



INDUCTION HANDBOOK

FOR NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS

2023



Information to assist newly elected Councillors in understanding their role and place in the Council

CONTENTS

WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE	4
INTRODUCTION AND GETTING TO KNOW THE COUNCIL	
Council Priorities and Achievements	5
Budget and Finances	8
Key Facts and Figures	9
Council Structure	11
Key Contacts and Routes	13
Democratic Services	17
BEING AN EFFECTIVE COUNCILLOR	
Allowances and Expenses	18
IT Support for Elected Members	19
Matlock Town Hall	19
Working Relationships	20
GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING	
How the Council Works	21
Decision-making Structure	21
Roles and Responsibilities	22
Committee Roles	26

ETHICS AND STANDARDS

The Constitution of the Council	28
Code of Conduct	28
Member / Officer Protocol	29
Register of Interests	29
Gifts and Hospitality	29
Safeguarding	30
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	30

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AND CONSTITUENTS

Representing your Ward	31
Ward Surgeries	31
Health and Safety	32
Town and Parish Councils	32

WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Congratulations on your election to Derbyshire Dales District Council.

The Council is committed to supporting Members throughout their four-year term of office. I and my colleagues welcome all new and returning Members with a Member Induction programme that will cover the basic information and tools you will need to get up and running. This includes briefings on how to comply with the Code of Conduct for Councillors and other protocols, the major issues facing the Council; introductions to specific services (including meeting and hearing from relevant senior officers) and more detailed learning events.

Following your election, you will now be held accountable by citizens in your wards for the decisions collectively taken by the Council. As a councillor you are uniquely placed to use democratic processes and public participation to shape the communities you represent and provide a better future for the whole of the Derbyshire Dales.

I want your term of office to be successful and enjoyable. I can give you a commitment that all officers will do everything possible to support you in your role.

As a starting point, I would ask that you take some time to read this Member Induction Handbook that we have prepared for you. In addition to this, you will be able to access a lot of information through the Council's website to enable you to fulfil your role as a councillor.

This will provide a useful starting point for your induction. After the induction, there will be a rolling Member Development Programme that will continue throughout the year, as well as workshops and briefings on specific topics.

I look forward to working with you, as do all officers, and I know that together we will be able to make the Council even more successful and deliver even better services to our residents.

Paul Wilson
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION AND GETTING TO KNOW THE COUNCIL

Council Priorities and Achievements

The Corporate Plan 2020-24 is the core document that underpins the Council's overall vision. The Plan sets out the headline priorities and outcomes for that period, along with key performance measures that demonstrate the delivery of the vision and ensure that this can be reported.

The plan is framed around the following themes:

- People – providing you with a high quality customer experience
- Place – keeping the Derbyshire Dales clean, green and safe
- Prosperity – supporting better homes and jobs for you

Underpinning these themes is the cross-cutting value of 'One Team, One Council, One Purpose'.

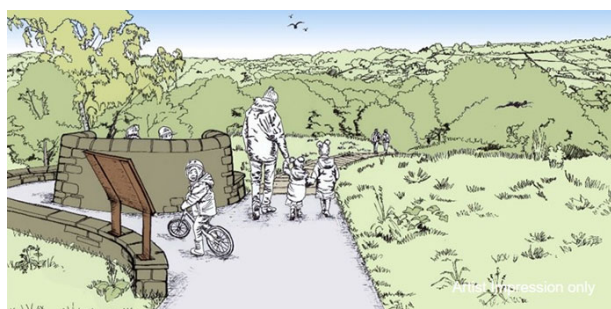
During the period of the current Corporate Plan the following achievements have been realised against the themes:

PEOPLE:

- Significantly enhanced online services to residents and businesses through a comprehensive programme of digital transformation
- Administered over £74-million in 17,202 Covid grants to support local businesses impacted by Covid-19
- Administered Covid rate reliefs of approx £16-million to businesses in 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Administered Council Tax hardship funding of £338,264 to provide relief to local residents impacted by Covid-19.
- Delivered financial support through Test and Trace payments to over 500 individuals (£246,500)
- Across all grant schemes operated throughout the pandemic, Derbyshire Dales paid out more than 89% of funds allocated, exceeding the national average of 84% and putting us in the top fifth of councils
- Delivered £3.36 million worth of £150 energy rebates to 22,404 households and a further £112,000 in discretionary payments helping 3,260 households with their energy costs

PLACE:

- £1-million National Lottery Heritage Fund grant secured for the Hurst Farm Regeneration Project





- Worked with local councils and community groups to implement an innovative Biodiversity Plan to increase the biodiversity of roadside verges and public open spaces
- Green Flag Awards for Matlock Hall Leys Park (15th consecutive year) and Bath Gardens, Bakewell
- Implemented a progressive programme for the introduction of electric charging points in District Council car parks
- Implemented online payment facilities in District council car parks with over 100,000 unique users
- Worked with community groups plus the provision of circa £150,000 match funding towards the delivery of the new Ashbourne Pavilion
- Secured £760,950 grant from the Department for Business Energy and Industrial strategy to improve the thermal insulation of properties in Tansley, Darley Dale, Matlock, Ashbourne and Hognaston
- Delivered new play area equipment at Morledge, Dimple Fields, Middleton, Yokecliffe, Fanny Shaws Wirksworth
- Comprehensive review of the Council's Public Space Protection Orders
- Delivered a much needed extension to Steeple Arch Cemetery, Wirksworth
- Co-ordinated and administered the Queen's Platinum Jubilee funding for all parish and town councils
- Planned, organised and coordinated the Queen's Baton Relay through Matlock Bath and Bakewell
- Continued to deliver the very successful Matlock Bath Illuminations event with increased participation and profits
- Delivered three separate projects in Matlock's Hall Leys Park including an upgrade for Knowleston Gardens, the Sunken Gardens and a biodiversity project on Boardwalk
- Refurbished the Hall Leys Park clock tower.
- Progressed work to secure the replacement of Ashbourne Bandstand
- Comprehensive re-signage programme in all 30+ District council owned parks and gardens
- Supported and facilitated the £450,000 renovation of Hurst Farm Social Club.
- Managed numerous national programmes to support housing for Afghan and Syrian refugees, Homes for Ukraine and asylum seekers.
- Secured £420,000 funding to lead a county-wide review of supported housing accommodation to deliver sustained savings

PROSPERITY:

- Sustained investment in affordable housing including the Council becoming a social landlord again for the first time in over 20 years
- Delivered a successful bid for the Ashbourne Levelling up Fund, securing £15-million investment over the next 2 years
- Secured £1-million Local Growth Funding from D2N2 to deliver the much needed and long overdue second access to open up the potential of Ashbourne Airfield for future housing and employment uses
- The sustained delivery of support to local businesses through our Derbyshire Dales Business Advice Service with access to grants and loans totalling almost £1.5-million
- The District Council's Bakewell Market being recognised as the 'Best' large outdoor market in the country at the Great British Market of the Year Awards 2020



- Progressed with the development of a new cinema at Bakewell Road, Matlock, to bring a boost to the economy of Matlock and the wider district
- Developed and implemented a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan with associated investment
- Secured £734,000 in Public Sector Decarbonisation funding (Phase 1) to remove gas heating at Ashbourne Leisure Centre.
- Secured £562,000 in Public Sector Decarbonisation funding (Phase 3a) to remove gas heating at our three largest buildings (Matlock Town Hall, Bakewell ABC and Northwood Depot).
- Secured £1,925,000 in Public Sector Decarbonisation funding (Phase 3b) to remove gas heating at Arc Leisure Centre Matlock and Wirksworth Leisure Centre
- Secured £123,275 Low Carbon Skills Fund Grant towards the decarbonisation of our leisure centres
- Secured £907,500 funding to assist with the implementation of energy efficiency measures in privately owned and rented properties
- Administered £127,000 grant funded schemes for the Welcome Back Fund / Re-opening High Streets Fund to support town centres in Covid recovery.

One of the key actions for the Council in the coming year will be establish a new Corporate Plan setting out the priorities of the authority for the period from 2024 to 2028.



Budget and Finances

Prior to each financial year the Council is required to set a budget for the authority, including the council tax to be levied for district council services. The annual revenue budget is heavily influenced by the Local Government Finance Settlement, where central government sets out grant funding and council tax capping levels for the coming year. In setting a budget, the Council has to have regard to the results of statutory consultation, spending proposals from services through a formal process and forecast levels of income, alongside a review of financial commitments and planning assumptions for future years set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The budget is also influenced by the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy which is intended to set out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and provide a framework within which decisions can be made regarding future service provision and council tax levels.

Alongside the revenue budget, Council is asked to approve a capital programme that relates to spending on assets, such as land, buildings and vehicles.

The revenue budget report covers the following key areas:

- Available resources, this is the money the Council has to finance its net revenue spending requirements, such as government grants, council tax and business rates
- The forecasts of revenue spending requirements for delivery of services including both the revenue financing costs and running/operating expenditure associated with the Capital Programme
- An updated Medium Term Financial Plan
- A plan of any required investments in services and how these will be supported
- Details of available reserves that could be used to finance revenue spending
- A plan of how expenditure can be managed within the constraints presented by the availability of resources, which may require savings plans to be proposed
- The proposed council tax requirement for the coming year.

Once approved the Council will then deliver services within its remit and conditions set within the budget report. The budget position is monitored closely and is formally reported twice during the year via the Council's financial monitoring reports.

Key Facts and Figures

The district of Derbyshire Dales is mainly rural with around 80% of its population living in rural settlements. The district contains the market towns of Ashbourne, Bakewell, Matlock and Wirksworth. Derbyshire Dales has the smallest number of households of all Derbyshire districts at 35,212.

In terms of population density, the district is home to around 0.6 people per football pitch-sized piece of land, making the Derbyshire Dales the joint least densely populated local authority area across the East Midlands (ONS Census 2021).

Population Breakdown 2021

	Count	%
All usual residents	71,536	100
Aged 4 and under	2,633	3.7
Aged 5 to 9 years	3,304	4.6
Aged 10 to 15 years	4,540	6.3
Aged 16 to 19 years	2,747	3.8
Aged 20 to 24 years	2,774	3.9
Aged 25 to 34 years	6,129	8.6
Aged 35 to 49 years	11,529	16.1
Aged 50 to 64 years	17,863	25
Aged 65 to 74 years	10,641	14.9
Aged 75 to 84 years	6,810	9.5
Aged 85 years and over	2,566	3.6

In terms of economic activity, of the residents aged 16 years and over, 55.1% are economically active and of those 1.7% were unemployed in 2021. 65% of economically active residents were in full time employment. Of the economically inactive, 19,479 residents (31.9%) were retired, with others being students, carers, long-term sick or disabled, or an 'other' category.

Home ownership levels in the Derbyshire Dales are high with 47.7% of households being owned outright and 25.2% of households being owned with a mortgage, loan or shared ownership. 12.6% of households are social rented and 14.4% are private rented or where residents live rent free. Of those households, 30.6% are one-person households, 66.3% are single family households and 3.1% are other household types.

