

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 26 JANUARY 2026

Present:

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

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| Councillor Frank Adlington-Stringer | Councillor Neil Baker |
| Councillor Nigel Barker | Councillor Jayne Barry |
| Councillor Richard Beech | Councillor Joseph Birkin |
| Councillor David Cheetham | Councillor Stephen Clough |
| Councillor Andrew Cooper | Councillor Suzy Cornwell |
| Councillor Charlotte Cupit | Councillor Alex Dale |
| Councillor Lilian Deighton | Councillor Peter Elliott |
| Councillor Michelle Emmens | Councillor Stuart Fawcett |
| Councillor Clive Fletcher | Councillor Mark Foster |
| Councillor Christine Gare | Councillor Kevin Gillott |
| Councillor David Hancock | 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 Michael Roe | Councillor Kathy Rouse |
| Councillor Ross Shipman | Councillor Derrick Skinner |
| Councillor Caroline Smith | Councillor Mick Smith |
| Councillor Richard Spooner | Councillor Jessica Stokes |
| Councillor Lee Stone | Councillor Martin E Thacker MBE JP |
| Councillor Richard Welton | Councillor Helen Wetherall |
| Councillor Pam Windley | |

Also Present:

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| L Hickin | Managing Director and 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) |
| L Pepper | Assistant Director of Communities & Environmental Health |
| D Thompson | Assistant Director of Planning |
| A Smith | Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer |
| A Bryan | Governance Manager |
| M E Derbyshire | Members ICT & Training Officer |

COU Apologies for Absence

172/2

5-26 Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors P Antcliff, K Clegg, M Durrant, P Elliott, M Emmens, N Morley, S Reed, C Renwick, Christine Smith, and K Tait.

COU **Declarations of Interest**

173/2

5-26

In respect of Item 7, Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 – 2028/29:

- Councillor K Gillott declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the HRA as a Board Member of Rykneld Homes Limited but had been granted a dispensation by Standards Committee to participate and vote on the matter.
- Councillor M Thacker MBE declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the HRA as a Board Member of Rykneld Homes Limited and would withdraw from the meeting for that part of the item and take no part in the vote.
- Councillors C Lacey, S Pickering, and P Windley declared that they were tenants of Rykneld Homes.

COU **Minutes of Last Meeting**

174/2

5-26

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Council meeting held 1 December 2025 be approved as a true and correct record.

COU **Chairman of the Council's Announcements**

175/2

5-26

The Chair began his announcements by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. He reported that over December he had attended a number of Christmas carol concerts throughout Derbyshire and that he would be attending the Derbyshire Amateur Swimming Association Gala in January.

Finally, the Chair recognised that tomorrow was Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Council had recently reaffirmed its commitment to the EHRC definition on antisemitism and its commitment to fight antisemitism and all forms of racism. He asked that Members who could not attend a service to take a moment to reflect on what was one of humanity's darkest ever chapters.

COU **Leader of the Council's Announcements**

176/2

5-26

The Leader provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the next stage was for the Government to undertake a consultation on all Derbyshire proposals and then following the consultation the Government was expected to announce its decision. The Leader also provided information on the Structural Change Order that would be required, and the ongoing preparatory work.

The Leader reported that he continued to chair the Strategic Leadership Board, which helped coordinate the Derbyshire council's relationship with EMCCA.

The Leader also reported that the Post Office had recently announced the closure of the Pilsley branch at short notice. Given the impact on the community the Leader had written to the Post Office offering the Council's support to reinstate Post Office services in Pilsley.

The Leader also reported:

- that supporting the local economy remained a priority, the Council's food and drink trail included over 40 businesses.
- officers had been delivering customer service sessions across the District.
- over 100 Community Action Grants had now been awarded. The work of

Pig Pals, a mental health support group, was highlighted as an example of community impact.

