

Derbyshire County Council

Council Plan 2025-29

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Foreward

We're proud to unveil our new Council Plan which will form the bedrock of all we aim to achieve over the next four years, mapping out how we will do it and outlining how our plans will benefit Derbyshire's residents and communities.

Every four years we develop a new Council Plan, refreshing it annually to take account of new developments, opportunities, risks and challenges, ensuring we are always on the front foot.

Our 2025-29 Council Plan has been shaped by residents who gave us their views during a consultation last autumn and we are grateful to everyone who took the time to have their say.

Our clear vision is set out in our plan which will see us working as One Council, with partners, residents, communities, businesses and other stakeholders, including the East Midlands Combined County Authority to improve lives across Derbyshire.

Well-documented challenges continue to face the Council and others across the country, many of them beyond our control. These challenges are the backdrop to our new plan.

We continue to face extremely challenging financial pressures, which have stemmed from significantly higher costs due to inflation and the continuing rising demand for our crucial services, particularly adults' and children's social care.

However, coupled with demographic pressures, these challenges are likely to continue so it is essential that we align our available budget to our priorities and objectives, ensuring financial stability is maintained, while at the same time having the capacity to deliver.

This will mean making some tough decisions in the short-term regarding budget savings; and, over the medium to long-term, changing the way we work so we can deliver services which are more efficient and effective.

Despite our financial challenges we remain ambitious for Derbyshire, its people, communities and places and our plan sets out how we will deliver the best outcomes we can.

We will be looking to build on our strong service, which includes looking after 3,361 miles of roads, lending two million books and digital items via our library service, dealing with more than 40,000 requests for social care advice, information and assessments and looking after more than 1,000 children in our care. In addition, the Council will continue working with the East Midlands Combined County Authority to maximise the opportunities presented by devolution for Derbyshire.

Our plan blends the delivery of good outcomes for residents with continued efforts to change the way we work, exploring new and innovative ways to mitigate challenging external factors and ensuring best value is a priority in all that we do. Our focus on delivering valued services for residents is why the drive for improved efficiency and effectiveness is at the heart of our new Council Plan.

While working on these longer-term changes, we are facing the immediate challenges head on, with a carefully planned savings programme of £98.6m in place by the end of 2029-30. This has inevitably led to difficult decisions affecting some of our services, but it is essential we live within our means

Our plan sets out three key Outcomes that we are confident encompass all we hope to achieve for Derbyshire:

- **People:** Empowered communities where people live safe, happy, healthy and independent lives
- **Place:** Prosperous, green and sustainable places with opportunities for all
- **Council:** A resident focused, efficient and effective organisation delivering value for money

What we will do over the course of this plan is set out as strategic objectives and supporting actions. You will find these 24 strategic objectives, aligned to one of the three Outcomes, in the plan from page 15.

Whilst we face significant financial challenges we believe our new Council Plan will enable local people to achieve their aspirations while also supporting each other within their communities, will ensure we modernise and transform how we operate and help us to use and continue to build effective networks internally, with local people, with partners and with the government.

About Derbyshire

Place:

A county with a rich, diverse heritage with spectacular landscapes such as the Peak District National Park and other unique attractions such as the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

354,200 households in Derbyshire.

Derbyshire is centrally located in the UK with strong links to the nearby cities of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Manchester, and Sheffield.

36.1% of houses are in the lowest Council Tax band (Band A), compared to 23.8% of properties nationally.

27 market towns play a significant role in the local economy.

Derbyshire is a largely rural county with many sparsely populated areas alongside larger built-up urban conurbations.

Derbyshire's economy is worth £18.5billion.

296,500 people are employed by a Derbyshire business, with the largest sector being manufacturing which employs over 49,500 people.

Derbyshire is home to 30,500 businesses, the majority (88%) of which are micro businesses employing 0-9 employees.

The average house price in Derbyshire stands at £233,090, 25% below the England average of £309,570.

About Derbyshire

People

Derbyshire has an older age profile with people aged 65 and over representing 23% of the county's population, higher than the England average of 19%.

The county has a total population of 811,400 people.

65% of working age people are qualified to RQF level 3 and above in Derbyshire. Whilst this is just below the England average (67%) this varies considerably across the county.

Derbyshire's population is expected to increase by 13% by 2043. Across the county population growth varies from just 5% projected in Derbyshire Dales to 30% in South Derbyshire.

19% of the county's population is aged 18 and under compared to 21% for England.

The average weekly wage of a Derbyshire resident is £654, 4% below the England average of £683.

The county's Black and Minority Ethnic population has more than doubled over the ten last years, now representing 6% (50,200) of the county's population.

The healthy life expectancy for both males and females living in Derbyshire is just below the national average. However, across the county healthy life expectancy varies considerably between the least and most deprived areas.

Derbyshire has an increasingly ageing population with the 85+ population set to double by 2043.

20.1% of the county's population are classified as disabled, higher than the England average of 17.3%.

About the Council

Our Services

Derbyshire currently has a two-tier local government structure. This means that local government functions are split, with some services provided by the eight district and borough councils, and some provided by the County Council.

The Council is responsible for the delivery of a range of mandatory statutory duties including key functions such as Adults Social Care, Education, Children's Safeguarding, Public Health, Highways, Waste management, Libraries and Trading Standards.

A total of 64 elected members represent the residents of Derbyshire.

Supports 420 schools to offer the best education.

Provides safe, stable homes for children in our care.

Runs 45 branch libraries and a mobile library service.

Deals with concerns about child safety and wellbeing.

Supports older and disabled people to live independently at home.

Deals with requests for adult social care assessments, advice and information.

Supports residents financial well-being by providing Welfare Rights services and managing the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund.

Our Services

Our Place department runs nine household waste recycling centres and disposes of more than 400,000 tonnes of waste each year.

Maintains 3,361 miles of roads, 1,234 highway bridges and 2,796 miles of pavements and foot ways each year.

Looks after 2,788 miles of rights of way footpaths, 276 miles of cycleways and greenways and 90,200 street lights.

Our Children's Services department supports around 1,600 children with a child in need plan and around 800 children on a child protection plan as well as their families. Just over 1,000 children are in care, of which:

8% are in semi-independent living placements.

14% are in other placement types.

16% are in a children's home.

62% are with foster carers.

Our Adult Social Care and Health department supports around 10,300 people on a longer-term basis including:

20% through direct payments where people choose and control their own support.

8% are in semi-independent living placements.

18% in other community settings.

14% are in other placement types.

31% in residential or nursing homes.

16% are in a children's home.

31% supported in their own homes.

62% are with foster carers.

The Council will continue to fulfil its statutory duties and has identified three Outcomes in this Plan to focus on delivering results within available resources, ensuring better outcomes for local people and value for money.

Vision and Outcomes

Vision

Working together to improve lives across Derbyshire

Outcomes We want Derbyshire to have:

People: Empowered communities where people live safe, happy, healthy and independent lives

We are committed to supporting people to live independent, healthy, and active lives, reducing health inequalities, and improving outcomes for children and families.

Place: Prosperous, green and sustainable places with opportunities for all

We will ensure Derbyshire is well connected with excellent road networks, transport links and digital infrastructure. We are dedicated to protecting the environment and heritage and promoting inclusive growth to create more employment opportunities and a prosperous future for everyone.

The Council: A resident focused, efficient and effective organisation delivering value for money

By embracing innovation, changing how we operate, and working together with our partners we will be a financially sustainable organisation that meets the needs of our residents and communities.

Our Ways of Working

The Council has developed a new set of principles to guide our future ways of working. These principles will guide how we design and shape our services as we change the way we work over the course of the plan and beyond.

Customer: We will put customers and residents first, designing services based on their experiences, needs, and priorities.

Partnerships: We will work together with our partners, combining resources and finding ways to achieve better results for local people.

Transformation and Improvement: We will design services with communities, and use a consistent approach to managing changes, focusing on best practice, innovation and doing things as efficiently as possible.

Statutory: We will prioritise our efforts and resources on meeting our statutory responsibilities.

Data and Insight: We will use data and insight to guide our decisions and better understand our communities.

One Council: We will work together across the Council, acting in a joined-up way, removing duplication of effort.

Service Delivery: We will try to get things right the first time by removing obstacles and delivering services that are accessible, inclusive, and responsive – improving outcomes for our customers and residents.

Best Value: We will spend money wisely and provide services in the most effective, efficient, and sustainable way.

Digital: We will use digital technology to improve access, efficiency, and the overall customer experience, ensuring processes and systems work as well as they can.

Workforce: We will have a high-performing, inclusive, well-led, motivated, well-trained, and well-rewarded workforce.

Employee Values

In order to deliver our Vision and Outcomes for Derbyshire we have agreed a set of values that will help shape our culture and encourage consistent behaviour across the Council.

Accountable: We hold ourselves and others to account.

Collaborative: We listen and engage to deliver shared goals.

Innovative: We are curious, embrace change and continuously improve.

Empowered: We support, trust and value each other.

Customer Commitments

In delivering our services, and as part of our customer experience strategy, we have three commitments that we have made to our customers. These commitments are what customers can expect when dealing with the Council.

We will be responsible, open and honest.

We will work together to achieve positive outcomes.

We will listen and be open to new ideas.

Our Plan for 2025-29

Challenges and Opportunities

Economic and Political

National economic challenges, including the high cost of living, are making life harder for many residents and businesses in our area. The price of fuel, food, and energy remains high, and people who are already struggling are at even greater risk. The Council is working hard to provide support where it's needed most.

In regard to the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) the Government, in the Autumn Budget, committed to simplify the funding landscape, reducing the number of grants through consolidating them and moving to multi-year settlements so that local authorities can plan more effectively. There will be reform of how the LGFS is allocated, starting with a targeted approach to allocating additional funding in 2025-26 ahead of a broader redistribution of funding through a multi-year settlement from 2026-27.

Rising Demand for Services

Demographic changes, such as an aging population, are adding to the growing demand for services. Key areas like Adult Social Care, and Child Safeguarding are under significant strain due to increased demand, as well as rising costs from inflation and a provider-driven market, especially for external social care placements. At the same time, people expect high-quality support. To meet these needs, we must find new innovative ways of working and strengthen our partnerships to continue delivering good services within our available resources.

Financial Pressures

Councils across the country are facing significant financial strain, and Derbyshire County Council is no exception. Escalating costs, driven by inflation and market conditions, have made it more expensive to deliver the essential services that local people need. Alongside this we are seeing an increase in demand for services, particularly for social care, leading to a further strain on our budget. The latest increases to the minimum wage and employer National Insurance contributions will also add pressure to our financial position. In recent years, to keep services running and deliver a balanced budget, we have relied on our financial reserves, but this is not a long-term solution. To address this, we have put in place a five-year savings programme amounting to £98.6m, but bigger, more fundamental changes to the way we operate are needed to make sure our finances are sustainable for the future.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Climate change poses a long-term threat to both the community and the environment. More frequent extreme weather events are affecting infrastructure, homes, and businesses, particularly due to flooding in some parts of the county. The Council remains committed to reducing its carbon emissions and aims to reach net zero by 2032 or sooner. This involves cutting emissions from our operations, reducing our property footprint, and exploring renewable energy options, and exploring ways to tackle climate change through improving and enhancing the natural environment. The Council, in conjunction with its partners, continues to undertake work to help ensure both our operations and functions, and the county, are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Devolution and Collaboration

The recent devolution deal and creation of the East Midlands Combined County Authority represents a significant opportunity for growth and localised decision-making. The deal, worth £1.14 billion and indirectly billions more, not only brings more funding into the area, but also gives us more control over important issues like transport, skills and training, housing, and the environment. With the newly elected Mayor, we also gain more opportunities to shape issues affecting our council and local communities.

In the English Devolution White Paper, the Government has set out further detail on the future of devolution, including working with councils to simplify local structures and efficiency savings from council reorganisation. In addition, additional powers for existing mayors and their combined authorities will be available, aimed at boosting economic growth. Through working together with other local authorities, we can use these resources to build a stronger economy and improve the quality of life for everyone in our region.

Opportunities for Change

While financial constraints and rising demand for services are difficult challenges, they also present opportunities to make significant improvements. The Council has already started making services more efficient through digital solutions, service redesign, and stronger partnership working. However, there is more work to be done. The Council's running costs are 11% higher than those of similarly sized County Councils. Additionally, our staff are paid below the local authority average, which contributes to ongoing recruitment and retention challenges. By transforming how we work, we can create a more effective council that puts residents first. Our new Customer Experience strategy and Community Engagement plans are key elements in this transformation, ensuring services are designed with the needs and experiences of residents in mind.

Integrated Strategic Planning

As part of our new approach to integrated strategic planning, designed to achieve a closer integration of service and financial planning, the Council has identified a number of Strategic Objectives, which together outline the key activity the Council must deliver to achieve the Council's Vision and Outcomes.

A total of 24 Strategic Objectives have been identified and are set out on the following pages. The Strategic Objectives have been plotted against the 2025-29 timeline and this has been represented as a Base Plan, enabling a single overview of planned activity aligned to our three Outcomes.

The Base Plan promotes a better understanding of the full range of planned activity and resource requirements across the organisation, assisting the Council to evaluate its strategic options and to prioritise activity. This supports the alignment of the budget to the Council's priorities, assists effective resource planning and enables the Council to ensure that its ambitions match the organisation's capacity to deliver.

The Base Plan will also be used to present and track the Council's performance, supporting a better understanding of the overall progress the Council is making and enabling a stronger strategic focus on any key areas of under-performance.

Strategic Objectives and Base Plan

Strategic Objectives

Outcome 1 - People: Empowered communities where people live safe, happy, healthy and independent lives

1. Achieve sufficiency of accommodation to ensure children are cared for in the right home at the right time.
2. Deliver improved outcomes for those with special educational needs and disabilities through timely analysis of need and support services in collaboration with stakeholders.
3. Ensure there is a good choice of affordable Adult Social Care support available across the county with a focus on people's experiences and improving quality.
4. Support people to live their best lives independently at home, connected to the community and local resources, stepping in with more help where needed.
5. Support people to recover and regain stability, independence and control following a personal crisis or illness.
6. Work across the Health and Social Care system with partners, carers and residents to provide support in a safe, supportive homelike setting.
7. Support financial wellbeing by maximising income, supporting good work and addressing poverty, reducing demand across council services.
8. Promote good mental health, prevent early deaths, and improve healthy life expectancy by tackling health inequalities and addressing the key risk factors of health through preventative activity.
9. Enable the best start in life by working across the Council and with partners to enable families to thrive.

Outcome 2 - Place: Prosperous, green and sustainable places with opportunities for all

10. Work to address the causes and adapt to the impacts of climate change through the activities of the Council
11. Support the East Midlands Combined County Authority to drive inclusive and sustainable growth in the Derbyshire economy including the creation of a new regional transport organisation.
12. Deliver a safe, effective, efficient and innovative highways service including the completion of the full transformation of the Highways Service itself.
13. Leading the stewardship of the natural and built environment and delivering national policy and regulatory requirements relating to waste, nature recovery and heritage.

Outcome 3 - The Council: A resident focused, efficient and effective organisation delivering value for money

14. Develop new operating models to provide enhanced services to children and families, strengthen workforce development and explore commercial opportunities.
15. Strengthen the effectiveness of strategic partnerships to drive improved outcomes for children.
16. Recognise and value carers and our social care workforce and the contribution they make.
17. Embed co-production to strengthen true partnership between people who use Adult Social Care services, carers and professionals to deliver better outcomes

18. Deploy and embed the Customer Experience Strategy and community engagement/consultation approaches aligned to delivery of the organisation's vision, strategic objectives and portfolio of change.
19. Fully explore and implement the opportunity to create a single unitary council for Derbyshire through Local Government Reorganisation as set out in the English Devolution Whitepaper.
20. Deliver our four-year budget savings programme to achieve financial sustainability with a focus on delivering £37.5m savings in 2025-26 (year 1 to be refreshed annually).
21. Develop and engage the Council's workforce to enable the organisation to achieve its vision and deliver its strategic objectives and portfolio of change.
22. Improve efficiency and integration across the Council through the centralisation and redesign of support services and digital and financial transformation.
23. Support and deliver increased efficiency and effectiveness through best value service reviews to achieve service improvement, redesign and/or different delivery models including opportunities for digitisation and automation.
24. Transform the Council's property portfolio, so that it is affordable, sustainable and consists of only those assets required to deliver council priorities.

Delivering and Monitoring the Plan

The Council Plan is supported by an overarching Strategic Objectives Implementation Plan and the Council's Financial Plan and each department has a Service Plan which sets out how the department will deliver the actions in the Council Plan.

Monitoring how we are performing against delivering the Council Plan is done in a number of ways.

The Outcomes Framework is a wider set of measures that is used to assess whether we are meeting our Outcomes over the four years of the Council Plan. The following outcome measures will be reported and reviewed annually.

People: Empowered communities where people live safe, happy, healthy and independent lives

Population and communities

- Percentage of residents who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- Percentage of residents who feel safe when outside in their local area after dark
- Percentage of residents who agree people from different backgrounds get on well together
- Road traffic casualties (rate per 1,000 population)
- Total crime (rate per 1,000 population)

Health and Wellbeing

- Healthy Life Expectancy at birth (Male)
- Healthy Life Expectancy at birth (Female)
- Healthy Life Expectancy Gap
- Smoking Prevalence in Adults (18+) Current Smokers (%)
- Potential years of life lost (PYLL) due to alcohol-related conditions for both male and female
- Percentage of adults (aged 18 plus) classified as overweight or obese
- Percentage of physically active adults (aged 19+)
- Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth
- Percentage of children classified as obese (Year 6)
- Under 75's mortality rate from causes considered preventable
- Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over
- Quality of life of people who use services
- The number of adults aged 65 and over whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes (per 100,000 population)
- The proportion of people who receive long-term support who live in their home or with family
- The percentage of residential adult social care providers rated good
- Quality of life of unpaid carers

Children, Families and Education

- Percentage of children in low-income families
- Number of children in care per 10,000
- Percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds Not in Education, Employment or Training

- Percentage of pupils achieving grade 4 and above in English and Math's at GSCE
- Percentage reading, writing and mathematics at expected standard (KS2)
- Percentage of pupils achieving good level of development (EYFS)
- Rate of first-time entrants to youth justice system (per 100,000)
- Proportion of young offenders who re-offend

Place: Prosperous, green and sustainable places with opportunities for all

Economy

- Economic productivity rate (Gross Value Added/per hour worked)
- Percentage change in business births
- Percentage of people in employment (aged 16-64)
- Percentage of people who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness (aged 16-64)
- Percentage change in employee numbers over 5 years
- Gross median weekly pay of a full-time Derbyshire employee (£)
- Percentage of working age population (aged 16-64) with a level 4+ qualification
- Average travel time in minutes to reach nearest large employment centre (500 to 4,999 jobs available)

Environment

- Local Authority territorial greenhouse gas emissions estimates (per capita, tCO₂e)
- Tonnes of household waste production
- Air pollution (concentration of fine particulate matter per cubic metre)
- Number of renewable electricity installations
- Number of bus passenger journeys within Derbyshire

The Council: A resident focused, efficient and effective organisation delivering value for money

- Percentage of residents who are satisfied with how Derbyshire County Council runs things
- Percentage of residents who agree the Council keeps them informed about their decisions
- Percentage of residents who agree that the Council provides value for money
- Percentage of residents who were satisfied with the way in which their contact with the Council was handled

Through our performance framework we will regularly monitor progress in delivering the Strategic Objectives outlined in the Plan, as well as the performance of key services. Reports will be produced on a quarterly basis and the performance measures we will use are set out in our performance framework.

For further information, the Financial Plan, Strategic Objectives Implementation Plan, Departmental Service Plans and Quarterly Performance Reports on Council Plan progress are available on the Derbyshire County Council website.

Budget

The Council employs more than 10,500 people and has a budget of £769.755m in 2025-26 that is used to deliver a broad range of services including its statutory responsibilities. This money comes from six main sources and is spent on the following service areas:

Where the money comes from (£m): Total Income £769.845m

Council Tax (£441.022m)

General grants (£181.850m)

Business rates top up grant (£102.945m)

Business rates (£24.864m)

Revenue support grant (£19.164m)

How the money will be spent (£m): Total net budget £769.845m. After delivery of £37.5m of savings

Adult Social Care and Health (£352.206m)

Children's Services (£175.772m)

Place (£99.336m)

Corporate Services and Transformation (£71.959m)

Contingency, interest, receipts and debt charges (£70.572m)

Savings (£m): Total savings £37.7m

The Council needs to make total savings of £66.6m by the end of 2028-29, of which the following £37.5m savings have been identified for 2025-26 to ensure total spend does not exceed total income.

Adult Social Care and Health (£16.9m)

Children's Services (£3.3m)

Corporate Services and Transformation (4.6m)

Place (£11.6m)

Corporate (£1.1m)

Have Your Say

The development of our new four year Council Plan has been informed by a consultation with residents, businesses, employees and key stakeholders. We would very much welcome your views on the Plan.

If you would like to discuss any part of it, are interested in getting involved, have any comments or require more information then please contact:

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