



Agenda



HYNDBURN

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Cabinet

Wednesday, 30 October 2024 at 5.00 pm,
QER, Scaitcliffe House, Ormerod Street, Accrington

Membership

Chair: Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP (in the Chair)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brerton, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Kate Walsh and Kimberley Whitehead

AGENDA

PART A: PROCEDURAL AND INFORMATION ITEMS

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

3. **Minutes of Cabinet**

To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of Cabinet held on 18th September 2024.

4. **Minutes of Boards, Panels and Working Groups** (Pages 5 - 18)

To receive the minutes of the meetings of the following bodies:-

Name of Body	Date of Meeting
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PART B: PORTFOLIO ITEMS

5. Reports of Cabinet Members

To receive verbal reports from each of the Portfolio Holders, as appropriate.

Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Education and Skills Councillor Noordad Aziz)

and

Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations (Councillor Vanessa Alexander)

6. Prudential Indicators Monitoring and Treasury Management Strategy Update - Quarter 2 2024/25 (Pages 19 - 28)

Report attached.

7. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/2025 - Quarter 2 to end of September 2024 (Pages 29 - 42)

Report attached.

8. Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25 - 2nd Quarter Update to 30th September 2024 (Pages 43 - 52)

Report attached.

Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Families (Councillor Kate Walsh)

9. Allotment Rental Charge 2026 & 2027 (Pages 53 - 62)

Report attached.

PART C: EXEMPT ITEMS

10. Exclusion of the Public

Recommended	That, in accordance with Regulation 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items, when it is likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings that there will otherwise be disclosure of exempt information within the Paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 specified at the items.
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Details of any representations received by the Executive about why the following report should be considered in public – none received.

Statement in response to any representations – not required.

Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Families (Councillor Kate Walsh)

11. Disposal of Land at Back Lane, Baxenden (Pages 63 - 68)

Exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 - Relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Report attached.

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LEADER'S POLICY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Monday, 29th July, 2024

Present: Councillors Munsif Dad BEM JP (in the Chair), Councillors Noordad Aziz, Zak Khan, Vanessa Alexander and Danny Cassidy

Apologies Councillors Kath Pratt and Kimberley Whitehead

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kath Pratt and Kimberley Whitehead.

Councillors Danny Cassidy and Vanessa Alexander acted as substitute representatives for their respective political groups.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday, 16th January 2024 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

The following Agenda item was taken next at the meeting.

4 Review of Members Expenses

Members considered a report of the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) on Members allowances.

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 governed the payment of members expenses. Payment of the following allowances was permitted:

Basic	This was compulsory. The same amount must be paid to all councillors.
Special Responsibility Allowance	This was discretionary. There was a list of duties and responsibilities for which SRA's could be paid.
Dependant Carer Allowance	This was discretionary. This could be made in respect of attendance at specific meetings or duties.
Travel Allowance	This was discretionary and was payable in respect of attendance at approved duties
Subsistence Allowance	This was discretionary and was payable in respect of attendance at approved duties for specific periods of time.

Any changes to the allowances scheme would have to be approved at full Council. When making changes to the allowances scheme the Council must have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The Council was not required to accept the panel's recommendations in whole or part, but it must consider them before a decision was made.

The allowances scheme could provide for allowances to be reviewed annually by reference to an index (such as RPI) without the need to consult the remuneration panel, but this could only be done for 4 years and, after that, the panel would have to be convened if allowances were to be changed.

Current Allowances

A copy of the Council's current scheme was appended to the report. It had not been amended significantly for several years.

Review Process

If members wished to review the current allowances scheme the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) would arrange to convene the remuneration panel and would provide them with a written brief. The panel might review the scheme as a whole if it so chose, but there might be specific issues that the Board wanted to ask the panel to consider and make recommendations about, and these would be included in the written brief. As part of the review process the panel might wish to speak to a range of councillors to gather evidence about issues such as time commitment, costs incurred, etc. The panel would then make its findings and recommendations, and would set these out in a written report. This was the report that would be presented to full Council, should members wish to implement changes to the allowances scheme.

The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) commented that travel, subsistence and carers allowance were seldom claimed. If these were regularly claimed by all entitled to such allowances, this could have significant budget implications. She noted that an SRA for the possible introduction of member champions had been raised recently.

Ms Ellis also gave a brief summary of the current membership of the IRP.