- that the Council continued to take firm action against crime and environmental offences; successful prosecutions for fly-tipping and closure orders had been issued.
- that the Council's housing stock had achieved a C1 accreditation.
- on the opening of Clay Cross Active

The Leader thanked Members and officers for their commitment and perseverance during what had been a demanding year.

COU Public Participation

177/2

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

COU Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 - 2029/30

178/2

5-26 The report to Council sought approval for the Current Budget for 2025/26 and Original Budget for 2026/27 for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan covering the years 2025/26 to 2029/30.

Members were informed that Cabinet had considered and endorsed the proposals at its meeting on 15 January 2026 following on from scrutiny at the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2026.

The Director of Finance and Resources and Section 151 Officer gave a presentation on the budget proposals. Members then asked any technical questions of the officer.

Councillor P Kerry, Deputy Leader of the Council, provided background to the budget setting and moved a Motion that Council approve recommendations 1 to 6 in the report. Councillor N Barker spoke and seconded the Motion.

Councillor A Dale moved an amendment to freeze Council Tax (to amend recommendation 3 to 0% instead of 2.99%). This was seconded by Councillor Helen Wetherall.

Councillors M Thacker MBE, K Gillott, H Wetherall, R Shipman, D Hancock, J Barry and F Adlington-Stringer spoke regarding the budget proposal and amendment.

The amendment was put to the vote. As required by law this was taken as a recorded vote. The amendment failed.

For: 14

Councillors F Adlington-Stringer, N Baker, S Clough, A Dale, L Deighton, M Foster, P Jones, W Jones, H Liggett, R Spooner, J Stokes, M Thacker MBE, R Welton, H Wetherall

Against: 27

Councillors N Barker, J Barry, G Baxter, R Beech, J Birkin, D Cheetham, A

Cooper, S Cornwell, S Fawcett, C Fletcher, C Gare, K Gillott, D Hancock, L Hartshorne, D Higgon, P Kerry, C Lacey, T Lacey, F Petersen, S Pickering, M Roe, K Rouse, R Shipman, D Skinner, Caroline Smith, M Smith, L Stone

Councillor R Shipman moved an amendment to increase Council Tax by 1% (to amend recommendation 3 to 1% instead of 2.99%). This was seconded by Councillor D Hancock.

The amendment was put to the vote. As required by law this was taken as a recorded vote. The amendment failed.

For: 16

Councillors F Adlington-Stringer, N Baker, S Clough, A Dale, M Foster, D Hancock, P Jones, W Jones, H Liggett, M Roe, R Shipman, R Spooner, J Stokes, M Thacker MBE, R Welton, H Wetherall

Against: 24

Councillors N Barker, J Barry, G Baxter, R Beech, J Birkin, D Cheetham, A Cooper, S Cornwell, S Fawcett, C Fletcher, C Gare, K Gillott, L Hartshorne, D Higgon, P Kerry, C Lacey, T Lacey, F Petersen, S Pickering, K Rouse, D Skinner, Caroline Smith, M Smith, L Stone

The original Motion was put to the vote. As required by law this was taken as a recorded vote. The Motion was approved.

For: 23

Councillors N Barker, J Barry, G Baxter, R Beech, J Birkin, D Cheetham, A Cooper, S Cornwell, S Fawcett, C Fletcher, C Gare, K Gillott, L Hartshorne, D Higgon, P Kerry, C Lacey, F Petersen, S Pickering, K Rouse, D Skinner, Caroline Smith, M Smith, L Stone

Against: 17

Councillors F Adlington-Stringer, N Baker, S Clough, A Dale, L Deighton, M Foster, D Hancock, P Jones, W Jones, H Liggett, M Roe, R Shipman, R Spooner, J Stokes, M Thacker MBE, R Welton, H Wetherall

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) that the view of the Director of Finance and Resources; that the estimates included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2029/30 are robust and that the level of financial reserves are adequate at this time; be accepted.
- (2) that officers report back to Cabinet and the Services Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis regarding the overall position in respect of the Council's budgets.

General Fund

- (3) a Council Tax increase of £6.48 will be levied in respect of a notional Band D property (2.99%)

- (4) the Medium-Term Financial Plan in respect of the General Fund as set out in the report to Cabinet (Appendix 1) be approved as the Current Budget 2025/26, and the Original Budget 2026/27, and as the financial projections in respect of 2027/28 to 2029/30.
- (5) that the General Fund Capital Programme be approved as the Current Budget in respect of 2025/26, and as the Approved Programme for 2026/27 to 2029/30.
- (6) That budget under spends be transferred to the Resilience Reserve to provide increased financial resilience for future years of the plan.

Having previously declared an interest in the next part of the item Councillor M Thacker MBE left the meeting.

Councillor P Kerry moved a Motion that Council approve recommendations 7 to 11 in the report. Councillor N Barker spoke and seconded the Motion.

The Motion was put to the vote. As required by law this was taken as a recorded vote. The Motion was approved.

For: 32

Councillors F Adlington-Stringer, N Baker, N Barker, J Barry, G Baxter, R Beech, D Cheetham, S Clough, A Cooper, A Dale, S Fawcett, C Fletcher, M Foster, C Gare, K Gillott, L Hartshorne, D Higgon, P Jones, W Jones, P Kerry, C Lacey, H Liggett, F Petersen, S Pickering, K Rouse, R Shipman, D Skinner, Caroline Smith, M Smith, R Spooner, L Stone, H Wetherall

Against: 2

Councillors D Hancock, M Roe

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) the Council sets its rent levels for 2026/27 be increasing rents by 4.8% from 1st April 2026.
- (2) the Medium Term Financial Plan in respect of the Housing Revenue Account as set out in the report to Cabinet (Appendix 1) be approved as the Current Budget in respect of 2025/26, as the Original Budget in respect of 2026/27, and the financial projection in respect of 2027/28 to 2029/30.
- (3) that the HRA Capital Programme be approved as the Current Budget in respect of 2025/26, and as the Approved Programme for 2026/27 to 2029/30.
- (4) that the Management Free for undertaking housing services at £13.962m and the Management Free for undertaking capital works at £1.1m to Rykneld Homes in respect of 2026/27 be approved.
- (5) that Members note the requirement to provide Rykneld Homes with a 'letter of comfort' to the company's auditors and grant delegated authority to the Council's Director of Finance and Resources in consultation with the

Leader of the Council to agree the contents of that letter.

Councillor M Thacker MBE returned to the meeting.

COU Treasury Management Report 2026/27 to 2029/30

179/2

5-26

The report to Council provided information for the approval of the Council's suite of Treasury Strategies for 2026/27 to 2029/30.

The report outlined the Council's proposed suite of Treasury Strategies, which contained:

- The Treasury Strategy which provided the framework for managing the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks for the period.
- The Capital Strategy which was intended to provide a high level, concise overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of the Council's Services.
- The Investment Strategy which focused on investments made for service purposes and commercial reasons, rather than those made for treasury management.

The strategies provided an approved framework within which officers undertook the day-to-day capital and treasury activities.

Councillors P Kerry and N Barker proposed and seconded a Motion to approve the recommendations as contained within the report.

Councillor H Wetherall spoke about the general principle of centralisation of funding not allowing for local decision making, and Councillor M Thacker MBE spoke about the investment strategy and the need to get the best value long term.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) Council approve the Treasury Management Strategy at Appendix 1 and in particular:
 - a) Approve the Borrowing Strategy
 - b) Approve the Investment Strategy
 - c) Approve the use of the external treasury management advisors Counterparty Weekly List (or similar) to determine the latest assessment of the counterparties that meet the Council's Criteria before any investment is undertaken.
 - d) Approve the Prudential Indicators.

- (2) Council approve the Capital Strategy as set out in Appendix 2 and in particular
 - a) Approve the Capital Financing Requirement
 - b) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2026/27
 - c) Approve the Prudential Indicators for 2026/27, in particular:

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| Authorised Borrowing Limit | £224.18m |
| Operational Boundary | £219.18m |
| Capital Financing Requirement | £211.07m |

(3) Council approve the Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix 3.

(4) Council approve the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy at Appendix 4.

Councillor G Baxter MBE left the meeting.

COU **Implementation of a Council Tax Premium for Empty Homes**

/80/2

5-26

The report to Council sought approval of a revised policy, which proposed an increase to the Council Tax premium charge for empty homes.

The report explained that Council had been given powers to charge empty homes premiums, and there was an expectation from Government to charge the maximum allowed under the regulations. It was therefore proposed that, as set out in the revised Policy, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1, to set the following charges from April 2026:

- Homes empty from 2 – 5 years – 100% premium (200%)
- Homes empty from 5 – 10 years – 200% premium (300%)
- Homes empty from 10 years and over – 300% premium (400%).

Councillor J Birkin, Portfolio Holder for Council Services, introduced the report and moved the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor N Barker.

Councillor D Hancock spoke in support of the item although raised concerns regarding the Equality Impact Assessment. Councillor A Dale also spoken in support of the item. Councillor R Welton stated that he would vote against the proposal.

Councillor S Fawcett left the meeting.

RESOLVED – that Council approve the revised Council Tax Empty Homes Premium Policy encompassing the implementation of an increased empty homes premium to commence on 1 April 2026.

COU **Progress Report on Development of a New Local Plan**

/81/2

5-26

Councillor S Pickering, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Place, introduced a report which provided an update on the work that had been undertaken to develop a new Local Plan, since the decision in November 2024 to undertake a review of the current Plan.

Councillors S Pickering and N Barker moved and seconded the recommendation.

Councillor R Shipman spoke about the lack of infrastructure and traffic problems. Councillor M Thacker MBE spoke about the green belt, protecting community identities and areas of archaeological and historical interest.

Councillor F Adlington-Stringer left the meeting.

Councillor C Cupit spoke about concerns regarding the housing target, and proposed an amendment that 'Council requests that Cabinet consider

commissioning a full briefing note on the options available, including evaluating any risks, to the Council in pursuing a lower housing target than the new national standard method in its new Local Plan, with the report going to a future Local Plan Working Group meeting for consideration'. Councillor A Dale spoke and seconded the amendment.

Councillor K Gillott agreed that the proposed action was something that should be considered.

The amendment was accepted.

Councillor D Hancock spoke about his concerns regarding the erosion of settlement development limits and Councillor H Liggett spoke about concerns to do with flooding.

Councillor R Welton left the meeting.

Councillor S Pickering concluded that he was happy to support the amendment and look at the possible options and emphasised that the evidence for any change had to be robust and strong.

RESOLVED – That:

- (1) the report be noted.
- (2) Council requests that Cabinet consider commissioning a full briefing note on the options available, including evaluating any risks, to the Council in pursuing a lower housing target than the new national standard method in its new Local Plan, with the report going to a future Local Plan Working Group meeting for consideration.

Councillor M Roe left the meeting.

COU **The Avenue Update**

/82/2

5-26

Councillor J Barry, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Assets, introduced the item and explained that a presentation would be given on the Avenue regeneration project and the Mill Lane/A61 junction, noting that whilst significant progress had been made, substantial work remained to full realise the site's potential.

The Director of Growth and Assets gave a presentation which provided a brief history of the site, the ownership of the site and the current phase of work taking place. The Avenue Area Strategic Framework was explained, and information was provided on the Southern Gateway, EMCCA funding status, public consultation outcome and the next steps for the Mill Lane/A61 junction.

Members asked questions regarding the presentation.

Councillors S Clough and M Foster left the meeting.

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

/83/2

5-26 No questions had been submitted under Procedure Rule 9.2 for the meeting.

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

/84/2

5-26 The Chair confirmed that one Motion had been submitted.

Motion A – Submitted by Councillor R Shipman

This Council notes that:

Derbyshire County Council and North East Derbyshire District Council have consulted on proposals to introduce traffic lights at the junction of the A61 and Mill Lane in Wingerworth.

The published consultation results show a clear majority of respondents opposed to the scheme, with approximately 65% stating they do not support the proposals, compared with fewer than 30% in support.

Local residents have raised significant concerns about increased congestion, road safety, and traffic being displaced onto surrounding residential streets.

This Council believes that:

Local communities must have a meaningful voice in decisions that directly affect their daily lives.

Proceeding with a scheme that lacks public support risks undermining trust in the consultation process.

There is a need to properly consider alternative solutions that reflect local knowledge and community priorities.

This Council resolves to:

Formally oppose the proposed traffic light scheme at the end of Mill Lane, Wingerworth.

Write to Derbyshire County Council, as the Highway Authority, urging them not to proceed with the traffic light scheme.

Request that Derbyshire County Council works with local residents and ward councillors to explore alternative, community-supported options to address traffic and safety concerns at this junction.

Councillor R Shipman moved the Motion. He expressed concern that the consultants responsible for the proposals did not fully understand the local area, particularly the role of the A61 as a diversion route when issues occur on the M1. He stated that the preferred traffic lights scheme lacked public support and argued that the Council should listen to residents. He stated that the Motion did not oppose all intervention at the junction but specifically rejected the traffic light proposal, which he considered a waste of money and unsupported by the community.

Councillor D Hancock seconded the Motion. He stated that the traffic light option had been presented as a fait accompli, and residents of Nottingham Drive feared

it would trap them in congestion. He criticised the lack of alternative options during consultation.

Cllr N Barker stated that the consultation responses had been analysed and acknowledged that although 65% of respondents had not supported the original signalised option, they had expressed support for some form of intervention. He highlighted ongoing issues at Nottingham Drive, including difficulties for right-turning traffic and the need for a safe pedestrian crossing and noted that revised proposals had attempted to address resident concerns.

Cllr H Liggett warned that the addition of further traffic signal junctions could significantly increase journey times. She believed that developer funding could support a roundabout solution and expressed strong opposition to installing additional traffic lights along the A61.

Cllr C Cupit stated she was sympathetic to the Motion but had concerns regarding how it was worded. She raised concerns that the consultation was narrowly framed and had not offered residents the ability to express wider preferences. She noted the potential risk of worsening congestion on the A61. She highlighted that the Motion no longer reflected the updated design proposals and that responsibility ultimately lay with Derbyshire County Council as the Highways Authority. She indicated she would likely abstain and suggested that the Motion might be better withdrawn and redrafted.

Cllr A Dale agreed that circumstances had moved on, but not necessarily favourably. He stated that a roundabout remained the best overall solution and suggested developer funding could be explored. He urged the Council to ensure a full consultation on future options.

Cllr N Baker also noted that although proposals had progressed, and ward members should be involved in developing the updated scheme. He stated that a well-designed roundabout slightly further along the road could work, but current land constraints made this difficult.

Cllr K Gillott noted that the choice appeared to be between accepting £1m for a deliverable scheme or attempting to secure funding for an alternative solution that could cost much more. He argued that ruling out the current option entirely would fail the community.

Cllr J Barry acknowledged that many residents preferred a roundabout but emphasised that the required land for such a scheme was privately owned. Even if funding was available, the scheme might require a compulsory purchase order (CPO), which would fall to Derbyshire County Council. It was confirmed that a CPO would be difficult to justify where a viable alternative design existed.

Cllr Shipman reiterated that the consultation was misleading and that residents had firmly rejected any form of traffic-light-based scheme.

The Motion was put to the vote and lost.

5-26 There was no urgent business.