin, C Cupit, M Emmens, S Fawcett, D Higgon, M Roe, M Smith, K Tait and P Windley.

COU Declarations of Interest

/18/2

5-26 There were no declarations of interest.

COU Chairman of the Council's Announcements

/19/2

5-26 There was no announcement from the Chair.

COU Leader of the Council's Announcements

/20/2

5-26 Councillor N Barker, Leader of the Council, reported that it had been a busy time; there had been the Derbyshire County Council elections in May and he had met with Police and Crime Commissioner. Councillor Barker reported that he had attended the District Council Network Conference in Windsor, at which the main topic for discussion had been Local Government Reorganisation. Cabinet had recently considered the end of year performance report on the Council Plan, which showed that the Council was delivering against its plan. A few of the highlights included that the Housing Strategy Team had reduced the duration homeless applicants spent in temporary accommodation, continuing to improve housing stock with Rykneld Homes and the Community Safety Team continued to tackle anti-social behaviour with the Police and other organisation. In respect of leisure, attendance was above target and Clay Cross Active would be opening soon. Councillor N Barker thanked the Senior Management Team and all staff, for all their work in delivering the Council Plan.

COU Public Participation

/21/2

5-26 No questions from the public had been received.

COU Local Government Reorganisation Update

/22/2

5-26 The Managing Director gave an update on the latest position regarding Local Government Reorganisation, following previous reports to Council in January and March 2025. A brief background to the matter was provided and then the Managing Director gave an overview of the interim plans that had been submitted to the Government in March 2025. The feedback on the interim plan submissions had now been received. The interim plan feedback: Derbyshire and Derby had been circulated to all members, along with a summary of the feedback.

Two interim proposals had been submitted to Government. These were the Derbyshire County Council proposal, which was for two unitary councils, with Derby City remaining as it was with a population of approximately 266,000, and the rest of Derbyshire with a population of approximately 811,000. This proposal did not have the support of any other authority in Derbyshire. The other proposal, put forward by the District, Borough and City Councils, was for two unitary councils but with populations closer to the guidance of 500,000. Amber Valley Borough Council had also submitted an outline proposal for a three-unitary option, but since further work had taken place, this proposal was unlikely to be pursued by Amber Valley. Derby City Council had written a letter of support for the two unitary option proposed by the District and Boroughs, but were at the time unable to be a signatory on the proposal.

It was noted that the feedback received was single feedback on all the proposals that had been submitted. The Managing Director gave a summary of the feedback.

In terms of next steps, the District and Boroughs would continue to work on the two-unitary proposal (north and south), with further work on whether Amber Valley would be placed in the north, south or split. A programme structure had been created by the district and boroughs to work up a full business case to be submitted by the 28 November 2025 deadline. It was anticipated that a decision would be made by Spring 2026, with a vesting date for the new authorities of May 2028.

Councillor N Barker reported that it was not easy work and the timescales were tight. He praised the Managing Director, Director of Growth and Assets, and Director of Finance and Resources for their work and attitude towards this project.

Councillor A Dale asked if potentially splitting the Borough of Amber Valley would cause delays and also how the £7.6m was being spent. He also commented about the shadow elections, which may take place in 2027. The Managing Director reported that current district and borough areas could be split, but yes it would take longer. Further information on the funding was still awaited but it would be for the development of a business case and associated costs. There was no further information on shadow elections as yet.

In response to a question from Councillor H Wetherall, the Managing Director clarified that the proposal needed to cover the whole of the County.

Councillor M Thacker MBE spoke about the historical and geographically considerations, as well as the civic and mayoral elements. He stated that there was precedent for education being managed at second tier and he raised concern about SEND services and provided examples of unitary councils working together in partnership for such services. Councillor Thacker concluded that he preferred the current model of local government but if that could not be kept the north and south option was the next best thing.

Councillor D Hancock echoed what Councillor M Thacker MBE had said. He spoke about the costs involved and the need to be realistic with the costings in any proposal.

Councillor N Barker responded that the costs had to be based on realistic figures, and that work was taking place to look at the costs of those councils that had already gone through reorganisation. This was setting up an organisation that would last for over 50 years and it should be done right.

The Director of Finance and Resources stated that it should not be rushed but that the November deadline meant there would have to be an element of assumptions in the proposals. Officers were working hard behind the scenes, including all the Section 151 officers to get as much information together. It was noted that there would still be pressures in respect of social care, SEND and homelessness and to expect these pressures to dissipate within three years of setting up new unitary councils was unrealistic.

Councillor A Dale stated that if the money made in efficiencies could be put back into other council services it might help but if the cost of local government was being re-baselined then the impact needed to be made clear.

The Director of Finance and Resources responded that any savings needed to be very carefully stated. The Managing Director added that this was why it was much better to be at the table and be involved as officers had been emphasising similar points regarding savings and the need to take time and get this right.

COU Auditors Annual Report 2023/24

/23/2

5-26

Councillor P Kerry introduced a report which set out the annual audit report in respect of 2023/24 which had been prepared by Forvis Mazars LLP. The annual audit report was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the auditor's annual report summarised the work undertaken by the Council's external auditors, Forvis Mazars LLP, for the year ended 31 March 2024. It provided an opinion on the financial statements, the Council's value for money arrangements and any other wider reporting responsibilities.

RESOLVED – that the report from the Council's External Auditors, Forvis Mazars, be noted.

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

/24/2

5-26

The Chair confirmed that one question had been received.

Question A – Proposed by Councillor R Shipman to Councillor S Pickering, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Place

How many reports of fly tipping have been logged in North East Derbyshire and how many of those have had fines issued?

Councillor S Pickering responded that the information he was about to provide had been taken from data that had been reported to Government for 2024/25. In that period, there had been 588 fly tipping incidents, out of which 87 had contained evidence and had been investigated. There had been 5 prosecutions, 26 Fixed Penalty Notices issued and 3 failure to produce documents for business waste.

Councillor R Shipman asked if for any of the 87 incidents investigated had the Council exercised the power to confiscate any vehicles.

Councillor S Pickering responded that of the 87 investigated not all had had evidence that was substantial enough to use. Where evidence had been recovered that could be used, there had either been prosecutions or Fixed Penalty Notices issued.

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

/25/2

5-26

No Motions had been received.

COU Chair's Urgent Business

/26/2

5-26

There was no urgent business.