
COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 9th March, 2026

Present: Councillor Stephen Button (in the Chair),
Councillors Jodi Clements (Vice Chair), Clare Yates, Clare McKenna,
Lorraine Cox and Tina Walker
Co-optee: Matthew Shaw

In Attendance: Kirsten Burnett – Head of Policy and Organisational Development
Lyndsey Sims – Chief Executive of Hyndburn Leisure Trust

Apologies: Councillors Mike Booth, David Heap, Sandie Dent, Rawstron and
Jean Battle

330 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Booth and Heap and Co-optees Jean Battle, Jackie Rawstrone and Sandie Dent.

There were no substitutions.

331 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no interests or dispensations declared at the meeting.

332 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 1st December 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - **That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.**

333 Chair's Update

The Chair reminded Members that this was the last Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee scheduled to take place in the 2025-26 municipal year. Consequently, the two-year appointment of the Co-opted members was due to expire and new Co-optees would need to be appointed for the 2026-27 municipal year. She explained that applications for the Co-optee positions would be advertised after the Council's Annual General Meeting.

The Chair thanked all Co-optees for their valuable contributions to the meetings throughout the year.

334 Active Wellbeing Services

Lyndsey Sims, Chief Executive of Hyndburn Leisure Trust, gave a presentation on the provision of 'Active Services' in the borough.

Active Wellbeing Services included the key areas:

- Physical Activities
- Healthy Weight
- Holiday Activities and Food Programme
- Smoke Free

She explained that the aim was to get people to be more active by providing the right support and advice. Each scheme lasted 12 weeks. Members were given information on the East Lancs Leisure Trust – Social Value of Exercise Referral Schemes and how people were offered the opportunity to access one of the Active Services.

An assessment of the services was measured in 4 areas: health, wellbeing, community cohesion and individual development. She explained that data had been collected to assess the success of the services. They found that there were better outcomes for participants in respect of life satisfaction, greater mental health, better health outcomes and better community cohesion. Participants were often from more deprived areas, suggesting the scheme also helped to address inequalities in wellbeing as well as improving social inclusion. Most of the respondents intended to continue their physical activity once the scheme ended.

In respect of valuation:

- on the WELLBY scale, 1.6 points of life satisfaction between the programme participant and the waitlist, estimating a value of £26,500 of wellbeing impact per person.
- on the QALY – Quality-Adjusted Life Years, there was 0.08 points on the EQ-5D index scale, estimated to be approximately £5,700.
- benefits that are sustained are assessed to last for at least one year.
- the majority of participants intended to stay active over the next 6 months and most would remain members of the Leisure Centre. Thus, suggesting a sustainable business model.

For the Future:

- There was a collective commitment to sustain and continue to grow and develop the Active Wellbeing Service.
- Good practice would be built upon.
- Collaborative work was being carried out to collect and analyse data, upskill and develop teams and work on commercial operating models and brand awareness.

Members submitted questions in advance of the meeting with responses provided on the following topics:

- How the Active Wellbeing programmes were being promoted.
- How residents could locate the services.
- If GPs could refer patients directly.
- Were people with disabilities/impairments catered for?
- Are various methods of booking the courses available?
- Are there any incentives to continue exercising n completion of courses?

A summary of the responses provided at the meeting, were given below:

- Self-referral routes were promoted through the Hyndburn Leisure website and through a limited amount of print marketing and social media.
- The programmes were accessed via health professional referrals and individuals could also self-refer directly on the Hyndburn Leisure website.
- Specific pathways were delivered for different health conditions. Facilities were designed to be accessible but further improvements would be sought as part of a commitment to inclusivity.
- People were supported to either continue to exercise within the leisure facility or to find a low cost or no cost alternative within the community.
- Various methods of booking were available, including online and telephone.

Members also enquired about:

- the role and involvement of Sports Clubs
- targeting against vaping
- further information on the 'Smoke Free' project
- Had TikTok been used to advertise the Services?
- Was there was a cap on the number of people that could use the service
- Could there be greater advertisement of the self-referral scheme

Responses were as follows:

There was already joint working with Sports Clubs, such as Accrington Stanley, to deliver facilities and opportunities to members of the public and this had been considered a success.

Lyndsey Sims explained that the Smoke Free project was an initiative for providing nicotine-free support to residents and would provide support to people who wanted to reduce smoking and those who needed help with vaping.

There was significant health deprivation within the Local Authority so it was important to enable self-referral to the schemes and increase reach to those who required support.

Lyndsey Sims reported that they aimed to use the data to improve services and work smarter in the future, which included good communication and the pooling of resources to produce a positive marketing message. She pointed out that although TikTok was not used to promote Active Wellbeing Services, other social media platforms were and that they would be using testimonial stories to promote and encourage others to use the services.

There was a commercial target but it was the aim of the Service to improve the quality of that being provided and make the service sustainable. She acknowledged that some Members had not seen any advertisements for self-referrals and indicated that this provision would be reviewed.

Resolved

- That the report be noted.