97.8% of residents (69,940) in the Derbyshire Dales identified as White in the 2021 census. The breakdown of identified ethnicity in the district was:

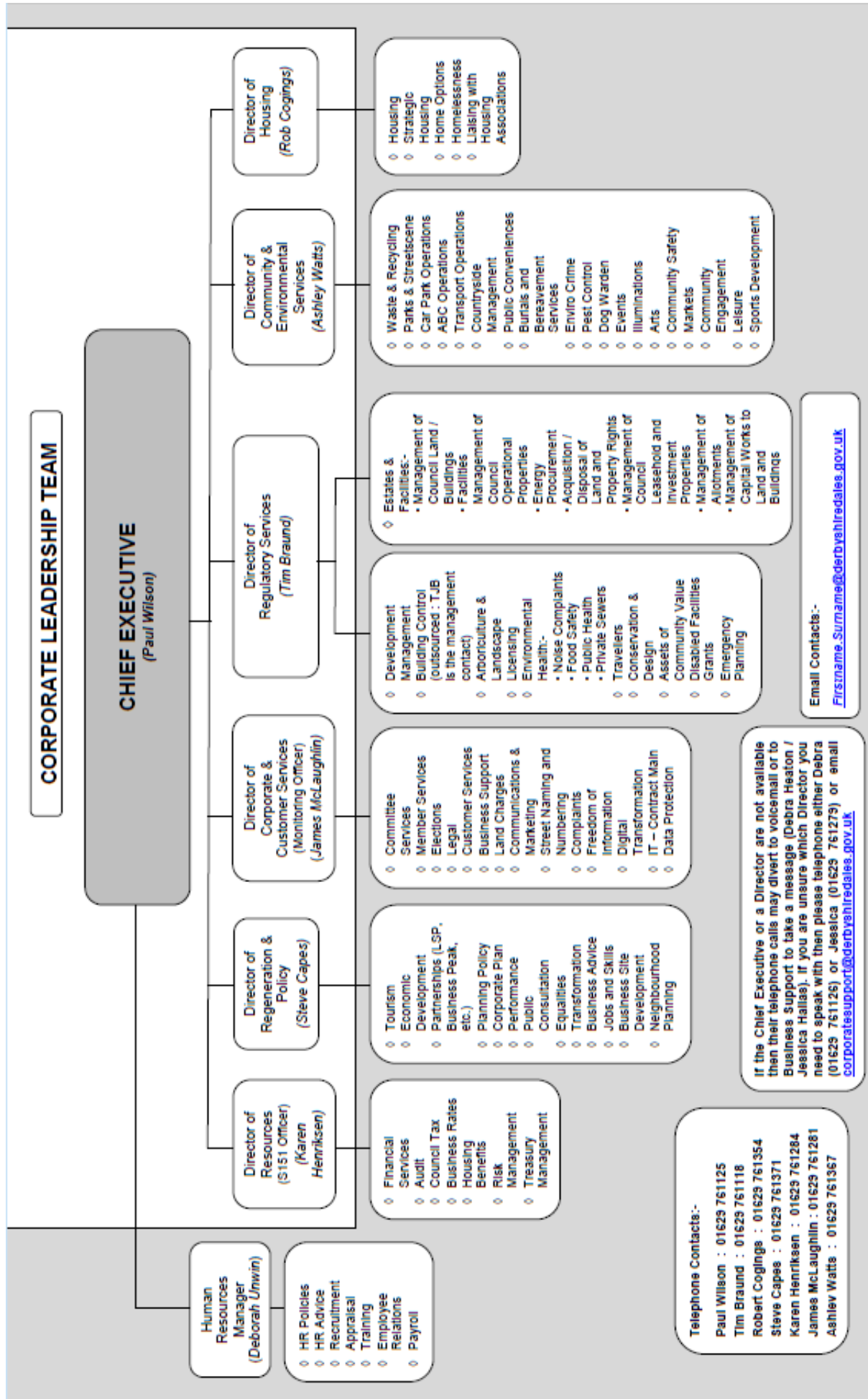
	Count	%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	518	0.7
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or Africa	169	0.2
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	723	1.0
White	69,940	97.8
Other ethnic group	185	0.3

More data and statistics in respect of the Derbyshire Dales can be found through <https://observatory.derbyshire.gov.uk/area-profile-district/>

Council Structure

The day-to-day management of the Council and its services is overseen by the Corporate Leadership Team and led by the Chief Executive, who is the Head of Paid Service and has overall responsibility for implementing the Council's policies.

There are six Service Directors each having responsibility for a different department of the Council. A summary of each of these can be found below in the corporate management structure chart:



CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Chief Executive

Paul Wilson

Tel: 01629 761125

Email: paul.wilson@derbyshiredales.gov.uk



Director of Community and Environmental Services

Ashley Watts

Tel: 01629 761367

Email: ashley.watts@derbyshiredales.gov.uk



Director of Corporate and Customer Services (& Monitoring Officer)

James McLaughlin

Tel: 01629 761281

Email: james.mclaughlin@derbyshiredales.gov.uk



Director of Housing

Rob Cogings

Tel: 01629761354

Email: rob.cogings@derbyshiredales.gov.uk



Director of Regeneration and Policy

Steve Capes

Tel: 01629761371

Email: steve.capes@derbyshiredales.gov.uk



Director of Regulatory Services

Tim Braund

Tel: 01629761118

Email: tim.braund@derbyshiredales.gov.uk



Director of Resources (S151 Officer)

Karen Henriksen

Tel: 01629 761284

Email: karen.henriksen@derbyshiredales.gov.uk



KEY CONTACTS AND ROUTES

Below is a useful list aimed to provide some of the key telephone numbers or routes for Members to follow in the first instance:



Agricultural Business Centre

Email: abc@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Phone: 01629 813777

Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/business/agricultural-business-centre

Arts Development

Email: arts@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Phone: 01629 761390

Benefits

Email: benefits@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Phone: 01629 818222

Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/benefits

Bins and Recycling

Email: waste@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Phone: 01629 761122

Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling

Building Control

Email: info@dbcp.co.uk

Phone: 0333 880 2000

Web: <https://dbcp.co.uk/>

Burials and Cemeteries

Email: cemeteries@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Phone: 01629 761130

Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/community/births-deaths-and-marriages#h2

Business Advice

Email: heather.bradford@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Phone: 01629 761330

Web: www.investinderbyshiredales.org/help

Car Parks

Email: carparks@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Phone: 01629 761333

Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/parking

Climate change

Email: climatechange@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761120
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/environment/climate-change

Committees and Meetings

Email: committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761333
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/your-council/council-and-committee-meetings

Communications and Marketing

Email: communications@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761195

Community safety

Email: communitysafety@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761187
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/community/community-safety

Corporate Policy

Email: policyandequality@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Council Tax

Email: revenues@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 818222
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/council-tax

Customer Services

Email: enquiries@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761100

Data protection

Email: dataprotection@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761396

Development Management

Email: planning@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761336
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/planning

Economic Development

Email: economicdevelopment@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761100
Web: www.investinderbyshiredales.org/

Electoral Services

Email: electoral@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761335
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/your-council/elections-and-voting

Environmental Health

Email: envhealth@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761212
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/environment

Equality and Consultation

Email: policyandequality@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/your-council/equalities

Events

Email: events@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761390
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/leisure/events

Homelessness

Email: homelessness@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761287
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/housing/advice-and-support/homelessness

Housing advice

Email: housingadvice@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761287
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/housing/advice-and-support

Housing improvements grants

Email: housegrants@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761212

Licensing

Email: licensing@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761313
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/licensing

Local Land Charges

Email: landcharges@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01628 761270
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/planning/local-land-charges-search

Markets

Email: markets@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761390
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/leisure/markets

Matlock Bath Illuminations

Email: illuminations@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761390
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/leisure/matlock-bath-illuminations

Parks and Recreation

Email: environmenthotline@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761215
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/leisure/parks-and-open-spaces

Planning

Email: planning@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761336
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/planning

Planning Policy

Email: localplan@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761101
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plan

Policy, equality and consultation

Email: policyandequality@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies

Sports Development

Email: sportsdevelopment@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761389
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/leisure/sports-and-health-activities

Street cleansing

Email: environmenthotline@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761215
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/environment/street-care-and-cleaning

Taxi Licensing

Email: licensing@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761345
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/licensing/taxi-and-private-hire

Tourism

Email: tourism@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/discover-the-dales

Waste and Recycling

Email: waste@derbyshiredales.gov.uk
Phone: 01629 761122
Web: www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling

Democratic Services

Your primary officer contacts in supporting you in your role as a councillor will be our Democratic Services team, who are led by Jason Spencer and whose contact details are set out below. You can also contact them through committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Jason Spencer	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager	jason.spencer@derbyshiredales.gov.uk 01629 761300
Tommy Shaw	Democratic Services Team Leader	tommy.shaw@derbyshiredales.gov.uk 01629 761318
Angela Gratton	Democratic Services Officer	angela.gratton@derbyshiredales.gov.uk 01629 761321
Lucy Harrison	Democratic Services Assistant	lucy.harrison@derbyshiredales.gov.uk 01629 761301

One of these officers will be at every Council or committee meeting and can provide advice and guidance, as well as being able to direct you to the right person or department where you might unsure of who to speak to.

YOUR ROLE AS A COUNCILLOR / BEING AN EFFECTIVE COUNCILLOR

Members as representatives of the public are exactly that - representative of the public - and come from a range of diverse backgrounds, as well as bringing different and valuable skills to the role. The Local Government Association has recently published a [Local Leadership Framework for Councillors](#), which will be an invaluable resource for you from the outset of your term of office. This framework identifies seven roles of the 21st-century councillor', namely:

- steward of place – working across the local area in partnership with others
- advocate – acting to represent the interests of all citizens
- buffer – seeking to mitigate the impact of austerity on citizens
- sense maker – translating a shift in the role of public services and the relationship between institutions and citizen
- catalyst – enabling citizens to do things for themselves, having new conversations about what is now possible
- entrepreneur – working with citizens and partners to encourage local vitality and identify creative new solutions
- orchestrator – helping broker relationships, work with partners and develop new connections.

As a local leader, you will have ambitions and aspirations for what you want to deliver which will have formed the basis of your election campaign and your communication with electors and residents in your ward. The Council is the vehicle for delivery of Council services for the entirety of the district, but is also able to support Members in delivering improvements in their wards. You will find that residents will contact you almost immediately after your result is declared and they will expect you to have answers. It is inevitable that it will take some time to understand who to contact within the Council or in other bodies to resolve casework generated by your constituents. The induction programme includes plans for you to meet with service managers and understand who is responsible for what. Your working relationships with these officers will be key to getting things done and concluding casework.

Allowances and Expenses

Elected Members are entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme, located in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution. The amount each Elected Member receives relates to the duties they perform and can include basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependent care allowance and travel and subsistence.

Please complete a claim form for each calendar month and submit to the Committee Team (committee@derbyshiredales.gov.uk) no later than the 3rd working day of each month. Claim forms received after that period will be held-over until the next pay date **(25th of the month)**.

IT Support for Elected Members

The Council is part of a joint ICT Service with Bolsover and North East Derbyshire District Councils. This service provides ICT (Information and Communication Technology) resources to support all councillors in the course of their duties. They also, working with Democratic Services, play a key role in helping to develop the capacity to enable councillor to undertake their duties at a community and Council level to:

- enhance communication between councillors and their constituents
- improve the flow (and timeliness) of information between councillors and officers
- enable access to a greater knowledge pool, through the Council's website and other online resources
- provide opportunities for efficiencies by reducing the reliance on paper-based communications.