Historically, Hyndburn's basic allowance and SRAs had been higher than its peer group. The last full review report had recommended lowering allowances and deleting some SRAs, but this had not been agreed by the Council. Subsequently, allowances had 'withered on the vine' and were now comparable to Hyndburn's peers.

A discussion within this forum would provide an opportunity to reach a consensus across the political groups. Accordingly, the Board was invited to consider:

- whether it wished to ask the remuneration panel to review the members allowances scheme; and
- whether there were specific issues that it wished to ask the remuneration panel to consider.

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, outlined four potential areas to include in a brief to the IRP, as follows:

- (a) The introduction of up to 4 Community Champions, in a similar style to those at Lancashire County Council. Members could bring back reports on specialist areas such as a youth, elderly or mental health matters.
- (b) Review of the SRAs for Deputy Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. There was a view that this role gave rise to only minimal additional responsibility and workload.
- (c) No increase to the level of basic allowance (subject to (e) below).
- (d) No change to the SRA available to the wider membership of Planning Committee. Member noted that councillors serving on this committee dealt with many applications and attended numerous site visits.

All members spoke in favour of the proposal at (a) above.

Councillor Alexander noted that claiming for travel, subsistence and carers allowances had historically been difficult, due to public perceptions. However, one possible outcome was that those in genuine financial need might have been unfairly dissuaded from claiming these funds. She added that the time might now be right to recommence index linked inflationary increases to allowances.

There was cross-party consensus that the claiming of any allowances by those eligible would not be publicised for party political gain.

Ms Ellis recapped on the items proposed to be included in the IRP brief with the addition of the following:

- (e) Reintroduction of an index for annual inflationary increases to allowances.

It was envisaged that the final report to Council would be available for the meeting on 7th November 2024.

Agreed - **To request a review of members allowances by the Independent Remuneration Panel and to approve the brief as outlined in points (a) to (e) above.**

5 **Boundary Review**

Members considered a report of the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's scheduled boundary review in Hyndburn.

The review would look at:

- The total number of councillors needed;
- The number of wards;
- The number of councillors per ward;
- Ward boundaries; and
- Ward names.

The review gave the Council a chance to consider whether it currently had too many councillors or too few, given the changing demands on councillors since the last review had

been carried out. The Council could look at matters such as changes to population, changes to its services, changes to its statutory responsibilities and the demands of its political management arrangements (e.g. how many councillors did the authority need to enable Cabinet and its Committees to operate effectively; and were councillor workloads manageable, etc). The Boundary Commission had produced guidance to support this process.

Since the last review the law had changed in respect of electoral arrangements. This meant that the Commission would require the Council to have three-member wards if it continued to hold elections by thirds. If the authority moved to “all out” elections every four years, it would be permitted to retain a mixed pattern of 1, 2 and 3 member wards. The electoral arrangements were a matter for the Council and would not be part of the review process. However, the electoral cycle would impact significantly upon the warding arrangements and the Commission had asked the Council to indicate before the review started whether the Council wished to change its electoral cycle or retain election by thirds.

The Council was required to submit a lot of preliminary information to the Commission when the review started e.g. detailed maps, population information, 5 year electorate forecasts.

The review would first consider how many councillors the Council needed. Both the Council and the individual political groups might submit a proposal to the Commission about this.

Having formed a view of councillor numbers, the Commission would then look at ward boundaries. The Commission would consult the Council and public about this before producing an initial proposal. There would then be further consultation on the draft proposal before final recommendations were produced by the Commission. The Commission’s recommendations would then be laid before Parliament in order to bring them into force at all out elections.

The Council had received an indicative timetable from the Commission, but this had slipped slightly as a result of the General Election and it might be that the authority would receive an updated timetable from them. However, in broad terms, the timings were expected to be as follows:

July 2024	Boundary Commission reps meet with Leader and portfolio holder
Autumn 2024	Boundary Commission presentation to Council
Spring 2025	Council / political groups submit size proposal Boundary Commission consults on ward boundaries etc
Summer / Autumn 2025	Boundary Commission publishes draft proposal and consults on these
Spring 2026	Boundary Commission publishes final proposals These then require Parliamentary approval (challengeable by Judicial Review)
May 2027	New boundaries etc implemented at all out elections

Ms Ellis would brief Corporate Management Team shortly on the key issues.

The Leader raised a number of points, as follows:-

- Councillors would be able to ask questions as part of the Commission’s presentation Council in September or November 2024.
- The two group leaders would need to have a discussion on the proposed electoral arrangements (by thirds or all out elections), as a two thirds majority decision by the Council was required to change the current arrangements.

- A view on the overall size of the Council would need to be finalised by Spring 2025, having regard to the above electoral arrangements.

Councillor Khan considered that it would be difficult to answer these points without the background information and options available. Ms Ellis confirmed that this information would be available in due course. However, an initial view on whether to elect by thirds or at all out elections every 4 years would be useful. The Commission would need this information by March 2025. Councillor Khan requested a paper to enable him to brief his group. Ms Ellis envisaged that the relevant points would be covered by the Commission's presentation at Council.

Agreed

- **That report on the Boundary review be noted and that representatives of the political groups will meet to seek to agree a common view on the proposed electoral arrangements.**

6 Webcasting of Meetings

Councillors considered a report of the Member Services Manager on the webcasting of meetings.

Cllr Booth had recently asked officers to consider webcasting Cabinet and Council meetings. The previous Leader of the Council had also asked for this matter to be put to the Leaders Board after the local elections in 2024.

Unlike many other local authorities, the Council was currently unable to live stream or webcast meetings from the Council Chamber or QER to the internet. To film and livestream physical meetings, the Council would need to invest in a new technology solution with the necessary audio and video infrastructure.

Any such proposals would aim to achieve the following:

- good quality, reliable audio-visual technology for Council meetings;
- the webcasting of meetings to provide greater public access;
- compatibility and security with existing IT systems (including MS Teams);
- value for money; and
- be simple to operate, preferably by non-technical members of staff.

In 2022, officers had sought quotes from two companies who each provided this service to a large number of local authorities, Public-I and Auditel. The Council's then IT Manager had also been involved in the discussions with the two companies, which had focussed on enabling webcasting from the Council Chamber only.

A summary of the quotes and comparative information obtained at the time was provided as an Appendix to the report. Likely costs were in the region of £100k-£130k depending on the detailed specification. Both quotes involved the provision of smart cameras which focused automatically on the speakers.

Public-I's quote was given without a site visit. There might be elements in each quote which could change, including reductions in the more expensive specification (e.g. fewer screens). The quotes were no longer in date, but were provided as an indication of the likely investment needed to provide a webcasting service. On top of this, there would be additional staff time needed in operating the equipment. It should also be noted that the

quotes did not include consideration of webcasting meetings held in the QER, at Scaitcliffe House.

There had been a consensus among attendees at this Board meeting in January 2023 that webcasting was not a priority in that year due to the likely costs, but that the project would be reconsidered if it shifted to a higher priority in the future.

The Board was invited to consider whether it wished to request that officers carry out further work to investigate the possibility of providing webcasting in the Council Chamber and/or in Scaitcliffe House and the likely costs of the same.

It might be possible to save costs, for example, by installing the technology in the Council Chamber only. This might then involve moving Cabinet and some Committee meetings (such as Planning Committee) to the Council Chamber to enable them to be broadcast. There might be other benefits to this approach in terms of security, given the public seating arrangements in the Council Chamber.

The Leader of the Council observed that this type of system was in place at Lancashire County Council and was very effective. The costs were high, but webcasting would help to get the message out to constituents.

Councillor Aziz spoke in favour of the introduction of webcasting as a means of improving accountability by producing a formal record of the proceedings. He was aware that Blackburn with Darwen and South Ribble had procured Auditel equipment. He expressed the view that much of the expenditure would be the capital costs required for the initial installation. Councillor Alexander added a note of caution around the longevity of the equipment and software and about whether the number of meetings and viewing levels would justify the expenditure.

Councillors Khan and Cassidy were in favour of webcasting on the grounds of transparency. It was suggested that both leaders take the question back to their political groups for discussion with a view to a report being provided to the Council in the light of the potential costs.

Ms Ellis indicated that up to date costs would be sought. Councillor Aziz suggested that it would be useful to find out whether neighbouring councils used webcasting and what meetings were included in their service. Councillor Cassidy concurred with the earlier point about the longevity of the equipment.