335 Access to Swimming Lessons in the Borough

Lyndsey Sims, Chief Executive of Hyndburn Leisure Trust, gave a presentation on 'Learn to Swim'. She referred to the issues of availability, cost and accessibility of swimming lessons provided by the Trust.

She referred to the following points:

- **Quality** Lessons followed the 'Swim England's National Plan for Teaching Swimming', it was led by qualified teachers (2 at Level 2 with Level 1 assistants). Teachers were often in the water too. A parent portal platform had been introduced to improve the experience of parents and children.
- **Membership** Weekly programme of lessons across 3 swimming pools plus data collected to monitor use including places available per month, number of members, number of members who pay by direct debit, numbers attending the Bhaja Initiative and a waiting list of over 500.
- **Affordability** Cost of a lesson in respect of group lessons, one-to-one lessons, crash course and free swimming outside of lessons.
- **Future Developments** Swimming lesson programme is set to grow further by the end of 2026, the recruitment and development of more swimming teachers, the Trust's plan to introduce new pre-school swimming sessions, extend the learn to swim programme and the forthcoming addition of adult swimming lessons to the weekly timetable. Water Wellbeing accreditation and broadening the swimming for health programme is being applied for.

Members submitted the following questions in advance of the meeting, summarised as follows:

- Why are the Leisure Centres closed on bank holidays when more residents would potentially want to use them?
- The HLT app cannot be used when booking preschool swimming lessons which may deter people from booking lessons. Could this be reviewed?
- Could the Trust's policy for advertising swimming sessions be reviewed and improved?
- Could data be provided on the numbers attending swimming sessions across the various centres?
- Did the Trust meet its footfall targets for attendance at its Leisure Centres this year and, if not, are there plans to improve them?
- Hyndburn has a diverse community, what plans are in place to ensure all communities are consulted on the provision of swimming sessions
- Once the new Leisure Centres were up and running, what would waiting lists potentially look like?
- Are there plans to work with transport providers to make it easier for people to access the Leisure Centres? Currently, using public transport can mean catching more than one bus.
- There is a lack of healthy food served at Hyndburn Leisure Centre. Could the food provision be reviewed to reflect a more healthy menu?

Responses were provided as follows:

- Closure of Leisure Centres on bank holidays was being reviewed. Currently contractual arrangements limited opening times. Consideration was being given to the hours that could be operated.
- Consideration was being given to adding further activities to the booking App with pre-school swimming being one of them.
- The Trust was intending to run a young people activity marketing campaign in 2026 to increase awareness of swimming lessons as well as other activities on offer. However, there is a long waiting list for swimming lessons which is cleansed and updated throughout the year.
- Data was provided during the presentation of the meeting, details of which were set out previously.
- The Trust did meet its footfall targets for attendance at its Leisure Centres.
- The Trust does provide women only swimming sessions and work in partnership with the Bahja Initiative.
- Working with transport providers was not currently in the plans of the Trust but it would be something that could be given further consideration. She suggested that community groups may have greater influence on transport companies because they would be more likely to provide transport if there was greater interest in people using a service.
- The 3 catering spaces that the Trust operates have varied customer bases and as a result have differing menus. There is a core offer across all café areas, but it was recognized that good practice could be taken from the recently opened café at the Cath Thom Leisure Centre to the other sites to enhance their offer.

The Chair of the Committee thanked Lyndsey Sims for attending the meeting and her hard work in providing leisure and health and wellbeing activities in Hyndburn.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

336 Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre

Head of Policy and Organisation Development submitted a report to update the Committee on work to progress plans to allow the re-opening of the Oswaldtwistle Civic Arts Centre and Theatre.

She reported that the Council was the owner of the building and summarised the history of ownership of the building, which had recently been returned to the Council. She explained that the building required significant investment to secure its future. Capital allocations include £267,000 from the 2024-25 Capital Programme for refurbishment works with a further £250,000 allocated in 2025-26. The Council had applied to the Theatre Trust to secure a Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities programme for a £10,000 grant to carry out essential roof survey work. There had also been a tender process to secure a contractor to begin work onsite in April.

The Council had explored options to get the building back into use, with possibly opening the ground floor to users first. A further £100k had been committed for further works.

Members submitted questions in advance of the meeting, as follows:

- Would the proposed Cabinet Working Group, set up to consider potential use and tenants for the Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre, include community representation?
- Would the implementation of LGR impact ongoing project work to the Theatre?

- Have timescales been set for inviting expressions of interest for the Theatre?
- Could the renovation of the Theatre be promoted as a 'good news' story in the borough?

Responses were provided as follows:

- It was intended that there would be community representation on the Cabinet Working Group. The Cabinet Working Group should be established by Summer 2026 but this would be dependent upon progress with improvements.
- The Council would ring fence any financial commitments to the Theatre with the aim of ensuring allocations were completed before LGR was implemented. However, decisions would need to be taken nearer the time in line with agreed requirements for LGR.
- The Controlling Group was committed to ensuring that the Theatre was back in use as soon as possible. A further £100k had been committed for further works.
- There had been press releases, and reports submitted to both Cabinet and Full Council, to provide updates. She encouraged all Councillors to share updates with community groups.

Resolved - **That the report be noted.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed