

MINUTES of the EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING of the
SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
held at the Civic Offices, Civic Way, Swadlincote
on Tuesday 04 November 2025
at 6.00pm

PRESENT:

Labour Group

Councillor A Archer (Chair) and Councillor A Tilley (Vice-Chair) and Councillors S Bambrick, J Carroll, M Gee, S Harrison, A Haynes, I Hudson, A Jones, L Mulgrew, M Mulgrew, R Pearson, V Redfern, G Rhind, D Shepherd, L Singh, K Storey, B Stuart, S Taylor and N Tilley.

Conservative Group

Councillors N Atkin, D Corbin, M Ford, M Gotheridge, K Haines, A Kirke, J Lowe, S Meghani, D Muller, J Patten and P Watson.

Liberal Democrats

Councillors G Andrew and J Davies

Non-Grouped

Councillor A Wheelton

CL/65 **APOLOGIES**

Council was advised that apologies for absence had been received Councillor D Pegg (Labour Group).

CL/66 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

On behalf of all Members, an interest in relation to agenda item 7, Local Government Reorganisation Submission in accordance with Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011. the Monitoring Officer had granted dispensation to all Members in relation to this declaration.

CL/67 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10**

Council was informed that no questions had been received.

CL/68 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 11**

Council was informed that no questions had been received.

CL/69 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - SUBMISSION**

The Chief Executive addressed the Council providing a detailed summary of the options within the report, as follows.

Option A

- **Northern Unitary Council:** Amber Valley, Derbyshire Dales, High Peak, Chesterfield, Bolsover, North East Derbyshire.
- **Southern Unitary Council:** Derby City, South Derbyshire, Erewash.
- **Key Features:** Uses existing district boundaries, avoids splitting Amber Valley, and creates councils with balanced population and resources. Supported by Amber Valley residents (54% agreement in consultation).

Option A1 (Modification of Option A)

- **Northern Unitary Council:** High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover, part of Amber Valley.
- **Southern Unitary Council:** Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire, part of Amber Valley.
- **Key Features:** Splits Amber Valley at parish level to better align with community ties and functional geography. Offers more balanced population and resources between the two councils. Payback period slightly longer due to disaggregation costs.

Option B

- **Northern Unitary Council:** High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover.
- **Southern Unitary Council:** South Derbyshire, Erewash, Amber Valley, Derby City.
- **Key Features:** Places Amber Valley in the southern council, aligning with Derby Housing Market Area. Allows Derby City to grow in all directions. Supported by High Peak (55%) and Derby City (49%) residents.

Option B1 (Modification of Option B)

- **Northern Unitary Council:** High Peak, Derbyshire Dales, North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield, Bolsover, part of Amber Valley.
- **Southern Unitary Council:** Derby City, Erewash, South Derbyshire, part of Amber Valley.
- **Key Features:** Splits Amber Valley at parish level, offering a near-perfect balance of population and resources between the two councils. Addresses community ties and functional geography. Payback period slightly longer due to disaggregation costs.

Consultation Results

- **Option A:** Preferred by 36% of respondents overall, with strong support from Amber Valley residents (54%).
- **Option B:** Preferred by 39% of respondents (weighted), with strong support from High Peak (55%) and Derby City (49%) residents.
- **Option C (consulted as Option A1):** Preferred by 21% of respondents overall, with support from Derby City residents (36%). Most respondents opposed splitting Amber Valley.

Councillor R Pearson thanked the Chief Executive for preparing the report and highlighted the significance of stakeholder engagement in considering a single unitary authority, emphasizing the need for an accountable and

sustainable structure to improve service delivery. Councillor R Pearson noted that reorganisation being challenging but necessary for financial sustainability and simplified governance.

Councillor A Wheelton expressed concerns about the national cost of reorganisation, potential delays in housing development, and negative impacts on pensions and service quality. Councillor A Wheelton stressed that 52% of residents opposed the changes and urged members to act in the best interests of the community.

Councillor K Haines described Option D as the “least worst” choice and noted the absence of officer recommendations, which would have provided helpful guidance.

Councillor D Corbin criticised the lack of cross-party collaboration and questioned whether the proposed changes would deliver real savings, citing pension liabilities and community opposition.

Councillor S Meghani reiterated that the process feels imposed rather than collaborative, warning of service disruption, reduced democratic representation, and financial risks. He argued that power was shifting away from local communities toward central government.

Councillor J Patten opposed breaking up Derbyshire, citing fears over council tax harmonization and loss of local identity.

Councillor N Tilley acknowledged the challenges but expressed hope for a smooth transition if changes proceed.

Councillor G Andrew summarised the situation as a government-driven process offering limited choice. He opposed Option B, citing concerns over council tax disparities and the risk of South Derbyshire becoming a “small fish in a big pond.”

It was noted that each option had its strengths and challenges, with varying levels of support across different areas and expressed concerns about costs, community impact, and loss of localism. Option B was viewed as the most balanced option.

As required by the Council’s Procedure Rules a recorded vote was taken.

The Members who voted in favour of Option B were:

Councillors A Archer, S Bambrick, J Carroll, M Gee, S Harrison, A Haynes, I Hudson, A Jones, L Mulgrew, M Mulgrew, R Pearson, V Redfern, G Rhind, D Shepherd, L Singh, K Storey, B Stuart, S Taylor, A Tilley, N Tilley

The Members who voted against were:

Councillors N Atkin, D Corbin, M Ford, M Gotheridge, K Haines, A Kirke, J Lowe, S Meghani, D Muller, J Patten, P Watson, A Wheelton

The Members who abstained from voting were:

Councillors G Andrew and J Davies.

- 1.1 Council considered and approved the Council's Case for Change for Local Government Reorganisation in Derbyshire as detailed at Appendix B, attached to the report.**
- 1.2 Council approved Option B, as the preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation.**
- 1.3 Council agreed the Leader of the Council to submit the Case for Change to Government by the 28 November 2025 deadline.**
- 1.4 Council delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make any minor or technical amendments to the proposal prior to its submission by 28 November 2025 deadline.**

CL/70 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as indicated in the reports of Committees.

CL/71 **EXEMPT QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NUMBER 11**

Council was informed that no questions had been received.

The meeting terminated at 18:45hours.

COUNCILLOR A ARCHER

CHAIR OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL