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07 July 2020

To: All Councillors

As a Member of the **Council**, please treat this as your summons to attend a virtual meeting on **Wednesday, 15 July 2020 at 6.00pm** via the Zoom application. (Joining details will be provided separately).

Purpose: Only for the completion of business withdrawn or adjourned from Council on 02 July 2020.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sandra Lamb', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Sandra Lamb
Director of Corporate Services

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

Please advise the Committee Team on 01629 761133 or e-mail: committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk of any apologies for absence.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation, as provided for in the Constitution, is suspended temporarily and is replaced with an alternative mechanism for the public to bring matters to the Council's attention.

Members of the public will be able to comment on any agenda item or matters in the wider public interest and will be invited to submit their questions or comments in writing, before 12 noon on the working day prior to the meeting by:

Web-form: [Make your submission here](#)

Email: committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Post: Democratic Services, Derbyshire Dales District Council, Town Hall, Matlock DE4 3NN

The Committee Team will assist any member of the public without access to electronic means by capturing their concerns over the telephone.

Phone: 01629 761133 (working days only 9am – 5pm)

Any such correspondence will be read out at the meeting.

The public will not be admitted to the meeting through virtual means. All meeting proceedings open to the public will be streamed live on our YouTube channel when all non -exempt items are being considered. Recordings of the meeting will also be available after the event on the District Council's website.

3. INTERESTS

Members are required to declare the existence and nature of any interests they may have in subsequent agenda items in accordance with the District Council's Code of Conduct. Those interests are matters that relate to money or that which can be valued in money, affecting the Member her/his partner, extended family and close friends. Interests that become apparent at a later stage in the proceedings may be declared at that time.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

02 July 2020

Page Nos.

5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY REVIEW (02/07/2020 – Item 12)

04 – 23

To consider approval of the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission on the size of the Council, for consideration as part of a full review of electoral boundaries within the District, which seeks approval for a recommended Council size of 34.

6. DECISION MAKING RECOVERY PLAN (02/07/2020 – Item 14)

24 – 24

To consider a report seeking approval for the resumption of decision making through the full committee system.

7. EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY DECISIONS MADE UNDER EXTENDED DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS (02/07/2020 – Item 15)

28 – 30

To receive a report informing Members of decisions, made under delegated arrangements that allowed temporary deviation from the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy and consider approval for an extension of delegated arrangements, for further periods as detailed in the report.

8. NEW VISION FOR DERBYSHIRE – NON STRUCTURAL REFORM (PHASE 2) (02/07/2020 – Item 16)

31 – 35

To note an update report on the development of a new vision for Derbyshire and the work to take forward non-structural reform. Also to consider approval for the Council's active participation in Phase 2 and the associated costs of supporting Price Waterhouse Coopers.

9. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE – ACTION PLAN

36 - 56

(02/07/2020 – Item 17)

To receive and consider approval of the draft Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.

10. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

To authorise that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to those documents, if any, required completing transactions undertaken by Committees or by way of delegated authority to others, since the last meeting of the Council

NOTE

For further information about this Agenda or on “Public Participation” call 01629 761300 or e-mail: committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

COUNCIL

15 JULY 2020 (02 JULY 2020 – Item 12)

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY REVIEW

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree a submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission on the size of the Council for consideration as part of a full review of electoral boundaries within the District.

RECOMMENDATION

That the draft submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission recommending a Council size of **34** is considered.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

STRATEGIC LINK

The issue of Council size is a key consideration when delivering on the Council's ambition and its Corporate Plan.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is a parliamentary body established by statute to conduct boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas in England. The Commission is independent of government and political parties, and is directly accountable to the Speaker's Committee of the House of Commons. An electoral review considers whether the boundaries of wards or divisions within a local authority need to be altered to take account of changes in electorate. Reviews of electoral boundaries may be undertaken on request by the local authority concerned, or in this case to correct an apparent inequality in the member: elector ratio.
- 1.2. When established in 1974, West Derbyshire District Council (as it was then) comprised 39 Councillors. A Review by the Commission in 1999 confirmed the Council size of 39 and resulted in the realignment and renaming of 20 of the 25 Ward boundaries.
- 1.3. This 2019 Review, was triggered by a number of Wards being + or – 10% from the average elector ratio, currently 1512, based on the February register of electors.
- 1.4. The Review seeks to adjust electoral ward boundaries to correct the current inequality and have asked us to forecast changes to elector statistics to 2026.

- 1.5. Stage 1 of the review concentrates solely on Council size and no regard has been taken in preparing this report as to where lines may ultimately be drawn on a map. Actual ward boundaries will be considered and consulted upon during Stage 2 of the Review.
- 1.6. The Commission has no perception about the right number of Councillors to represent the Council. There is no national template to apply and each case is considered on its own merit.
- 1.7. Representatives from the Commission visited the Council in 2019 and made presentations to Officers and Councillors on this Council and to an invited audience representing parish and town councils.
- 1.8. The Commission's guidance requires the Council to consider the optimum number of Councillors required to :
 - take decisions effectively,
 - manage the business and responsibilities of the Council successfully,
 - provide effective community leadership and representation.

A draft submission based around the template provided is attached at Appendix 1. It must be stressed at this point, that the recommended figure is an officer opinion. Council is actively encouraged the review the evidence and come to a different conclusion if it sees fit. The Commission will also accept submissions based on alternative numbers from individuals or political groups.

2. REVIEW METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 By adhering to the Commission's guidance and template, the following methodology was employed in producing the draft submission:
 - Questionnaire to all Councillors based on the Local Government Association census of 2018, on time spent and qualitative questions on the role of Council. A number of questions were duplicated in order to provide context to comparisons.
 - Development forecast to 2026 on all parts of the District (including the National Park area)
 - Elector forecast to 2026 by Ward and Electoral Division
 - Analysis of existing arrangements and mapping of change over time since the last review
 - Comparison with neighbouring authorities
 - Review of Commission's guidance on valid considerations
 - Thinking ahead to the Council's future plans and ambition

2.2 Electoral and Development Forecasts

The Commission request forecasts for electoral numbers to 2022 using housing data projections and electoral registration rates. The methodology for this element is attached as part of the submission in Appendix 1. The following table shows the elector forecast to 2026. The base electorate for 2020 is that published in the February 2020 edition of the Register of Electors. Wards forecast with a voter inequality of +/- 10% are highlighted in red.

2.3 Development Forecasts to 2026

The following table details the expected rates of residential development forecast to 2026 across the Derbyshire Dales, including within the Peak District National Park.

Please note the data provided covers the period 1/4/2018 to 31/03/2019.

Ward	Development rates to 2026 (No. dwellings)				
	Local Plan Allocation Sites ¹	Resolution to Grant Sites ²	Commitments ³	PDNPA Commitments ⁴	TOTAL ⁵
Ashbourne North	28	0	27	0	55
Ashbourne South	0	0	278	0	278
Bakewell	0	0	0	36	36
Bonsall	0	0	0	0	0
Bradwell	0	0	0	59	59
Brailsford	0	0	164	0	164
Calver	0	0	0	1	1
Carsington Water	0	0	12	0	12
Chatsworth	0	0	0	1	1
Clifton and Bradley	50	0	27	0	77
Darley Dale	96	0	125	0	221
Dovedale and Parwich	0	0	2	10	12
Doveridge and Sudbury	18	0	137	0	155
Hathersage and Eyam	0	0	0	7	7
Hartington and Taddington	0	0	0	10	10
Hulland	0	0	106	0	106
Lathkill and Bradford	0	0	0	2	2
Litton and Longstone	0	0	0	3	3
Masson	0	0	12	0	12
Matlock All Saints	239	0	117	0	356
Matlock St Giles	0	68	206	0	274
Norbury	0	0	70	0	70
Stanton	0	0	10	14	24
Tideswell	0	0	0	6	6
Winster and South Darley	0	182	3	1	186
Wirksworth	150	0	81	0	231
Total No Dwellings to 2026	581	250	1377	120	2358

Footnotes

- 1 Residential units anticipated to come forward on sites allocated for development within the Adopted Derbyshire Dales Local Plan
- 2 Residential units anticipated to come forward on sites with a 'resolution to grant planning permission'
- 3 Residential units anticipated to come forward on sites with an extant planning permission
- 4 Residential units anticipated to come forward on sites with planning permission in the Peak District National Park
- 5 Total anticipated amount of residential development by 2026

2.4 Forecast Electoral Variances

Name of ward	Number of Cllrs per ward	Electorate 2020	Variance 2010	Electorate 2026	Variance 2026
Ashbourne North	2	2961	-0.63%	3040	-3.44%
Ashbourne South	2	4193	40.71%	4870	54.69%
Bakewell	3	3652	-18.30%	3751	-20.57%
Bradwell	1	1505	1.01%	1522	-3.31%
Brailsford	1	1539	3.29%	1950	23.88%
Calver	1	1494	0.27%	1512	-3.95%
Carsington Water	1	1576	5.78%	1595	1.32%
Chatsworth	1	1389	-6.78%	1406	-10.68%
Clifton And Bradley	1	1484	-0.40%	1533	-2.61%
Darley Dale	3	4745	6.16%	5004	5.96%
Dovedale And Parwich	1	1372	-7.92%	1389	-11.76%
Doveridge And Sudbury	1	1634	9.67%	1948	23.75%
Hartington And Taddington	1	1390	-6.71%	1406	-10.68%
Hathersage And Eyam	2	3208	7.65%	3246	3.10%
Hulland	1	1511	1.41%	1732	10.03%
Lathkill And Bradford	1	1293	-13.22%	1308	-16.91%
Litton And Longstone	1	1334	-10.47%	1350	-14.24%
Masson	2	2442	-18.05%	2471	-21.51%
Matlock – St Giles	3	4464	-0.13%	4986	5.58%
Matlock All Saints	3	4417	-1.18%	4607	-2.44%
Norbury	1	1432	-3.89%	1519	-3.50%
Stanton	1	1464	-1.74%	1481	-5.92%
Tideswell	1	1399	-6.10%	1415	-10.11%
Winster And South Darley	1	1365	-8.39%	1382	-12.21%
Wirksworth	3	4845	8.39%	4969	5.22%
Total		58108		61392	

3 KEY FINDINGS

- Elector growth to 2026 is predicted to be slow. 9.5% from baseline in February 1997
- Elector spread throughout a large rural area makes exclusive single Member Wards unfeasible and would exacerbate the current voter inequality
- The Council's finances limit its ambition as it becomes more reliant on income which is highly susceptible to external influences and the market economy
- Areas of the District within the Peak District National Park continue a longstanding trend of limited development
- Derbyshire Dales District Councillors spend 50% less time in fulfilling their role compared to the national average. This is attributable in part to the District Council's role in actively transforming service delivery and customer contact and streamlined decision making over time
- The decision making structure has also contracted to allow elected Members to concentrate on important strategic matters.