Following the election, the Joint ICT Service will establish email accounts for new Members which be firstname.surname@derbyshiredales.gov.uk As part of the induction process, you will be given an iPad from which you will be able to access your District Council email account, as well as papers for Council and committee meetings. As the District Council strives to reduce its reliance on paper, Members are expected to bring their iPads to meetings to read papers.

Matlock Town Hall

Derbyshire Dales District Council's administrative headquarters is Matlock Town Hall, which is located on Bank Road, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3NN. This is the main place of work for the majority of employees and where all formal Council and committee meetings take place.

The District Council is fully committed to creating a safe and secure working environment for all councillors and employees through efficient and effective identity and access procedures. All Elected Members and employees who need access to the Town Hall are issued with a photo smartcard ID Badge which must be worn at all times.

Matlock Town Hall is open from 9.00a.m. to 5.00p.m. on Mondays to Thursdays and 9.00a.m. to 4.30p.m. on Fridays. When Council or committee meetings are scheduled to take place, the building remains open until the end of those meetings. The building is also available to host meetings for political groups and Members should contact the Committee Team to make a booking for this purpose.

Parking

All Members are issued with a pass that entitles them to park free of charge in any of the District Council car parks whilst on Council business. There are three parking spaces reserved for Members in the car park at the rear of the Town Hall (access from Edgefold Road).

Working Relationships

Councillors and staff must treat each other with respect. Challenge and debate is healthy. Criticism can be a form of challenge and holding each other to account. However, those being criticised must have the right to reply.

Senior staff will need to brief Councillors in a timely, open and honest fashion. In situations where significant choices have to be made or new requirements requiring significant action arise, senior staff are entitled to put formal advice in writing and Councillors should expect to reply in writing and vice versa. The advice offered doesn't have to be taken but a decision taken which goes against the advice offered should be documented as to the reasons why.

Councillors who are operating as part of a Majority Administration ought to hold themselves as responsible for clear policy direction. Officers need to work to understand such direction, though they may seek to influence it. Regular dialogue and review will ensure such policy direction can be operated and will withstand challenge.

The best policy is often made by close working between Councillor political and conceptual direction and officer professional and management advice.

Councillors and senior staff need to operate within expectations of professional behaviour.

Officers are paid to be experts and should be treated as such but in return should not over-state their expertise. In some situations expertise is a minor component and other considerations including political principle and public credibility may be relevant. Senior staff should recognise these considerations lie outside their areas of expertise.

When asked questions or asked to give an account, senior staff must strive not to appear defensive or closed. A full, straightforward account should lead to better understanding and reflection. In return Councillors should not rush to judgement or blame precipitately.

Councillors should use officers to generate options, clarify implications and expand understanding of option appraisal.

The Leader, Deputy Leader and Committee Chairmen will have reason to hold senior staff to account. It will be important that this is only senior staff. Chief Officers are responsible for the performance of all other staff, not Councillors.

When these demanding conversations are taking place there will be an additional expectation that all parties will commit to firm, precise and professional language, to avoid any sense of personal conflict.

GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

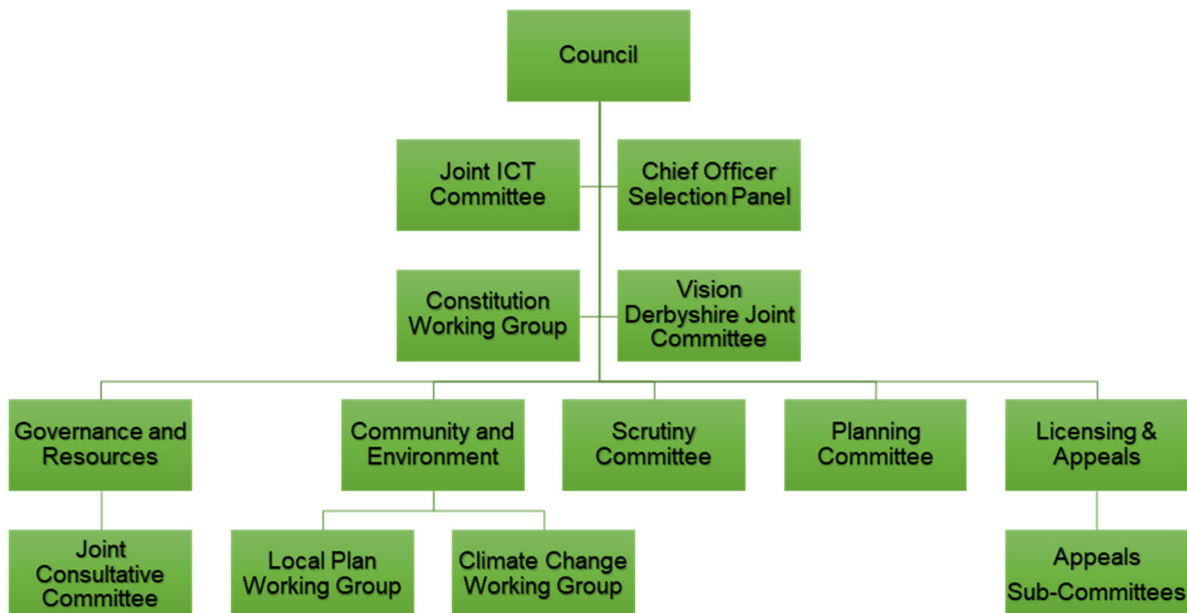
How the Council Works

The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient transparent and accountable to local people.

The Constitution is made up of 13 articles, as well as additional parts which set out in detail the procedures and codes of practice regulating different aspects of the Council's business.

Decision-making structure

The diagram below illustrates the Council's decision-making structure



The Council of 34 Members is responsible for setting the strategic policy direction of the authority and determining its budget, as well as the Council Tax to be levied, on an annual basis.

As an authority operating a committee system model of governance, all functions and responsibilities are legally invested in the full Council, which then chooses to reserve matters to itself and allocates responsibilities to other committees. Some committees hold statutory roles, such as Planning Committee and Licensing Committee. Whereas the Policy Committees (Community & Environment and Governance & Resources) have a role in implementing the overall priorities of the Council expressed through the Corporate Plan and agreed budget.

In practice, the vast majority of functions and responsibilities are discharged by officers under the principle established by the Council that unless a matter is specifically reserved to the Council or its committees then it is formally delegated to officers to determine on behalf of the authority.

Further information on the Council and its committees can be found in Part 3 of the Constitution named 'Functions and Responsibilities'.

Councillors are appointed to places on specific committees in accordance with the political balance of the Council as a whole (i.e. the allocation of seats to political groups must mirror the overall political composition of the Council). This process is carried out by the Council at its annual meeting which takes place in May each year.

Roles and Responsibilities

Political Groups

After your election, councillors must decide which political group they will be a Member of on the Council. For candidates who have stood for a political party, this will usually be the political group of the party for whom you have stood as a representative. However, councillors can serve as independent or politically 'non-aligned' Members, which means that they do not serve as part of a political group.

Any party with at least two councillors on the Council may form a political group.

Following the election, your political group should meet to elect a Group Leader and Deputy Group Leader. These leaders will then be responsible with providing the Council's Monitoring Officer with a list of Members within their political group. This list should include a signature from each Member.

If a councillor chooses to be politically non-aligned, they should write to the Monitoring Officer to confirm their status. This will then enable the calculation of the political balance of the authority and the entitlement of each political group to seats on committees.

If a political group has more than 17 seats then they will be deemed the 'majority group' and will nominate a councillor to serve as Leader of the Council. In such a scenario, the group with the second largest number of seats will be deemed the "main opposition group".

Where no political group has more than 17 seats, it will be incumbent on the political groups to work together to identify common themes that may enable them to form a coalition or a working agreement for support to command a majority of votes in the Council.

Ward Councillors

All councillors have a responsibility for the residents and businesses in the ward they represent. This can include speaking as an advocate for residents at Planning Committee meetings and working to improve the lives of local individuals and communities. However, ward councillors also have a responsibility to the district and the Council as a whole, which can sometimes lead to councillors needing to balance competing priorities.

Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader are elected for a one-year term at each Annual Meeting of the Council. As the Council operates a Committee system, the Leader/Deputy has no formal legal powers and duties vested in him or her under the Local Government Act 1972 or the Local Government Act 2000. However, in practice, all local authorities need to appoint a Leader and each Leader will hold the most significant elected Member role within the Council. The Council's Leader will be the political/elected head, the focus for policy direction and community development and the chief advocate and ambassador for the District.

The Council expects that the Leader will:

- be the political (rather than ceremonial) leader of the Council, for the benefit of all the District's communities - its citizens, taxpayers, businesses, public bodies and other public authorities;
- lead and work with the Council, particularly the Chairs of its Committees and Sub Committees, in the development of the Council's vision for the future, policy framework, budgets and strategies;
- lead and work with the Council, particularly the Chairs of its Committees and Sub Committees, in overseeing service delivery and the implementation of policies approved by the Council
- represent and pursue the interests of the Council in the community and at national and regional levels;
- fulfil the role of Leader at full Council meetings and carry out as necessary the other functions that require political leadership on behalf of the Council;
- lead in providing policy direction and guidance to the Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team;
- meet regularly to progress the Council's objectives with Committee Chairs, the Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team, Leaders of other political groups on the Council, partner organisations, stakeholders, community representatives, government representatives, the local Member of Parliament etc

The Deputy Leader is empowered to act on behalf of the Leader when they are unavailable.

Chairman of the Council

The Chairman of the Council is be elected by the Council annually. The Constitution provides for the Chairman of the Council to have the following responsibilities:

- To uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution, and to interpret the Constitution when necessary;
- To preside over meetings of the Council so that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of councillors and the interests of the community;
- meeting as a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and the place at which Members, who do not sit on Policy Committees or hold Committee Chairs are able to hold the Members of the Policy Committees and Committee Chairmen to account;
- To promote public involvement in the Council's activities;
- To be the conscience of the Council.

Civic Chairman of the District

The Civic Chairman of the District is a ceremonial post held by a councillor and is elected annually. The Civic Chairman of the District is the First Citizen of the Derbyshire Dales and has the civic responsibility representing and promoting the district. The role entails promoting events and causes by attendance at a variety of engagements throughout the civic year that raise the profile of the Derbyshire Dales and its people, both in the district and beyond.

The Constitution specifically provides for the Civic Chairman of the District to act:

- As a symbol of the authority - to be the Council's ambassador and to represent the Council at civic functions within the County boundaries.
- As a symbol of open society – to promote inclusiveness and equality.
- As an expression of social cohesion – to act as a link between the Council and the various community bodies and organisations.

Role of Committee Chairmen

Whilst there is no formally agreed role profile for Committee Chairmen, it is generally accepted in local government that they will:

- have a working knowledge of the functions, policies, practices, procedures, services and budgets of the Committee or Sub-Committee which they chair;
- attend all mandatory training sessions as required;
- lead in the development of the work of the Committee or Sub-Committee which they chair. This should take into account the wider vision, such as corporate, cross-service and partnership issues; lead in service delivery and the implementation of policies approved by the Council where these relate to the Committee or Sub-Committee which they chair;
- be the spokesperson for the Committee or Sub-Committee in relation to external affairs and communications;

- Progress the Committee's or Sub-Committee's objectives with officers and Members, and as appropriate other people, groups and organisations;
- represent and pursue the interests of the Committee or Sub-Committee which they chair in the community and if appropriate at regional and wider levels;
- promote and uphold high standards of ethical conduct by Members and the Council's equalities policies;
- ensure that the meetings of the Committee or Sub-Committee which they chair are properly conducted
- support the performance of the Council's scrutiny function and participate in scrutiny reviews as appropriate;
- maintain professional working relationships and establish mutual respect with all members and officers.

The responsibility of a Chairman for the proper conduct of meetings is formally recognised in law. There are provisions in the Local Government Act 1972 which apply to the holding and chairing of meetings, but much of the detail is supplied in the Council's Procedure Rules, which are standing orders made under powers in the 1972 Act. For any eventuality not covered in the legislation or the Procedure Rules, it may be possible to turn to the body of common law which the Courts have developed in relation to meetings.

The following are specific functions which a Chairman has under the Local Government Act 1972:

- a power to exercise a second (casting) vote in the event of an equality of votes on any matter;
- a duty to sign the minutes of the previous meeting;
- a power to agree the addition of a late item of business to the agenda, if the Chair is of the opinion that it should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

To help the Committee which they chair make effective decisions, Chairmen will not only ensure that the procedural rules applying to their Committee are observed, but also that any decisions made are sound in law. With assistance from officers as necessary, the Chairman will ensure that the Committee:

- observes any particular legal duties relevant to a proposed decision, and
- has regard as necessary to any general duties such as
 - ◊ compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998;
 - ◊ equalities; and
 - ◊ the general fiduciary duties to its Council Taxpayers to act with financial prudence.

The Chairman will ensure that the Committee reaches its decisions rationally, taking into account relevant factors and disregarding those which are irrelevant, including advice taken from the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.

The Council's Constitution also makes the following provisions for Chairmen of Committees to:

- be appointed at the Council's annual general meeting;

- have power to direct that items of business be placed on the agenda of their Committee and the order in which business is arranged on the agenda;
- control the proper conduct of meetings of his or her Committee;
- depart from the formality of the Rules of Debate applicable to full Council meetings and such discretion is regularly exercised;
- reserve Power to call extraordinary (special) meetings;
- present any reports which need approval of full Council;
- be available to answer questions;
- be consulted by officers prior to the exercise of specific delegated powers or decisions that are considered urgent.

Committee Roles

Council

The purpose of the full Council is for all Elected Members to meet to determine the overall policy structure and set an annual budget and council tax. It also provides an opportunity to hold the Leader of the Council and Committee Chairmen to account by allowing Members to ask questions on areas of their responsibilities.

Policy Committees

The following broad matters are reserved to Policy Committees:

Service and Financial Planning and Review

- Agreeing policy issues that are not reserved to full Council.
- Approval of the proposed withdrawal or variation of any service where this is outside the scope of an agreed Service Plan and the likely impact on present or future users of the service is considered significant.
- Agreeing alterations to Council Services Plans (provided they remain within the constraints of the Budget and Policy Framework).
- Agreeing fees and charges (other than any set by the full Council as part of the budget setting process) in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan and any policies in respect of fees and charges.
- Agreeing to policy and performance priorities for the short and medium term, taking into account the needs of the Council as a whole.
- Considering reviews of service performance against approved plans.

Consultation and Petitions

- Agreeing the Council's response to consultation by Government or other external agencies where this relates to proposed policy changes where the Chairman of the Committee considers the proposed changes to be significant.
- Dealing with petitions in accordance with the Council's scheme.

Scrutiny Committee

The Council established a Scrutiny Committee in July 2022 with the intended purpose of

- providing an independent review of Council decisions either before or after they have been made;
- providing an independent review of decisions made by certain partner authorities;
- making recommendations regarding the decisions made.

The Scrutiny Committee is not an alternative or additional mechanism to appeals procedures in respect of the decisions of the Council's regulatory committees.

Licensing and Appeals Committee

The Council's Licensing and Appeals Committee deals with functions that are regulatory in nature and are not reserved to officers to determine. This can include, for example, the licensing of operators of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles or applications in respect of liquor licensing.

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee considers the reports and recommendations of Planning Officers on applications and determines whether to grant permission after having regard to their professional recommendations and the views of members of the public and other stakeholders.

ETHICS AND STANDARDS

Within this section Members will find information regarding the standards expected of them when they are acting as a representative or conducting the business of the Council.

The Council's Constitution

The Council's Constitution, located on the Council's website, sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.

The Constitution comprises 13 articles and a further 7 parts. The articles set out the basic rules governing the way the Council conducts its business. The remaining 7 parts of the Constitution contain more detailed procedures and codes of practice regulating different aspect of the way in which the Council discharges its functions and responsibilities.

The purpose of the Constitution is to:

- Give a framework for the Council to provide high quality services which give best value in order to maintain and enhance the environment, and quality of life for all residents and businesses in the Derbyshire Dales;
- Enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with local people, businesses and other organisations;
- Support the active involvement of local people in the process of local authority decision making;
- Help Councillors represent their constituents more effectively;
- Enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively;
- Create a powerful and effective means of holding decision makers to public account;
- Ensure that those responsible for decision making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions; and
- Provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community.

Code of Conduct

The Council's Code of Conduct located on the Council's website sets out the standards expected of elected district councillors. It states what is required of Members when they are acting as a representative or conducting the business of the Council.



The Code is grounded in the Principles of Public Life and covers general behaviour around things like confidentiality, impartiality and bullying. It also details the financial and other interests that councillors must declare.

Member / Officer Protocol

All councillors and officers are subject to the Member and Officer Protocol. The protocol sets out detailed guideline for the behaviour of councillors and officers towards one another and can be found in Part 5 of the Constitution.

The working relationship between officers and councillors has to be built upon mutual trust and respect. It is also necessary that both officers and councillors have a clear idea of the differences between their respective roles.

Register of Interests

All councillors are required by law to provide a list of their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election to the Council.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are:

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation;
- Any sponsorship of the councillor, including contributions towards their election;
- Any contracts between the councillor and the Council;
- Any land the councillor has an interest in and lies within the area of the District Council;
- Any licences the councillor holds to occupy land within the Derbyshire Dales
- Any corporate tenancies;
- Certain securities they hold.

Councillors are also required by law to list the disclosable pecuniary interests of their spouse or civil partner, or person with whom they are living as if they were their spouse or civil partner.

These disclosable pecuniary interests are recorded in the Register of Interests which is published under each councillor's profile on the Council's website to ensure openness and transparency.

On election to office each councillor will be required to complete the Register of Interests form and ensure completion as soon as possible. Advice on completing the form will be available from the Monitoring Officer.

Gifts and Hospitality

All gifts and hospitality received by councillors should be declared to the Monitoring Officer through the Councillor Gifts and Hospitality Declaration Form, which can be provided through the Committee Team.

Safeguarding

Derbyshire Dales District Council believes that every child, young person and adult, regardless of their background, age, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ethnicity or religious belief, should be able to participate in a safe society without any fear, violence, abuse, bullying, discrimination or exploitation. Safeguarding is everyone's business and everyone at the Council shares a responsibility, both corporately and individually, to ensure that every person is treated with dignity and respect.

All Council employees, councillors, contractors and volunteers, particularly those who come into contact with, or who share information about children, young people or adults in the course of their work – but not exclusively so – have a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of the most vulnerable people, young or old.

If you are worried about someone and it is an emergency call 999.

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or adult at risk of harm and abuse call Derbyshire County Council on 01629 533190 to make a safeguarding referral. The District Council's Safeguarding Officer is Ashley Watts, Director of Community and Environmental Services and he can be contacted on 01629 761367 or ashley.watts@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Council is committed to working on behalf of and for all customers, residents, partners and visitors. This includes understanding the diversity of communities and their specific needs in order to provide the most appropriate and responsive services, and ensuring all are treated fairly, with dignity and with respect.

This commitment is reinforced by the Equality Act 2010 which requires the Council to promote fairness and equality through community leadership. In particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people.

As publicly elected councillors who represent the whole population of the Derbyshire Dales, all councillors are expected to act in accordance with the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Code of Conduct for Councillors. This includes a need to:

- Treat all people with dignity and respect;
- Know the local community and its different needs, and ensure Council services meet these diverse needs; and
- Engage with and listen to all sections of the community.

All councillors will be able to receive training and resources on equality and diversity as part of the induction and ongoing development programme.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AND CONSTITUENTS

Within this section councillors will find information on how to be effective when working with communities and town or parish councils within the Derbyshire Dales.

Representing your Ward

Maps of the various electoral wards within the Derbyshire Dales can be found on the Council's website. Following the May 2023 elections, the Derbyshire Dales has moved from 25 to 21 wards and has 13 single Member wards, 3 two-Member wards and 5 three-Member wards.

Councillors should aim to be familiar with their ward, its communities and key local contacts. Within the first six months of your election, arrangements will be made for a representative of the Corporate Leadership Team to undertake a 'Ward Walk' with you to understand the issues you want to resolve and better understand your local priorities.

Ward Surgeries

Councillors may choose to hold regular surgeries in their wards to allow them to meet and engage with local people and learn about potential casework issues. Prior to the pandemic, these would largely have been held as face-to-face meetings taking place at a publicised time and place where councillors would be available to speak to local residents. This model would also involve councillors booking a local venue in their ward directly.

Since the pandemic, councillors now have the option to set up virtual surgeries. These work similarly to face-to-face surgeries but remove the need for travel or booking a venue by allowing residents and their councillor to connect using software like Zoom or MS Teams. If a councillor wants to pursue that approach, a date, time and link can be published on their profile page on the Council's website, which once accessed by a resident will place them in a virtual waiting room until the councillor admits them into a private meeting.

Councillors can choose a format for surgeries which they best feel suits them and their communities. It may be helpful to discuss this with ward colleagues if you represent a multi-Member ward. The Committee Team will be able to provide advice on virtual surgeries and publicise these through the Council's website.

Health and Safety

Being at the heart of communities and staying in touch is what being a councillor is about. This includes helping individuals with any problems they might have, dealing with community tension and addressing wider community issues. Often this extends beyond just the delivery of Council services. These contacts are usually rewarding and non-adversarial. However, councillors can find themselves in a position where they need to manage angry and frustrated residents who often contact their elected representative when they feel that they have no other avenue to pursue.

In many cases, considering and maintaining personal safety and security is common sense. Councillors should always assess the level of risk and what arrangements are in place for their safety.

Town and Parish Councils

Town and Parish Councils (also known as Local Councils) are the first tier of local government and play a vital role in engaging with local people and helping to shape their communities.

There are 100 civil parishes in the Derbyshire Dales with an established network of over 70 town and parish councils. The whole of the district is fully parished.

Each Local Council is a corporate body, a legal entity separate from that of its members. It is an elected body in the first tier of local government and the decisions it takes are the responsibility of the whole body. Local Councils have the legal power to take action, but they have very few duties and greater freedom to choose the communities they serve and improve the quality of life and the local environment. Furthermore, they influence other decision makers and can, in many cases, deliver service to meet local needs.

The parish contact list is available to view [here](#).