- Since the last boundary review, the District Council has undergone significant and substantial changes in its organisational structure, range of service delivery and budget. This level of contraction does not justify growth in Council size and makes the status quo position difficult to defend.
- Residents have also changed how they access council services, with advances in ICT meaning the vast majority of the public no longer need to contact their councillor to find out about council services, meetings or decisions
- Comparisons with neighbouring and comparator authorities which have been the subject of a recent review by the Commission, has proved inconclusive as very few operate a Committee system.

4. CONCLUSION

Although the District Council has undergone significant change since the last boundary review, which could justify a reduction in size alone, the Council needs to retain a level of flexibility to support the future ambitions of the Council as well as its residents.

Furthermore, the District Council should be mindful of not creating a situation where Wards would cover expansive areas which could erode community identifies based purely on elector ratio figures.

A Council size of 34 is considered to be a proportionate response to the challenge of reviewing the Council size. A council of 34 would result in an elector/member ratio of 1806 in 2026, which represents an increase of the number of electors per Councillor of 21%. The reduction in Councillors is a modest decrease of 13%

5. TIMETABLE

- 5.1 The Timetable for the Review has been revised, taking account of the delay cause to the initial plans as shown in the table below.

Draft council size submission	3 July 2020
Final council size submission	1 August 2020
Receive electoral forecasts	10 August 2020
Council size Commission meeting	18 August 2020
Warding patterns consultation opens	25 August 2020
Warding patterns consultation closes	2 November 2020
Commission meeting to agree draft recommendations	19 January 2021
Draft recommendations consultation opens	2 February 2021
Draft recommendations consultation closes	12 April 2021
Commission meeting to agree final recommendations	15 June 2021
Final recommendations published	29 June 2021

5.2 Consultation plans have also been revised to reflect the Covid. 19 restrictions. The Commission is fully equipped for remote working and activities are designed to be particularly sensitive to:

- the capacity of local authorities to engage s whilst they were focusing on their critical task of delivering essential public services
- the need to ensure that it consults in ways that do not compromise appropriate input from residents and organisations.

5.3 During the Review the Commission intends to carry out effective consultation by

- working closer with councils to ensure it is reaching a wide range of stakeholders
- developing materials to help community groups gather views from their members and make effective submissions
- holding community and council briefings without the need for face-to-face meetings
- making its promotional and informational materials more suitable for on-line viewing, and making greater use of graphics and animations
- boosting its social media engagement, particularly Facebook
- engaging in a scanning house to ensure it can continue to receive and process postal submissions even in the event of full building closure

6. RISK ASSESMENT

6.1 Legal

The powers of the Commission are set out in the main body of the report.

6.2 Financial

The revenue budget for 2020/21 includes £181,069 for Members Allowances and £52,464 for Special Responsibility Allowances. A reduction in the number of members from 39 to 34, based on the current basic allowance of £4,504 p.a., could generate an annual saving of £22,520. The financial risk is assessed as low.

7. CONTACT DETAILS

Sandra Lamb, Director of Corporate Services
Tel. (01629) 761281 or
Email: sandra.lamb@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

2019 Elected Member Survey
Local Government Boundary Review Guidance

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – draft submission including methodology on elector and development forecasts

Derbyshire Dales District Council

Council Size Submission

Submission by Derbyshire Dales District Council

Contents

Local Authority Review	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Strategic Leadership	3
Accountability	4
Community Involvement	5
Other Issues	5
Changes in Council Finances	6
Comparison with Other Authorities	6
Member Survey	6
Sum	7
Appendix 1 – Methodology for Elector Forecasts	7

1. Local Authority Profile

- 1.1 The District of Derbyshire Dales covers an area of approximately 780 km² on the west of Derbyshire.
- 1.2 The total population is in the region of 72,000. Just over half of the District lies within the Peak District National Park and about one third of the National Park is within the Derbyshire Dales, which presents both opportunities and challenges. Clearly this area is a local tourist attraction with a recognised 'brand name', which helps to explain the number of visitors to the district, but the special purpose of the Park also conflicts to some degree with some of the Council's key issues, such as meeting the Council's objectively assessed housing need and the provision of affordable housing.
- 1.3 The District of Derbyshire Dales is wholly 'parished', the process having been completed by the West Derbyshire (Parishes) Order 1986. There are 111 parishes in the District. Eighty of those parishes are represented by 70 local councils (some are represented by joint parish councils). There are 497 seats on parish councils in the District.
- 1.4 According to the Derbyshire Observatory 2018 Area Summary Profile over a quarter of the resident population is over the age of 65, which is significantly higher than the average for Derbyshire and England. Conversely the District has a lower than average population of people under the age of 16. Approximately 20% of all households in the Derbyshire Dales area are considered to be deprived.
- 1.5 The following table summarises some key data about the district (ONS, 2018)

Population 71,977	71,977
Proportion under 18	17.2% (12,411)
Proportion aged over 65	25.5% (18,367)
Number of households	31,291
Satisfaction with the area as a place to live	94%
Satisfaction with the District Council's services	68%

- 1.6 Key challenges for Derbyshire Dales District Council include:
- 'Youth flight' from the District due to low local salary levels and high house prices
 - An increasingly ageing population
 - Delivery of key housing and employment sites.
- 1.7 In addition, and complementary to the 3 main themes of our [Corporate Plan](#), future challenges include:
- The need to review our approach and influence as a 'place shaper' in order to encourage a more environmentally sustainable future which delivers on our ambitious climate change targets in response to the global climate change emergency.

- The need to diversify our proven means of providing affordable housing in the future and expand into becoming an owner of social housing. A modest plan to build up to 50 properties is currently being considered as is the potential to deliver affordable homes for sale.
- The need to support economic growth through investing in key employment sites across the district, in order to increase productivity and provide higher wage job opportunities for our residents in both rural and urban locations.
- The need promote strategic investment in our market towns in order to facilitate a thriving day and night time economy which is capable of meeting increasing social, economic and environmental challenges.
- Developing more effective and sustainable relationships with our communities in order to help them develop tailored solutions for their community, and tackle the problems that are important to them within their communities.
- Utilising our resources as efficiently and effectively as possibly in order to respond to the challenges faced by our communities.

2. Strategic Leadership

2.1 Governance Model

Derbyshire Dales is a two tier authority area, which means that Derbyshire County Council provides some of the services received by the District's residents. At District level, Derbyshire Dales has 39 members and 25 Wards, with each Ward represented by one, two or three Members. No councillor represents more than 7 parishes.

2.2 Decision Making

Since the last Electoral Review in 1999, the District Council has continued to operate a Committee system with responsibilities set out in its Constitution https://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/images/Part_3_-_Responsibility_for_functions_20191.pdf

2.3 Delegated Decision Making

The Council has an extensive scheme of officer delegation, <https://www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/your-council/council-constitution> which aims to speed up decision making and free up time in Committee.

In 2000, and again in 2016, the Council undertook a major review to significantly enhance the scheme of officer delegation arrangements in planning. The revisions to the delegation scheme were instigated to limit committee time spent on considering planning applications to those of a major and contentious nature. The level of

delegation for the last financial year was the highest on record at close to 94% and this was accompanied by application turnaround figures of over 90% for all 3 categories of development - major, minor and other. Ward councillors are fully engaged in the processing of planning applications, being notified of receipt of applications, invited to comment on applications and advised of decisions made electronically. The current arrangements safeguard the engagement of members in the planning process whilst freeing up officer time to improve submitted schemes across the board.

The Council has also moved away from a geographical approach to decision making since the last review and now has a single planning committee for the whole of the District outside the National Park.

The extension of delegated arrangements shows a corresponding reduction in man hours in committee as illustrated below in paragraph 3.2.

2.4 Portfolios

As a Committee structure, there are no portfolio holders. Individual decision making by Councillors is limited to distribution of the Local Projects Fund – small grants to local communities on a Ward basis.

However, certain individuals such as the Leaders of political groups and Chairmen of committees hold positions which attract a Special Responsibility Allowance. 9 individuals hold positions of responsibility - 23% of the total membership. This compares to the position nationally, with findings from the LGA survey which indicated that in 2018 53.8% of Councillors held at least one position of responsibility.

3. Accountability

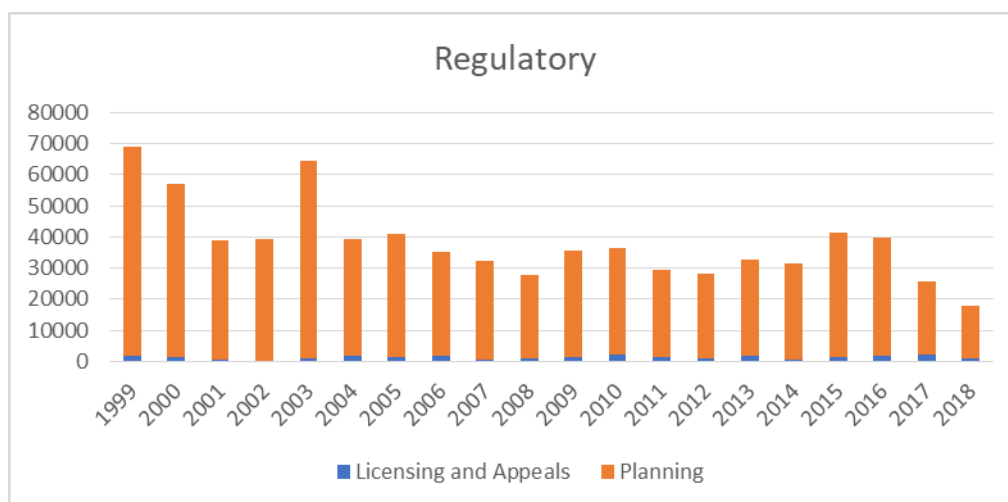
3.1 Internal Scrutiny

The District Council disbanded its Overview and Scrutiny Function in 2012. Policy development and the overview element has been developed by alternative means including task and finish groups and Member Workshops. For example a Member led task group is spearheading the District Council's response to the climate emergency. Full Member Workshops were also an invaluable tool in scoping the level of service to be included in the renewal of the waste and recycling contract. The Constitution also provides the means for all Councillors to challenge the political leadership by Questions on Notice and Notices of Motion.

3.2 Statutory Function

In terms of the Regulatory function, the Council has a Licensing Committee of 12 members and a Planning Committee of 13 members. When meeting in a quasi-judicial capacity to determine appeals, the Licensing Committee forms a sub-committee of 3 members from the whole.

The workload of the Licensing and Planning Committees is illustrated below.



Planning showed a marked decrease after 2000 when new delegation arrangements were implemented to reduce the number of applications considered by Committee. With the exception of 2003, the lower level of man hours was maintained. The increase in 2015/16 is attributable to an increase in large applications submitted by developers to ‘beat’ the implementation of the new Local Plan.

An external review of the service was undertaken in 2016 which resulted in still lower levels of committee time as enhanced consultation and delegation arrangements were put in place.

The preponderance of planning in the graph hides the variation in Licensing and Appeals.

3.3 Licensing

The increased activity in licensing in 2004, was attributable to the new alcohol licensing regime and again in 2016/17 to a spate of taxi licensing appeals resulting from a legacy issue. However the time commitment in this area remains variable but only contributes to a small proportion of the overall regulatory burden.

3.4 External Partnerships

The Council reviews its relationship with significant partnerships and outside bodies on an annual basis. The current list of affiliations is [\[link to annual meeting schedule\]](#)

The workload associated with an appointment varies, depending on the number of meetings; associated activities together with expected time commitment and any reporting back arrangements. The most onerous in terms of time demand are considered to be:

- Representatives to serve on the Peak District National Park Authority
- Representative on D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership.

4. Community Involvement

4.1 Support to Elected Members

The District Council has an extensive Member Development Programme, which is co-ordinated by the Member Development Working Group. The Group reports to a policy committee and develops proposals for -

- the annual training programme;
- recommends which topics are to be defined as mandatory training and at what frequency;
- evaluates the effectiveness of the previous year's training programme;
- devises the Induction Programme, and
- reviews the role profiles for District Councillor and for those in positions of responsibility.

The requirement to attend mandatory training has now been incorporated into the District Council's Code of Conduct and failure to attend mandatory training may be considered to be a breach of that Code.

4.2 Community Leadership

The extent to which elected Councillors interact with their communities is very much up to the individual Councillor. However, a number of councillors are also members of their local parish council or have been elected to the County Council. The role profile for a District Councillor requires that each member establishes a link with their local parish councils. This usually means attending meetings on a regular or irregular basis to update their communities on matters of mutual interest. Some of the larger parish (town) Councils meet on a frequent basis, whilst smaller parish councils meet on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis. Role profiles are attached as an Appendix to this submission.

When it comes to engaging with constituents, 65.6% of respondents to the recent Councillor survey, reported the use of email as their most preferred option, dropping to 0% using Twitter as the least favoured option. The least used facility was Facebook and Surgeries.

Councillors also attend community groups and outside body meetings which are established to deal with localised issues. Whilst this level of representation is acknowledged and facilitated by the Council it is not recognised as an 'Approved Duty' for the purposes of the Members Allowance Scheme.

Although the Council operates through a Committee system, it has delegated individual decision making to all Councillors to discharge its Local Projects Fund. The fund enables grant aid to support community led initiatives in the area they represent. Each year £900 is allocated to each Councillor to grant aid projects or initiatives, in their Ward, that will benefit the local communities and be valuable to the area. The Fund provides for a wide degree of flexibility and can be used to support one off projects, ongoing activities and the development of sustainable, longer term projects.

4.2 Casework

From the recent survey of councillors 85% of the respondents said that they considered representing local residents their top priority and spent 5.9% of their time overall on achieving that. 45% also said that representing communities is important. 4.3% of time spent overall was in attending parish council meetings.

5. Other Issues

5.1 Organisation structure and workforce.

5.2 At the time of the last review the Council's workforce in 1999 was 497 representing the total number of jobs. Due to a contraction in service delivery documented elsewhere and the need to make economies, the workforce has shrunk to 223 jobs in 2020 (174fte).

5.3 Service departments increase capacity due to the seasonal nature of some jobs by the recruitment of temporary, agency staff not accounted for in the figure above.

6. Changes in Council Finances

The table below shows changes in key financial data from 1999/2000 to 2019/20:

Data	1999/2000	2019/20
General Fund gross revenue spending	£18.1m	£17.6m
Funded by:		
Sales, fees and charges	38%	41%
Council tax	19%	34%
Government grants	43%	8%
Retained business rates	(incl in gov't grants)	17%
Capital spending	£3.2m	£2.8m
Housing Revenue Account gross spending	£7.6m	Not applicable
General Fund balances	£1.3m	£2m
Strategic Reserves	£3.6m	£12m
Band D Council Tax	£102.94	£209.27

The table above shows that over the twenty year period there has been a significant change in the way that the Council is funded, with less reliance on government grants and more funding from council tax (in particular), retained rates and sales, fees and charges. The years of austerity resulted in ongoing savings of £2.7m from 2015/16 to 2019/20, evidenced in part in the reduced workforce mentioned in section 5.

In March 2020 the Council set a corporate savings target to identify ongoing annual savings (or additional income) of £250,000 a year to balance the revenue account in the medium term. That will almost certainly change as a result of:

- government reviews of funding and business rates;

- any ongoing impact arising from the additional expenditure and lost income due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Whilst levels of reserves and balances were healthy prior to the coronavirus pandemic, these could be significantly depleted if the extra costs and income shortfalls arising from the coronavirus lockdown are not fully offset by government grants.

In view of the above, an increase in the cost of democracy would not be appropriate or sustainable at this time.

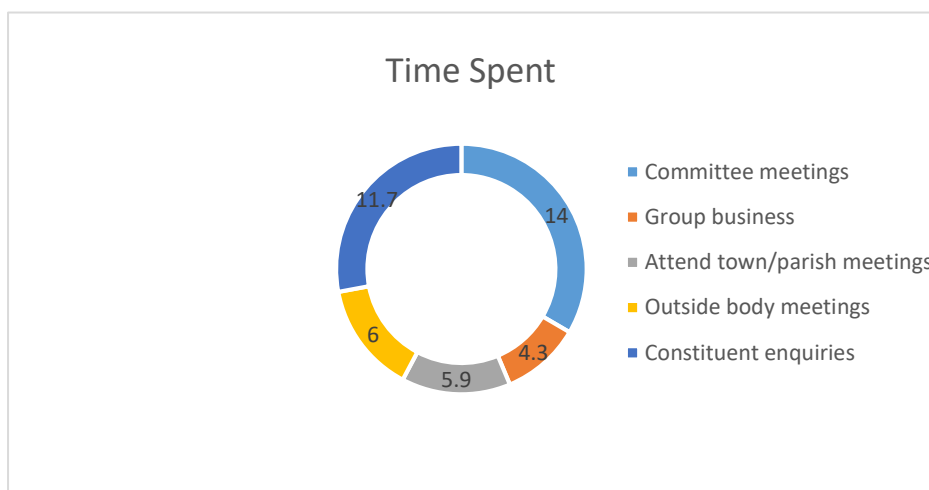
7. Comparison with other authorities

7.1 In terms of comparisons with other authorities, Derbyshire Dales frequently uses benchmarking data provided by similar authorities in the Audit Commission Family Group. The following table shows how Derbyshire Dales compares to members of the Group that have recently undergone a similar review of its electoral boundaries. Unfortunately, only one comparator operates a Committee system similar to Derbyshire Dales.

Authority	Review date	Council size		Electorate		% growth	Elector Ratio		Governance Model
		Start	End	Start	End		Start	End	
Babergh	2018	43	32	71656	74575	9.6	2240	2330	Cabinet
Cotswold	2017	44	34	68723	74211	9.3	2021	2183	Cabinet
Forest of Dean	2017	48	38	66941	73509	9.1	1762	1934	Cabinet
Derbyshire Dales	2020	39	33	57618			1477		Committee
Hambleton	2012	44	28	70884	75647	9.4	2532	2802	Cabinet
Mid Devon	2019	42	42	63272	69724	9.1	1506	1660	Cabinet
Mid Suffolk	2018	34	34	79119	82784	9.5	2327	2435	Cabinet.
Ribble Valley	2016	40	40	45441	48027	9.5	1136	1221	Committee x 6 plus regulation and PC Liaison
Richmondshire	2017	24	24	35908	38339	9.4	1496	1587	Cabinet

8. Member Survey

- 8.1 A survey was conducted of all Councillors, in October 2019, based on the national LGA census of 2018. Top priorities and time spent has been referenced elsewhere in the submission.
- 8.2 In terms of time spent overall, Derbyshire Dales Councillors spend on average 41.9 hours per month being a Councillor, compared to 22 hours per week in the LGA national survey.
- 8.3 Derbyshire Dales Councillors time spent is broken down as follows (based on mid-point responses).



8.5 Anticipated Change

23 responses were recorded as to whether change was anticipated in terms of the amount of time spent on Council business.

13 responded yes. Reasons given included:

- New initiatives
- Time spent dealing with constituents communicating and dealing with new initiatives, e.g. waste, significant building plans
- General expectation that more work will come with greater experience
- General expectation that new political balance will require groups to work harder
- Increased workload with new role

6 responded that they didn't not expect the work to increase but without reasons and 3 responded that the workload would probably be the same as now.

9. Summary

9.1 The Council is seeking a reduction in the number of Councillors and submits that the Council size be reduced from 39 to 34, given the reduction in service responsibilities over recent years and specifically since the last Electoral Review in 1999, namely

- the transfer of the Council's housing stock;
- the outsourcing of the Council's leisure service;
- the outsourcing of the Building Control service
- the outsourcing of the Revenues and Benefits service
- continued outsourcing of the waste and recycling service;
- reduction in the Council's budget and human resources
- pressures on sustaining the Council's financial position given the reduction in external funding

- streamlining formal decision making and working practices
- enhancing the ability for customers to transact business without the need to contact the Council in person
- slow growth in population in comparison to authorities of a similar size

The Council is proposing a reduction in the number of Councillors by 13%.

Utilising the evidence submitted, the Council considers that such a reduction would be appropriate whilst maintaining a robust approach to effectively discharging its responsibilities.

Growth in numbers or the status quo option have been discounted on the basis of proportionality and the certainty of available finance to fund statutory responsibilities and future ambition. The Council concludes that a reduction in numbers by 5 would not adversely affect service delivery or affect the needs of constituents and elected Members in terms of community engagement. The Council further contends that the reduction is fit for a District Council with reduced service delivery responsibilities in the Peak District National Park.

July 2020

APPENDIX 1

Derbyshire Dales District Council Electoral Review May 2020 Rationale for the Projection of Electors to 2026

This note details the process of production of electorate projections, at polling district, parish and district ward level as part of the Electoral Review process.

The approach relies on forecasting future electorate on the basis of observed ratios of electorate and dwelling numbers at the most recent date for which actual data is available (January 2020). The ratios have been applied to forecast dwellings completions up to 2026 to produce electorate forecasts for 2026.

The following data inputs were used:

- Dwelling completion forecasts for sites of 10 or more dwellings to 2024/25
- Dwelling counts, by polling district from electoral rolls
- ONS mid-2018 population estimates
 - Sub-national projections of adult (18+) population for districts 2016 – 2026 (ONS 2016-based sub national population projections)

A number of other data items were also considered including electorate data and changes prior to 2020 and vacancy rates as recommended in the LGBCE Guidance but it was concluded that in the case of Derbyshire Dales the data did not improve the accuracy of the analysis and electorate projections.

The following steps were taken in forecasting future electorate:

- The number of dwellings for each polling district were taken from the electoral rolls for 2020.
- The future anticipated dwelling completions at polling district level were calculated by taking site by site completions forecasts and allocating these to polling districts based on the site centroid. Only sites of ten or more dwellings were included as recommended in the LGBCE Guidance.
- These forecasts were then cumulatively added to the 2020 dwelling totals for each polling district.
- The ratio of dwelling to electorate at 2020 was then applied to the dwelling forecast to produce a basic electorate forecast to 2026.
- These forecasts were then summed to district level for each forecast year and compared with the ONS projected 18+ population for the corresponding year.
- The change in the ratio between the electorate forecast and the ONS projection for each year was then applied to each polling district forecast, to produce a forecast controlled to the change in the ONS projected population.
- The polling district forecasts were then summed to parishes and wards.

Electoral Boundary Review

Development Data

Methodology Statement June 2020

Context

The Derbyshire Dales Local Plan adopted in December 2017 identified a need for 5,680 new homes for the whole of the Derbyshire Dales for the period 2013-2033. Between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2019 1,422 new homes have been completed across the Derbyshire Dales, including within the Peak District National Park. A number of new homes have been built mainly in and around the market towns of Ashbourne and Matlock and the larger settlements of Brailsford and Doveridge. Although the rate of new home building in Derbyshire Dales is at the highest for over 30 years there are a number of large complex brownfield sites situated in Matlock, Ashbourne and Wirksworth which have been allocated in the Derbyshire Dales Local Plan to accommodate over 2,500 new homes. These sites need a considerable amount of remediation and are therefore likely to come forward towards the end of the Plan period.

Identifying future housing development to 2026

In order to forecast the future electorate of the Derbyshire Dales the Boundary Commission requires details of the prospective scale, pattern, location and timing of new residential development in the area and the likely impact on the number of electors, forecast over the next six years to 2026. The initial stage of the review involved identifying the potential number of new electors in each polling district due to new housing development.

The District Council is required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement. The District Council has undertaken an assessment of its five year housing land supply and identified sites which are considered to be deliverable in principle, namely those sites which have planning permission, or a resolution to grant planning permission; and are allocated for development within the Derbyshire Dales Local Plan. This data has been utilised, along with details of sites with extant planning permissions within the Peak District National Park area of the Derbyshire Dales to forecast the number of new dwellings to be completed across the Local Authority area. It is forecast that 1,747 dwellings will be completed on sites with planning permission (including sites with a resolution to grant planning permission) by 2026.

As set out within the NPPF, local planning authorities are also required to identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth beyond the next five years for years 6-10 and where possible for years 11-15 to produce a housing trajectory illustrating future likely development. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) advises that once the sites have been assessed, the development potential of all sites can be collected to produce an indicative trajectory. This sets out how much housing development can be provided and at what point in the future.

This information has been used to forecast the anticipated number and phasing of new dwellings that may be completed on sites allocated for residential development within policy HC2 of the Adopted Derbyshire Dales Local Plan by 2026. It is forecast that 581 new dwellings will be completed on sites allocated within the Derbyshire Dales Local Plan by 2026.

The District Council has used a set development rate to calculate how many units are likely to be delivered each year, this is based on historic build out rates and information supplied by the stakeholders responsible for the delivery of sites. In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF (para 74(a)) the development data and forecasts have been collated with the cooperation of the landowners and developers responsible for the delivery of sites identified therein. The Council has as strong degree of confidence that the sites identified in the housing land supply position will be delivered.

A total of 2,328 dwellings are forecast to be developed by 2026 across the Derbyshire Dales.

As all of the housing development data has site address details this has allowed each site to be allocated to a specific polling district. This information has been presented on digital GIS maps to show the scale and location of potential future housing within the corresponding polling districts and ward boundaries of the Derbyshire Dales.

COUNCIL

15 JULY 2020 (02 JULY 2020 – Item 14)

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

DECISION MAKING RECOVERY PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree the resumption of decision making through the full committee system.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That decision making as discharged by Council to its policy Committees resumes in accordance with the agreed calendar of meetings following the Annual Meeting on 22 July 2020.
2. That meetings of the Planning Committee are called when required by the Chairman of that Committee prior to the Annual Meeting and thereafter in accordance with the programme of meetings.
3. That to safeguard all Committee members and employees alike, group site visits are suspended until such time as the law permits such events and that photographic or video footage is presented where the relevance of on-site characteristics are required to enable robust decision making.
4. That the interim scheme of Public Participation, agreed by Council on 12 May, continues until such time as the law permits the Council to invite submissions in person.
5. That the extended scheme of delegation to officers on Licensing matters expires on 22 July and all matters requiring a decision are put before the Licensing Committee, or sub-committee as appropriate.
6. That all meetings of the Council and its Committees continue to operate on a virtual platform until such time as the law permits meetings in person or a combination of in person and virtual.
7. That the Emergency Committee reverts to a non standing committee from 22 July, 2020 and is only called to stand when appropriate in accordance with the agreed terms of reference.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

STRATEGIC LINK

An effective decision making structure, which is based on a democracy, underpins the Council's ability to fulfil its Corporate Plan.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 12 May, the Council agreed to suspend normal business through the Committee system and established the Emergency Committee to deal with

urgent decision making during the Covid, 19 pandemic. The Committee has met on 3 occasions to date to deal with significant issues in adapting policy and procedures as necessary during these challenging times.

- 1.2 Public Participation as prescribed in the Constitution was also suspended and an interim scheme approved in its place to provide a means of engaging with the public by remote means, without disadvantaging those without access to technology.
- 1.3 Meetings of the Planning Committee were similarly suspended but with authority delegated to Officers and the Chairman of the Committee to call a meeting when required to deal with “significant planning applications which attract significant public opposition, and where public participation is desirable”. A meeting has not been required to date but arrangements need to be agreed.
- 1.4 This report deals with a recovery plan to bring about the resumption of business within safe and lawful parameters.

2 CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1 Resumption of ‘normal’ business’ needs to comply recent legislation. The Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 enable a local authority to convene meetings virtually using appropriate technology, provided that the technology permits the participants and the public at large to hear, and preferably see the proceedings. Meetings of the Council and the Emergency Committee have been successfully held using that technology and are permitted to do so until 7 May 2021 (subject to any change or extension of that power).
- 2.2 The lawful principles guiding meetings in person is covered by the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 (“the Regulations”) as amended (most recently) by the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020. These Regulations prescribe that during the emergency period, unless certain conditions apply, no person may participate in a gathering which takes place in a public or private place indoors, consisting of two or more persons. An indoor gathering is defined as being in any place for any purpose. And, following the receipt of legal advice, meetings of a local authority do not warrant any exemption to the provisions. There is no exception of the 2 metre rule, whereby the Government has advised people to keep 2 metres apart to reduce the chances of infection. The Regulations refer to no such rule.
- 2.3 The concept of a hybrid meeting where a number of Councillors might convene in the Council Chamber whilst others participated at home is therefore not lawful. By the same token members of the public are not allowed to assemble indoors to take part in a meeting, except with members of their own household at home.
- 2.4 The final pieces in the jigsaw to consider relates to an individual’s choice given that some Councillors may wish to protect themselves from unnecessary exposure to others and the number of people that may assemble outdoors whilst social distancing. That number is 6. This is particularly relevant to site visits that may be required in order to fully assess a planning application.

3 WAY FORWARD

3.1 With all those constraining factors, consideration has been given as to how to reintroduce a sense of normality to decision making through the full Committee structure.

3.2 Meeting Format

The 2020 Regulations referred to in the opening paragraphs which restrict the number of people allowed to meet internally last until September 2020. All meetings will therefore be run on Zoom until such time as the legislation permits otherwise.

3.3 Council Meetings

Two meetings of Council have been held since the restrictions were imposed and are recommended to resume the 6 weekly pattern of business given that Council needs to address decision making in a timely manner and specific items cannot be delegated. The 6 weekly cycle is recommended to commence after the Annual Meeting on 22 July 2020

3.4 Emergency Committee

The Emergency Committee has met on 3 occasions since its inception to deal with significant matters that required an urgent response to review current policy/procedure and to approve additional finance to deal with the emergency situation. It has not been required to deal with routine business of the Council or the policy committees and it is envisaged that the emergency workload will reduce significantly in the coming weeks and is recommended to revert to a non standing Committee at the Annual Meeting.

3.5 Policy Committees

The Corporate Timeline of decision making has been reviewed and it is considered that the resumption of normal business can be accommodated within a regular 8 weekly cycle from the Annual Meeting.

3.6 Planning Committees

There may be a need to convene a meeting of the Planning Committee before the date of the Annual Meeting to determine a small number of applications, which have attracted significant opposition. The format of the Committee is currently being considered in terms of replicating for the public's benefits, key information which will aid their understanding of the matter under discussion and as a guide for members of the Committee. It is therefore recommended that the need for meetings prior to the Annual Meeting are left to the Chairman's discretion to call (on officer advice) and then revert to a regular meeting pattern following the Programme of Meetings set at the Annual Meeting.

3.7 Licensing

Interim delegation arrangements were approved at the 12 May meeting to avoid the need to hold hearings for taxi and private hire vehicle matters. It is considered that

by using video technology those matters can now be brought back for Councillors to determine under the remit of the Licensing Committee.

3.8 Public Participation

The interim Public Participation scheme is recommended to continue until such time as members of the public have the ability to observe meetings in person. This is considered to be the fairest means of treating everyone equitably and not disadvantaging anyone without the technology to participate remotely. It would also shorten the meeting duration whilst proceedings are being streamed live.

3.9 The interim scheme offers a distinct advantage in that the public are now requested to formulate their question in advance and receive an answer in the majority of occasions. Compared to the existing scheme which relies on a certain amount of spontaneity where the public can ask whatever they like without notice of line of questioning. The interim scheme also allows Committee members to consider the issues in advance of the meeting, rather than attempt to take on board issues on the night.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Legal

The content and recommendations of this report reflect the current legislation regarding Virtual meetings. The legal advice is therefore low.

4.2 Financial

The additional costs of videoconferencing software can be met by savings in travel expenses. The financial risk is therefore assessed as low.

5 CONTACT DETAILS

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COUNCIL

15 JULY 2020 (02 JULY 2020 – Item 15)

Report of the Director of Regulatory Services

EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY DECISIONS MADE UNDER EXTENDED DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report informs the Council of 2 decisions made under delegated arrangements during the initial stages of lockdown that allowed temporary deviations from the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy. The report goes on to request that both deviations be extended for a further period.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the decision to suspend routine 6 month testing for taxis be extended by a further 4 months, until 31 October 2020;
2. That the decision to waive the requirement to replace a taxi vehicle when it reaches 10 years of age be extended by a further 2 months, until 31 August 2020;
3. That the decision to offer a rent free period to Hall Leys Park tenants be extended by a further 1 month, until 22 July 2020;
4. That the decision to offer a rent free period to ABC kiosk tenants be extended by a further 1 month, until 22 July 2020;
5. That the ABC café be offered a rent reduction equivalent to a 4 month rent free period, in line with other Council tenants;
6. That the operator of the boating rights on the River Derwent be offered a rent reduction equivalent to a 4 month rent free period, in line with other Council tenants.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

STRATEGIC LINK

'Prosperity' is highlighted in the Corporate Plan 2020-24 as a District Council priority due to low local wages and high local house prices. With regard to the recommendations in this report, the District Council specifically aims to: *Support businesses to encourage productivity, growth, and higher wage jobs in rural and urban locations.* The recommendations in this report would support local businesses during the Coronavirus pandemic.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 19 March, the Council agreed to extend delegated authority to make urgent decisions, on a temporary basis, to ensure business continuity during the pandemic emergency situation. It was agreed that members of the Corporate Leadership Team would be delegated authority to deal with urgent policy matters in

consultation with the relevant Policy Committee Chairman, Vice Chairman and Ward Members (where the matter was Ward specific). These arrangements were subsequently replaced with the Emergency Committee from 12 May 2020.

- 1.2 Two decisions were made in relation to taxi licensing issues under the initial arrangements: to exempt taxi vehicles to be tested for an initial period of 3 months during the pandemic, and to exempt taxi operators from the requirement to replace their vehicles once they pass 10 years old for an initial period of 3 months during the pandemic. These exemptions were necessary as the Council was unable to safely operate its testing depot at that time and car showrooms were closed as non-essential businesses during the pandemic.
- 1.3 Decisions were also made in relation to some businesses that were tenants of the Council. Some of these businesses did not have their own rateable values and so were unable to access the initial Government support grants. The businesses that were identified as being affected at that time were the café and the boat and train operator in Hall Leys Park, Matlock, and the tenants of the kiosks at the Agricultural Business Centre (ABC), Bakewell. These businesses were offered a rent reduction equivalent to a rent free period of 3 months, which expires on 22 June 2020.

2 REPORT

- 2.1 These exemptions have now been reviewed. In respect of taxi testing, the depot is being reopened, but at the moment does not have the capacity to resume full 6 month testing. It is recommended that the current capacity should be used to concentrate on the 12 month tests that are now due, with 6 month testing being suspended for a further 4 months, until the end of October 2020. This will enable the depot to catch up with its routine work and ensure that the most important testing, undertaken as part of the licence renewal process, is undertaken.
- 2.2 In relation to the replacement of vehicles, car showrooms are now allowed to be open. However, it is considered to be appropriate to allow drivers a reasonable time to renew their vehicles as the country settles into a 'new normal'. Therefore it is recommended that this exemption is extended by a further 3 months, until the end of September. This will give operators sufficient flexibility as they are returning to full working, whilst ensuring that the quality of the District's taxi fleet is not diminished in the medium term.
- 2.3 In relation to the businesses that have been offered a rent reduction, it is evident that the difficult trading circumstances that gave rise to the offer have not gone away. Although some of the businesses have been able to commence trading in a limited way, they have not been able to return to full capacity. Some of these businesses may be able to access the discretionary grants now being offered by the District Council, but it is unlikely that these will cover the full extent of the losses they have suffered. Therefore it is considered appropriate to offer a further rent reduction equivalent to an additional 1 month rent free period to these businesses.
- 2.4 In addition to those businesses that were initially identified as requiring rent reductions, two further businesses have subsequently been found to have been adversely affected by lockdown requirements. These are the café at the ABC and the boat operator on the River Derwent at Matlock Bath. Whilst the café does have its own rateable value and is therefore eligible to apply for Government grants, it is

evident that the inability to trade as a café and the absence of visitors from the area during lockdown, has made its position very difficult. Equally, the boat operator has missed a number of important trading opportunities during lockdown. Therefore it is considered appropriate to offer both of these businesses a rent reduction equivalent to a 4 month rent free period, in line with the other Council tenants outlined above.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 Legal

The report updates the Council on decisions delegated to Officers under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. The legal risk is therefore low.

3.2 Financial

Extending the suspension of routine 6 month testing for taxis by a further 4 months, until 31 October 2020, will result in lost income for the Council of around £2,712 on top of the £2,034 for April to June, or an average of around £678 per month.

The extension until 31 August 2020 of the decision to waive the requirement to replace a taxi vehicle when it reaches 10 years of age does not have any impact on the Council's financial position, though it will benefit taxi owners' finances.

The offer of rent free periods to assist businesses with recovery will result in additional lost income for the Council of around £7,144.

There is no provision in the 2020/21 revenue budget for the estimated lost income. However, the Council has received a government grant of £744,150 to assist the Council in meeting the additional costs and lost income arising from the coronavirus pandemic. The lost income arising from this recommendation could be financed by using part of the government grant or, if the grant is insufficient to meet all additional expenses and lost income, it would be financed from the General Reserve. The financial risk to the Council is assessed as low.

4 CONTACT DETAILS

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5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Urgent Decision Records – Taxi Vehicles Requiring Routine 6 Month Tests, Taxi Vehicles Requiring Replacement at 10 Years Old, Rent Free Periods

COUNCIL

15 JULY 2020 (02 JULY 2020 – Item 16)

Report of the Chief Executive

NEW VISION FOR DERBYSHIRE – NON STRUCTURAL REFORM (PHASE 2)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide a further update on work taking place with all Derbyshire Councils on non-structural reform and the development of a new vision for Derbyshire.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the progress on the development of a new vision for Derbyshire and work to take forward non-structural reform be noted.
2. That the Council's active participation in Phase 2 and the associated costs of supporting PWC proposals be approved.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

STRATEGIC LINK

The non-structural reform initiative will enable the Council to explore more collaborative forms of working across traditional boundaries in an effort to improve the outcomes for Derbyshire Dales' residents and businesses.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the meeting of Council on 16th January 2020, Members were appraised of the work commissioned by all Derbyshire Councils, to work in partnership with Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) to undertake a programme of work to explore the appetite for future collaborative working in Derbyshire. It was agreed that the new approach should look beyond traditional partnerships towards a new collective and ambitious vision and model of collaboration, integration and shared leadership focused on achieving the greatest public value for local people and communities.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Leaders' Advisory Group on 11th February, the Council's participation in Phase 2 of the project and the associated costs (circa £17,000) were agreed, in principle, subject to a retrospective report being presented to a future meeting of Council. The Covid-19 pandemic has prevented this matter being considered by Council to date, however, work has continued on the project and a further update is summarised in the remainder of this report.

2. PHASE 1 PROJECT SUMMARY

2.1 The key aims of the Phase 1 study were to:

- Identify and explore the existing level of ambition and appetite of stakeholders to progress non-structural reform in Derbyshire.
- Establish the purpose and potential value of progressing the approach in Derbyshire and the conditions which would need to be in place to support future collaboration.
- Identify and develop short, medium- and long-term options for collaboration.
- Scope and establish the parameters for Phase 2.

2.2 All Derbyshire Councils agreed to participate in, and contribute financially to, the study. Derbyshire Chief Executives, and a sub-group comprising a small number of Derbyshire Councils (including Derbyshire Dales), have led the work throughout this process to guide the work and future phases.

2.3 The study commenced in August 2019 through a series of semi-structured interviews with Leaders and Chief Executives, led by a team from PwC. Key interview topics for discussion, included:-

- Derby / Derbyshire as a place
- Existing level of alignment, successes and challenges
- Ambitions for future collaboration
- Potential outcomes and themes for collaboration
- Ways of working, culture and behaviours, enablers and barriers

2.4 Two exploratory workshops, held on 6th September 2019 and 4th October 2019, subsequently took place. The workshops started to explore the vision of place for Derbyshire with the first workshop exploring the “why” (why should Councils work together). The second workshop focused on the “what” (what should Councils work together on) with a small number of themes starting to emerge.

2.5 The third and final workshop took place on 25th October 2019 and sought to confirm priority themes and identify both barriers and enablers moving forward. The final workshop also explored how the Councils could collectively maintain the momentum, energy and enthusiasm for joint working that has been built through the process and next steps.

2.6 All workshops, and the process of developing proposals, have been well received and have provided a space for an honest conversation about the opportunities and challenges for future collaboration. PwC have now set out, for consideration by the Councils, proposals for future action together with a draft timeline. A number of principles for collaboration to guide future working have also been identified as follows:

- **Improve outcomes** - collaboration must enable us to improve outcomes for people and place.
- **Speak with one voice** - collaboration must support us to speak to our residents, business, regional and national stakeholders with one voice.
- **Better coordination** - collaboration must enable better coordination and use of resources, allowing us to make strategic choices according to the need of our place.
- **Provide a visible alternative to unitarisation** - collaboration needs to represent a viable alternative to unitarisation, with greater flexibility to deal with strategic challenges of the future whilst maintaining appropriate local control.
- **Deliver to be sustainable** - collaboration should be delivered within the means, both resource and financial, of all Councils, to be sustainable.

2.7 During workshop activities a number of areas for future collaboration emerged. These, whilst not exclusive, provide a potential focus for future working and include:

- Climate Change
- Development of a strategic narrative
- Tourism
- Skills and employment
- Thriving communities/social mobility
- Economic prosperity

2.8 The ambition to work collectively together moving forward has revealed a number of success factors which Councils acknowledged were critical. These indicate a step change in approach and ways of working to drive a truly different model of local government in Derbyshire and include:-

- Working at pace, building on the momentum achieved through the accelerated phase.
- Working as a collective in a different physical and mental space from business as usual.
- Continuing to strengthen and role model collaborative, collective leadership behaviours.

2.9 The work undertaken as part of the study marks a statement to develop a fundamentally new way of working together to deliver differently for the people of Derbyshire. Following discussions at Derbyshire Chief Executives meetings and the D2 Committee for Economic Prosperity in November 2020, PWC were asked to develop and submit proposals for Phase 2 which are set out below.

Phase 2 Proposal

2.10 Phase 2 non-structural reform proposals aim to progress a new model of local government collaboration for Derbyshire. Detailed proposals build on the work carried out to date, with a view to:

- maintaining the momentum successfully built up during Phase 1 and extending engagement to a broader range of members, employees and partner organisations;
- developing a case for change and a proposition to Government; and
- designing and mobilising a dedicated team and delivery programme in order to accelerate implementation.

2.11 Phase 2 will enable Councils to:-

- foster even closer working relationship between Councils in Derbyshire through a clear understanding of how a new model of local collaboration will work and deliver benefits;
- persuade central government to back the new model; and
- establish the operations of the new model and begin to deliver tangible results through enhanced collaboration across specific areas/themes, with climate change being the potential first theme to take forward.

Proposed Approach

2.12 To deliver identified outcomes, PWC have proposed the adoption of two workstreams, with a number of identified deliverables as follows:-

Workstream	Activity
1. Development of case for change and proposition to government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm scope and structure of case for change with Steering Group • Collect and analyse baseline data • Interviews and engagement with Leaders and Chief Executives • Engagement events • Develop a functional model for collaborative working in Derbyshire • Develop the strategic narrative that will underpin collaborative working in Derbyshire • Assess potential financial and non-financial benefits • Write up the case for change • Produce a formal proposition for government • Support Council in their discussions with Government
2. Delivery programme mobilisation and acceleration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilise and provide both 1:1 and group coaching for the cross-Council delivery team • Support the design of the delivery programme for the new model of collaboration • Provide embedded support for a period of three months, including running workshops to begin delivery of tangible results through the programme

2.13 An indicative project plan alongside detailed activities and deliverables for each workstream has also been developed and seeks to both focus and direct the work of both PWC and participating Councils during the implementation period, which is anticipated to last six months.

2.14 Whilst the proposed areas for future collaboration outlined at paragraph 2.7 remain valid, the steering group working with PWC has determined that a more relevant, and cogent demonstration of extensive collaboration, can be better articulated by the response to the current Covid-19 pandemic. It is proposed that this work is used as part of the case for change to be presented to Government.

2.15 An updating report on the outcome of Phase 2 will be reported to a future meeting of Council.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 Legal

The report seeks retrospective authority to participate in discussion to investigate and develop proposals for collaborative working within the Derbyshire Area for the benefit of Residents. As this project is in a formative stage the legal risk is low.

3.2 Financial

The cost of supporting PWC proposals for the District Council is estimated to be circa. £17,000. Subject to retrospective approval on the Council's active participation in Phase 2, the sum of £17,000 will be financed from the General Reserve.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

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6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A New Vision for Derbyshire – Non Structural Reform Report, PWC (November 2019)

COUNCIL

15 JULY 2020 (02 JULY 2020 – Item 17)

Report of the Chief Executive

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Draft Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan for consideration and approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan be approved.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

STRATEGIC LINK

The Corporate Plan sets out the District Council's priorities and areas for improvement and identifies targets to be achieved. Service Plans, policies and strategies supplement the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Peer Challenge has informed the formulation of the Council's Corporate Plan (2020-2024).

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The final feedback report following the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken 22nd – 24th October was received and circulated to all Members on 21st January 2020. A copy of the feedback report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Leaders Advisory Group held on 11th February 2020, Leaders' were informed that, in response to the feedback report, the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) would commence work on the drafting of an Action Plan which would outline the proposed actions to be taken in response to the CPC recommendations, together with a timescale for implementation.
- 1.3 A draft Action Plan was presented to, and considered by, the meeting of the Leaders Advisory Group held on 18th May 2020. In light of comments received, this has been further revised and is attached at Appendix 2.

2. ACTION PLAN

- 2.1 As part of their final presentation, the LGA team reported that the district council has a good understanding and appreciation of its local context and is focussing on continually improving local community relationships. The Council is also regarded as an effective leader of the district by partners who attest to the authority being a good partner to work with. Underpinning all of our activities is a consistent record of good financial management. The Council therefore has a very strong foundation despite the ongoing long term financial uncertainty that exists.

2.2 However, the key recommendations outlined to the Council as part of the LGA Peer Challenge presentation also offer a series of constructive challenges on the Council's need to:-

- Develop a strong narrative and vision for the area that is owned and understood by members, officers and key stakeholders;
- Ensure the new Corporate Plan is forward looking and takes account of the potential for a fresh approach which is collectively owned and resourced;
- Ensure that our commercialisation approach is sufficiently clear, ambitious and realistic;
- Consider its own skills base and investment capability to promote jobs and business growth;
- Engage with strategic and local organisations to build trust and community capacity to advocate for and deliver on important initiatives.

2.3 The Action Plan outlined at Appendix 2, seeks to respond positively to the challenges identified and identifies a series of specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound (SMART) actions over the coming months to deliver sustained improvement.

2.4 The Action Plan was agreed by the Leaders Advisory Group and is now presented to Council for formal approval.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 Legal

There is no legal obligation for the Council to undertake a Peer Review, however, a Peer Review is a useful tool to ensure that the Council is complying with all its legal duties in the most efficient manner.

3.2 Financial

There are no direct costs of undertaking a Peer Review, other than staff time that has been met from existing budgets. Some of the items in the Action Plan have financial implications but, where these cannot be contained within existing budgets, further reports will be presented to Members for approval of additional spending. The financial risk is assessed as low.

The review of financial planning and viability, which formed part of the peer challenge, has provided a useful assessment of the Council's arrangements for financial management and financial sustainability.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

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6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Position Statement (September 2019)
Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report (January 2020)

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report
Appendix 2 : Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan



Corporate Peer Challenge Derbyshire Dales District Council

22-24 October 2019

Feedback Report

1. Executive Summary

There is a real sense of ambition and commitment to continuous improvement at Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC).

There is a positive supportive culture which has dedicated loyal staff at its centre. The general sense is that the council is seeking to be more forward-thinking and this is very much shared by staff.

The council's core services are performing well. Through focused and prudent management, the council has a strong financial position which provides a foundation for the council's future ambition. As has been the case in recent years for all councils, DDDC has needed to focus on achieving savings and efficiency targets. However financial constraint should not be the overriding driver for all future decisions. A question for the council to consider is how much of an appetite it has for managing risk in order to utilise the many opportunities DDDC has.

The council's plans to develop a new corporate plan for the district provides an important opportunity which must be seized as a means of clearly spelling out the ambition and future vision for Derbyshire Dales as a place. The new corporate plan will also provide opportunities for the council to ensure these messages are clearly articulated to ensure its aspirations are clearly understood. There is clearly an opportunity for this plan to be widely shared to secure greater buy-in from stakeholders and partners across the district as a whole.

There seems a clear opportunity for the council's role in place leadership for the district to be strengthened through the new corporate plan. This work would also give DDDC the chance to provide clarity and focus about its commercialisation aspirations. There is also a good opportunity for the new corporate plan to review and address the council's capacity issues in terms of assuring itself that it has the right levels of staff with the skill required to deliver its ambitions for the future.

It will also be a chance for the council to clearly define its ambitions for economic development and place making whilst reflecting the importance of doing this in sustainable ways. The natural environment of Derbyshire Dales is widely recognised as a significant asset for the council and the communities of the district so the importance of balancing these various considerations will be important.

The Council has good internal and external communications but needs to widely celebrate success. The peer review team would encourage the council to ensure that its communications focus more clearly on reflecting DDDC's desire to continue to build local trust and reach out into its communities effectively. There appears to be an opportunity for the role of elected members to be reviewed to ensure councillors can play a full role in DDDC effectively undertaking this community leadership role.

In taking forward its ambitions for the future the council needs to fully embrace the modernisation agenda for example through systematic approach to digital technology.

2. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions, in addition to the conversations onsite, many of which provided ideas and examples of practice from other organisations. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the Council:

Develop a strong narrative and vision for your area that is owned and understood by members, officers and key stakeholders. Consider how to further broaden members' understanding of the whole district.

Ensure the new corporate plan is an opportunity to look forward and takes account of the potential for a fresh approach. It will need to be collectively owned and appropriately resourced to deliver.

Ensure you understand and maximise the benefits for the district as a whole. Judgement of the value of the council's intervention should not only be based on cost.

Ensure the council's commercialisation approach is sufficiently clear, ambitious and realistic. Make sure this will provide income to support the delivery of quality services and the ambitions of the council.

Further strengthen relationships with key stakeholders especially where delivery of practical and mutual benefits to the district can be achieved.

Review the role description for members to ensure they can fully contribute to the future direction of the council and the district.

Utilise group leaders to ensure all members are fully informed. Ensure information is easily accessible to all members. Consider a single log for member enquiries and have options for self-service.

The council should consider its own skills base and investment capability to promote jobs and business growth. The draft economic plan drives an ambitious direction at a time when site delivery and wider economic circumstances are challenging and suitably skilled staff are needed.

Consider whether your affordable housing offer needs to be diversified in light of the range of local housing need.

Further engage with strategic and local organisations to build trust and community capacity to advocate for and deliver on important initiatives (for example. climate change).

Ensure that the council fully understands what a 2030 carbon neutral target means in impact and cost terms. Good growth and carbon neutrality should both be core to the council's climate change plan.

Share the narrative and celebrate success.

3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) were:

- Norman Proudfoot (Harborough District Council Joint Chief Executive)
- Councillor Linda Robinson (Former Leader, Wychavon District Council)
- Councillor John Boyce (Leader, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council)
- Richard Cohen (Deputy Chief Executive, East Devon District Council)
- Rob Andrew (Strategic Place-Shaping and Localism Lead, Cornwall)
- Priya Thethi (LGA Policy Adviser)
- Ernest Opuni (LGA Review Manager)

Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges cover. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
4. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?

5. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

Under these headings you asked the peer team to provide feedback on the following specific questions:

- How well does the council understand its local context and place and how has that been used to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
- How well is the Council achieving against those ambitions? For example, as it reaches the end of the 2015-2019 Corporate Plan has the Council got a clear idea of where to go from here?
- The extent to which the Council's affordable housing ambitions are stretching enough and realistic.
- Does the council provide effective leadership of the District within and beyond through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
- How well is the council balancing its growth aspirations with the considerations of the need to deliver wider 'green' outcomes such as carbon reduction?
- Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term sustainability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
- How aware is it of its costs compared to similar councils?
- Is the Council maximising appropriate sharing and "commercial" opportunities to enable reinvestment in services and to contribute further to self-sufficiency?
- Are the Council's commercial aspirations reasonable and realistic given what it considers to be its limited cash and assets?
- Does its new "Commercial Board" provide- and allow- the focus and leadership needed?
- Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance.
- Are decision-making arrangements fleet of foot, responsive to key challenges and opportunities and enable change and transformation to be successfully implemented?
- Are elected and officer roles clearly defined and relationships constructive?
- Is the way the Council operates its Committee system model fit for purpose?
- Are resources aligned with priorities?
- Does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?
- Is the culture one where residents and other stakeholders feel fully engaged and involved in the decisions that are being made on their behalf?
- Is the strategic capacity within the council sufficient for current and future challenges?
- Is the Council making the most of new technology, including artificial intelligence, to reduce demand, improve efficiency and to deliver outcomes?
- To follow the housing theme, is the Council making use of all possible opportunities and taking the right steps to deliver its affordable housing ambitions

The peer challenge process

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focussed and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent 3 days onsite at Derbyshire Dales District Council during which they:

- Spoke to more than 85 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 43 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 180 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 5 weeks in Derbyshire Dales.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit on 24 October 2019. In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing

4. Feedback

4.1 Understanding of the local place and priority setting

Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC) has a good understanding and appreciation of its local context and is focusing on continually improving local community relationships. The council's efforts to establish a clear link between what it delivers and clearly identified community priorities is a clear driver of much of what it delivers. The result of the council's 2019 staff survey indicates an improved understanding of the relevance of plans and strategies. This means council's priorities are clear and being operationalised because the key themes for the new Corporate Plan -People, Place, Prosperity- are well understood in the organisation

Members are largely united on council's purpose to provide a positive place to live, work and grow up. Although the council's priority in relation to leading on climate change is in its early days, councillors are positive about the council working to setting an example by making the council a leader in relation to the green agenda. The new corporate plan represents an opportunity for DDDC to develop more fully worked up plans focused on delivering clear outcomes.

There is a strong understanding within the authority about rural pressures and the need for the council to take the lead locally. There is consensus from political and managerial leadership that 'a focus for the future is to deliver services for the benefit of local communities including high value jobs. The emerging Corporate Plan needs to be clear and directive and owned by the whole council. While recent years have by necessity, focussed on achieving savings targets, there is now an opportunity in the new corporate plan for the future direction to include opportunities to invest whilst managing risk effectively.

Affordable housing delivery has been prioritised and resourced. The affordable housing need is clearly evidenced and is a current pressure, exacerbated by lack of suitable land. The council recognises the challenges associated with this and is seeking to maximise off-site contributions by working in partnership with Housing Associations to deliver units. There are good working relationship between Rural Housing enabler and Registered Housing Associations providing a positive foundation on which to progress with delivery into the future. The approach of utilising offsite Section 106 contributions and working with Registered Providers is moving in the right direction but there is more for DDDC to do to ensure future needs can be met.

The established format of the Derbyshire Dales Community Forums could act as a foundation for wider conversations in relation to agendas such as climate change. Now is the time for further engagement with these forums as a vehicle for taking forward much of the local aspirations. The peer review team would encourage the council to review its internal capacity to ensure it is placed to deliver effectively on this agenda.

The council is investing in strategic planning capacity to improve use of sites and improve developer negotiations and the council's understanding of its sites. There is an opportunity for the council to review its empty homes strategy, local housing need and demand. DDDC could also consider the choice of different tenures and whether the Council could itself be a direct investor.

4.2 Leadership of Place

DDDC is credited with being an effective leader of the district by partners who attest to the authority being a good partner to work with which makes positive contributions to collaboration. Relationships with partner organisations to promote the district are strong and the council is actively looking to work more closely with other districts.

DDDC's induction programme for its new councillors is positively regarded by local councillors. Members are also positive about potential for innovation in the area and are keen to take this forward as part of the council's new Corporate Plan including effective delivery of infrastructure projects for the future

There is a good relationship between DDDC's and the County Council as evidenced by the Ashbourne Airfield redevelopment, collaboration on transport and the work that has been done in relation to parking enforcement. These are all contributing positively to DDDC delivering more effectively in its place leadership role. Where possible the council should seek to lead joint initiatives where the benefits are going to be realised locally as this will ensure that infrastructure projects are delivered more effectively.

The council's building control partnership service is working well and benefits from effective reporting and governance structures which allows it to identify and respond to effectively to future works. This shared service has very strong support from DDDC officers which will be key in addressing the development aspirations and associated future challenges this may bring.

There is evidence of good leadership such as the climate change initiative. This will be important if the council is to fully utilise its natural environment as the asset it could be. The peer review team would encourage continued closer collaboration between officers and the member working group set up to develop ideas for delivering on this agenda into the future. Taking this forward effectively will contribute positively to the council identifying resources from the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for example.

DDDC is one of the districts within the county best placed to lead on the delivery of improved rural outcomes in Derbyshire. DDDC can create scope for investment in this agenda due to its unique location and positive reputation as a tourist destination.

The council is exceptionally well placed to build on its good relationships with external partners to highlight and tackle issues that rural councils have such as housing provision when substantial parts of the district are within National Parks. There would seem to be mutual benefits to jointly have a constructive dialogue with central government to explain the difficulties and seek support to address the perceived inequalities of the government's current approach. The council clearly has a strong relationship with the National Park however it needs to ensure that the council's representatives on the National Park board are able to promote the council's position and robustly challenge where necessary.

Town Councils and Parish Councils view DDDC as being more responsive and welcome the prospect of a place-based approach. There is a will and opportunity for yet closer working between DDDC and the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils (DALC) which could yield real benefit through sharing resources and expertise. The foundations for effective collaboration are in place but there remain further opportunities to continue to improve local engagement and understanding. There will be a need for the council to review its capacity to support this work in that DDDC can be assured of its ability to deliver its future ambitions.

DDDC would benefit from having a stronger voice and greater visibility on the regional stage to promote rural businesses and diversification. Key to this will be a clear narrative on what DDDC is able to contribute to achieving LEP priorities. DDDC is regarded by the LEP as one of the better districts to work which provides further opportunity for yet more effective delivery at this level.

DDDC's Economic Strategy is seeking to achieve a shift from tourism promotion to higher value and rural economy focus which would help contribute to ambitions of the LEP. Through this greater alignment there are likely to be enhanced opportunities to secure the kind of resources which could contribute to accelerating the delivery of important projects focusing on economic growth sectors and frontline services to local businesses. The peer review team would encourage DDDC to consider even more structured engagement with Businesses by sector and place and how this work might support manufacturing and engineering firms for example.

Historically it appears that the Council has overseen the delivery of site development such as Marks and Spencer, Wilkinson's and ABC premises. There is a clear desire to deliver economic development however employment sites are complex and difficult to develop in this area. There may be value in the council considering if it could be an investor in potential sites which may help unlock these developments.

DDDC is an integral part of strong partnerships focused on delivering to the wider the health and wellbeing agenda. This is being achieved through promoting health and active life style activities through its active communities' strategies. These are contributing positively to better community outcomes.

The positivity of the council about climate change and the potential for strong local partnerships could contribute positively to achieving the LEP's rural agenda. In order to maximise these opportunities, it will be important for the new Corporate Plan to address and clearly define what outcomes are sought for the towns in the district and how delivery could contribute to LEP objectives.

DDDC core service delivery is well regarded particularly in areas such as waste collection and recycling.

4.3 Organisational leadership and governance

The Council needs to identify a clearer strategic direction and then the capacity to deliver. There needs to be a better balance between strategic and operational delivery. A clearer strategic direction from the Members will enable the Corporate Leadership Team to more effectively deliver.

Member and officer relationships have changed since the election and there needs to be a better mutual understanding of roles. Members and officers are a team, working on behalf of the residents in the district and it is important that there is clarity on behaviours, responsibilities, roles and delegation. The members role is crucial as there is evidence of the members becoming involved in operational matters which is clearly not their role.

There can be a tendency for some members to be too parochial forgetting their wider district councillor role. The peer review team's view is that the role of councillors is also a strategic one in which they use their local knowledge and experience as elected representatives to take decisions that set the direction of the council across the whole district. Members developing and communicating a long-term vision would be a strong message for the community and for partners.

Internal corporate communication as evidenced by the 2019 staff survey, seems to be effective. There is however some recognition that internal communications across the organisation between various departments requires attention to address future challenges and prevent silo working.

The transformation of the business support service has been successful in delivering efficiencies and is the success of this approach a template for similar change.

There is an opportunity to review the constitution to encourage fleet of foot decision making and more empowerment. Currently it would appear that decisions are sometimes delayed as they are required to go through the committee system. In reality many of these decisions should not require a committee approval so would benefit from the officers having delegated powers or where relevant a swifter member involvement. This will undoubtedly become more important as the Council's commercial approach develops and there will be a need to adapt to changing market conditions. Reviewing the constitution will enable the scheme of delegation to be developed to encourage swift and effective decision making.

The council is working well with the other district councils and the county council to identify better ways of collaboration and joint working through non-structural reform. This may prove to be a useful approach to deliver efficiencies and the council needs to be flexible to adapt its approach where necessary to ensure the partnership working is successful.

4.4 Financial planning and viability

Derbyshire Dales has a budget of just under £10m. The authority receives relatively little government grant support and is therefore now heavily dependent on generating income from Council Tax, Business Rates and local fees and charges.

There is evidence of strong finances and good financial management and the Council has a good record of staying within its budget. Reserves are healthy and the Council plans well for the future. Financial reporting to elected members is of a high standard and it is clear the Council understands its financial position and recognises its risks. There appears a need to develop savings plans to address budget shortfalls over the next three years.

The Council has a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) that includes a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which projects DDC's finances to 2023/24. The Strategy is well set out, detailed and thorough, demonstrating that the council understands their financial challenge well. It is underpinned by a set of principles the first of which is:

“to have a balanced sustainable budget in the medium-term to ensure that the Council remains in good financial health and meets the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget.”

The MTFs and MTFP address significant risks, such as loss of New Homes Bonus, reductions in business rates and the impact of contract renewals. This means the council is well placed to anticipate and plan effectively for the future.

DDDC is managing its finances well. The council holds a healthy level of reserves and have prudently set aside money to deal with in-year variations in their budget. There is a risk-based reserves strategy which sets out the purpose for which they are held.

The council has a five-year Medium-Term Financial Plan which recognises financial risks and opportunities. The MTFP is a good document and shows that the council understands its finances well.

DDDC has been successful in generating savings over the last five years to sustain the council financially. There is clearly some uncertainty over the future due to the delay in the government’s review of local government finance but DDDC has set out projections based on a reasonable set of assumptions. This shows that it will need to identify further recurring savings (or additional income) after 2020/21 which amount to approximately £400,000 per annum. As yet the Council have not published their ideas beyond some thematic areas and this represents an area the council would benefit from focusing on further.

In 2020/21 the Council faces significant risks around contract renewals, in particular the waste contract (an additional £300k per annum. has been included in the MTFP), and from the revaluation of the pension fund (£150k per annum included in the MTFP).

The Council has low levels of debt (£5.4m) and has a strategy to provide resources from revenue to support the repairs and renewal of assets. This capital programme reserve stood at £2.25m at 31st March 2019.

The Council has a commercial investment strategy in order to generate income. This strategy is supported by an investment reserve of £570k. The strategy recognises the risks of this kind of investment and sets out a clear set of parameters within which the Council works to mitigate against such risks. However it is unclear how the strategy is being used to determine potential investments and whether there is additional funding available to maximise financial returns.

The council is in a strong financial position given the current climate. There has been a strong focus on financial sustainability around savings and efficiencies but needs to include a clear drive for increasing income generation. Coupled with a drive to generate income there should be more clarity around the true costs of services so that managers can robustly assess the commerciality of their services. The commercial ambition for the council needs to be clearly defined as a whole including the role of core services. The Commercial Board needs to be willing and to make timely investment decisions. The council’s strong financial position should enable it to be more ambitious with commercial

investments underpinned by robust management rather than avoidance of risk. It may help if the council considers a target which is derived from return on capital invested. The peer review team noted that the establishment of the Limited Liability Partnership was not being progressed and suggests that other delivery models are investigated to enable the council to operate with a more commercial approach for the relevant projects.

The use of assets to generate income for the Council should be a clearer priority emerging from the Asset Management plan. It is clear that DDDC has taken up the challenges of rationalising the asset base, a key recent example being leisure centres and public toilets. To continue the optimisation of its significant number of assets a swift governance process needs to be in place.

4.5 Capacity to deliver

DDCC has good, dedicated staff who are well thought of, enjoy working for the council and are clearly dedicated and passionate about working here. The peer team heard positive feedback from members and partners about officers. Staff expressed that they are happy with the current management arrangements and approach. There was however evidence of risks around recruitment, retention, staff progression and succession planning which have been highlighted by staff.

Once the new corporate plan priorities have been confirmed, there will be the need to further review capacity and skill requirements to deliver – “step up from enabling to delivery”

There is recognition amongst all parts of council (including members) of a lack of strategic capacity with CLT drawn into operational delivery. A suggestion from members is to reintroduce the Corporate Director role and the peer review team would support this action to provide additional strategic input and resilience for the Chief Executive.

Both procurement and asset management were seen as areas which would benefit from additional professional capacity.

Some of the shared services are working well and returning financial benefits such as the Building Control Company. There appears however to be some confusion amongst staff between the role of the ICT partnership and the digital transformation programme.

The council currently has flexible working in place and staff recognise the benefits that this brings. There is evidence that there is a demand for more flexible working policies across the council and not just in specific services. As many staff travel from other districts and there is limited public transport there is a potential to improve efficiencies and reduce the carbon footprint through the expansion of this approach.

5. Next steps

Immediate next steps

We appreciate the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this. Mark Edgell, Principal Adviser is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). His contact details are: mark.edgell@local.gov.uk

In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with the Council throughout the peer challenge. We will endeavour to provide signposting to examples of practice and further information and guidance about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform ongoing consideration.

Follow up visit

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the original peer team. The timing of the visit is determined by the Council. Our expectation is that it will occur within the next 2 years.

Next Corporate Peer Challenge

The current LGA sector-led improvement support offer includes an expectation that all councils will have a Corporate Peer Challenge or Finance Peer Review every 4 to 5 years. It is therefore anticipated that the Council will commission their next Peer Challenge before 2024.

	KEY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE
1	Develop a strong narrative and vision for your area that is owned and understood by members, officers and key stakeholders. Consider how to further broaden members' understanding of the whole district.	<p>Publish slimmed down and plain English version of Corporate Plan evidence base</p> <p>Member corporate governance training on the back of the new Corporate Plan that guides Members to think corporately</p> <p>Bi-Annual Tour of the District to reinforce corporate priorities?</p> <p>Training to ensure that Members understand the strategic financial position</p>	<p>Mike Hase</p> <p>Member Development Working Group (MDWG)</p> <p>MDWG</p> <p>Karen Henriksen to lead, but determined by MDWG</p>	<p>August 2020</p> <p>Summer 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>November 2020</p>
2	Ensure the new corporate plan is an opportunity to look forward and takes account of the potential for a fresh approach. It will need to be collectively owned and appropriately resourced to deliver.	<p>Annual review of Corporate Plan objectives (not just performance indicators)</p> <p>Analyse budget and capital programme in line with new corporate plan priorities</p> <p>Review and simplify format of Service Plans to show links to Corporate Plan and resources, include both qualitative and quantitative information, and refer to core statutory duties</p>	<p>Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Council</p> <p>Karen Henriksen</p> <p>Mike Hase, CLT</p>	<p>November 2020</p> <p>November 2021</p> <p>November 2022</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p>
3	Ensure you understand and maximise the benefits for the district as a whole. Judgement of the value of the Council's intervention should not only be based on cost.	<p>Consider defining a key decision to demonstrate wider district community benefit, cost and desired outcomes (to distinguish from parochial outlook)</p> <p>Put more emphasis on different ways of working and engaging with our communities. We need to understand local needs and wants, and f work with local community groups, and Town & Parish Councils to achieve agreed objectives, including the development of a Community Asset Transfer policy</p>	<p>Sandra Lamb</p> <p>Rebecca Bryan</p>	<p>Annual Meeting</p> <p>March 2021</p>

	KEY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE
4	<p>Ensure the Council's commercialisation approach is sufficiently clear, ambitious and realistic. Make sure this will provide income to support the delivery of quality services and the ambitions of the Council.</p>	<p>Define clearly what DDDC means by commercialism, its scope, priorities, exclusions, risks and realistic income potential. (Take into account tradeable services e.g. market comparisons on service fees and charges, regeneration and investments)</p> <p>Produce an annual commercial work plan and monitor its success.</p> <p>Maximise Corporate Social Responsibility via procurement: encourage contractor investment aligned to DDDC priorities.</p>	<p>Strategic Director</p> <p>Strategic Director</p> <p>Strategic Director</p>	<p>TBC – subject to resources being made available</p> <p>TBC - subject to resources being made available</p> <p>TBC - subject to resources being made available</p>
5	<p>Further strengthen relationships with all key stakeholders especially where delivery of practical and mutual benefits to the district can be achieved.</p>	<p>Continue to use our influence via D2N2 Boards, PDNPA and DCC. Continue to play a leading role in the non-structural reform agenda</p> <p>Review significant partnerships and outside body representation based on their fit with our corporate themes</p> <p>Ensure feedback mechanism to Council from elected representatives on outside bodies to ensure organisational learning</p> <p>Review mechanism for engaging with 70 Parish Councils in the District – perhaps a Ward approach or within established community identifies e.g. Hope Valley. Consider rolling out key contact scheme with Parish Councils on a rolling programme (along lines of Closer Working relationships with Town Councils).</p> <p>Reconsider format of Community Forums to be less combative; include a Question time session with the Leader. Reach out to communities on their terms as a listening session not a broadcast event.</p>	<p>Paul Wilson / Steve Capes</p> <p>Sandra Lamb / James McLaughlin</p> <p>Sandra Lamb / James McLaughlin</p> <p>CLT</p> <p>LAG</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual Meeting and for Member Workshop discussion</p> <p>Annual Meeting and for Member Workshop discussion</p> <p>May 2021</p> <p>Annual Meeting</p>

KEY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE	
6	<p>Review the role description for members to ensure they can fully contribute to the future direction of the council and the district.</p>	<p>Review to focus on community leadership role and to stress need to put district ahead of ward Organise facilitated workshop by EMPC to focus on community leadership in redrafting role profiles</p> <p>Re-purpose the Member Development Working Group to consider a competency framework for newly elected Councillors with a training plan to fit.</p> <p>Instruct the IRP to include diversity of members, as part of the review of allowances.</p> <p>Create a forum for ideas and initiatives from all Councillors which can then be assessed against the Corporate Plan</p> <p>Develop a succession plan for political groups to use to invest in promoting talent within the group system. Small budget perhaps for Groups to disperse?</p>	<p>MDWG</p>	<p>Annual Meeting</p> <p>Revised ToR Agreed First meeting Autumn 2020</p> <p>Review commenced. Revised target following suspension Sept 2020</p>
7	<p>Utilise group leaders to ensure all members are fully informed. Ensure information is easily accessible to all members. Consider a single log for member enquiries and have options for self-service.</p>	<p>CRM system to be used to log and manage Member requests for service. Reduce email communications for routine business by more self-serve options, e.g. apologies and invitations to workshops</p> <p>Review Members Portal to segment information which can be viewed without the email traffic.</p> <p>Member monthly bulletin with contributions from Councillors</p> <p>Consider scheduling meetings of LAG to keep senior politicians up to date on strategic matters generally</p> <p>Member briefings pre Committee and/or Quarterly area focused meetings</p> <p>Programmed quarterly member Q&A (with Leaders and CLT)</p>	<p>Glenn Burton</p> <p>James McLaughlin</p> <p>MDWG</p> <p>MDWG</p> <p>MDWG</p> <p>MDWG</p>	<p>October 2020</p> <p>December 2020</p> <p>For Member Workshop discussion</p> <p>For Member Workshop discussion</p> <p>For Member Workshop discussion</p> <p>For Member Workshop discussion</p>

	KEY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE
8	The Council should consider its own skills base and investment capability to promote jobs and business growth. The draft economic plan drives an ambitious direction at a time when site delivery and wider economic circumstances are challenging and suitably skilled staff are needed.	<p>Recruit skilled commercial development staff to deliver sites. Ensure organisational review of capacity alongside strategic succession planning policy for employees</p> <p>Further utilise staff whose day jobs involve routine interaction with business, in addition to business advice service, e.g. Environmental Health and Licensing</p>	<p>Place Shaping Hub</p> <p>CLT</p>	<p>October 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
9	Consider whether your affordable housing offer needs to be diversified in light of the range of local housing need.	<p>Ensure our Housing function delivers on a range of housing needs and tenures for residents as a whole, as well as social rented housing.</p> <p>Workshop with elected members to scope potential and resources required to expand (or not) from affordable rental market</p> <p>Properly consider the role of the private rented sector in this respect</p> <p>Promote the work of Community Land Trusts and Almshouse charities who provide affordable housing</p>	<p>Rob Cogings</p> <p>Rob Cogings</p> <p>Tim Braund / Rob Cogings</p> <p>Rob Cogings</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>Housing Workshop (Autumn 2020)</p> <p>Housing Workshop (Autumn 2020)</p> <p>June 2020</p>
10	Further engage with strategic and local organisations to build trust and community capacity to advocate for and deliver on important initiatives (for example climate change).	<p>Consider co-option of voluntary sector on working groups e.g. climate change.</p> <p>Allocate some of the LPF or Better DD's fund for larger/strategic community initiatives</p> <p>Work with Derbyshire based agencies to support community initiatives, e.g. Community Payment Scheme</p>	<p>Ashley Watts</p> <p>Ashley Watts</p> <p>Ashley Watts</p>	<p>Summer 2020</p> <p>Summer 2020</p> <p>Summer 2020</p>

	KEY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE
11	<p>Ensure that the Council fully understands what a 2030 carbon neutral target means in impact and cost terms. Good growth and carbon neutrality should both be core to the Council's climate change plan.</p>	<p>Commit to the development of a Climate Change Strategy with clearly defined targets and actions which do not prevent sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>Prepare Climate Change SPD</p> <p>Climate Change Task Group Annual Action Plan to Council</p> <p>Assessment of carbon footprint in committee reports (basic level)</p> <p>Consider co-opting expertise and local interest groups to join the Task Group</p> <p>Development of strategy with clear action plan leading to 2030. Delivery against those targets. Consider role of SMT in helping with this. Consider role in wider community in this respect</p>	<p>Climate Change Working Group (CCWG)</p> <p>Mike Hase</p> <p>CCWG</p> <p>CLT</p> <p>CCWG</p> <p>CCWG</p>	<p>Summer 2020</p> <p>June 2021</p> <p>Autumn 2020</p> <p>Annual Meeting</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
12	<p>Share the narrative and celebrate success.</p>	<p>Maximise opportunities for PR and encourage good news stories to be raised with JF from across the whole of the organisation: invite staff to share their stories of how they have made a difference for promotion through Paul's Post and external if relevant i.e. open up Departmental blog's to run alongside Paul's Post. Develop a council-wide culture so that staff willingly share their successes</p> <p>Increased promotion of Local Projects Fund</p> <p>Encourage success to be shared across professional networks e.g. LinkedIn</p> <p>Pursue opportunities for national awards e.g. MJ / Housing / APSE</p>	<p>Jim Fearn / CLT</p> <p>Rebecca Bryan</p> <p>CLT / Senior Management Team (SMT)</p> <p>CLT / SMT</p>	<p>Autumn 2020</p> <p>Autumn 2020</p> <p>Summer 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>