Agreed

- (1) To request the officers to carry out further work to investigate the possibility of providing webcasting in the Council Chamber and/or in Scaitcliffe House and the likely costs of the same.**
- (2) Following the preparatory work undertaken by officers, the party leaders raise the question of webcasting within their own political groups, with a view to a debate being held at Council on the matter.**

7 Mayoral Car Quotes

Members considered a verbal report by Jane Ellis, Executive Director, Legal & Democratic Services, in connection with the expiration of the mayoral car lease in 2025.

Ms Ellis reported that it might be necessary to seek a small budget increase for the lease of a new vehicle in 2025, as car prices had risen significantly. A number of quotes had been received, but were all above the current budget, particularly in view of the preference for hybrid vehicles.

Officers would bring a written update to the next meeting.

Councillor Aziz enquired if sponsorship for the vehicle had been considered, for example, from the dealership concerned. Ms Ellis indicated the Hyndburn had not previously tried that approach, but could bring back some information on this at the next meeting. Councillor Khan expressed some concerns around sponsorship which might attract some criticism around the dignity of the role of mayor.

Agreed - **To note the verbal report on the mayoral car quotes and the suggestion around possible sponsorship.**

8 Appointment of Mayor's Cadet

Councillors considered a report of the Member Services Manager on the possible appointment of a Mayor's Cadet.

The Council had been approached in May 2022 by Flight Lieutenant Paul Morton, Officer Commanding, 1035 (Accrington & District) Squadron Air Training Corps, commonly referred to as the Air Cadets, about the possibility of establishing a Mayoral Cadet. Since then work had been on-going to develop a suitable scheme.

A number of local authorities were known to appoint a Mayor's Cadet as part of the civic arrangements for the local borough or town/parish council area. The role involved a representative of one of the three Cadet forces (army, sea and air) being appointed on an annual basis. Generally, their role would be to accompany the Mayor at selected civic events throughout the year to support the Mayor, to make speeches, as appropriate, to represent the uniformed Cadet services and to raise the profile of the military and its training arm within the wider community. The role would complement a similar position available in Lancashire for a Lord Lieutenant's Cadet.

A draft report for Cabinet was provided, together with a draft protocol and application/consents form, as Appendices to the covering report.

The views of the Sea and Army Cadets as to this proposal were not yet known. Subject to the Board's endorsement of this proposal, further work would be undertaken to consult all three services on the draft protocol and form, with a view to the report being submitted to Cabinet in September 2024.

The Board was invited to consider whether Officers should progress the proposals to establish a Mayoral Cadet with effect from 2025/26 and to undertake the necessary consultations.

Councillor Cassidy noted that Lord Lieutenant successfully operated a similar arrangement for a cadet. He also raised a question about the possible inclusion of Police and Fire Service cadets in the arrangements. Councillor Alexander enquired if it would be possible to appoint 2 Mayoral Cadets (one male and one female) in order for the post-holders to provide mutual support for each other at events.

Agreed - **To request Officers to progress the proposals to establish a Mayoral Cadet role with effect from**

2025/26, including the possible inclusion of Police and Fire Service cadets and the annual appointment of both a male and female cadet, and to undertake the necessary consultations.

9 Town Twinning

Councillors considered a report of the Member Services Manager on a proposal to establish a Town Twinning relationship between Accrington and Khust in Ukraine.

The proposal to twin with Khust had initially been brought forward by one of the residents in Hyndburn on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, neurologist Dr Valeyrie Hrymchak. In August 2023, Hyndburn Council had hosted an initial virtual meeting between Chief Executive, David Welsby, the (former) Leader of the Council Marlene Haworth, the Mayor and Mayoress of Hyndburn, Council officers and representatives from Khust, including the Mayor of Khust. The following week, Hyndburn Council had hosted a civic reception at Haworth Art Gallery to welcome a number of representatives from Khust. A presentation in support of twinning was also provided at the Council meeting on 2nd November 2023.

It was currently proposed that a delegation from the Ukraine would again visit the Borough and the cities of Preston and Lancaster between 5th and 7th August 2024. The Mayor of Hyndburn would be asked to host a suitable civic reception at the Haworth Art Gallery on Day 1 of the visit.

A copy of a draft report to Council in September 2024 was provided as an Appendix to the covering report. This document outlined the background as mentioned above and set out the potential benefits of twinning and a process to take this forward. The next step envisaged the establishment of a working group to include both officers and elected members, to further explore projects and initiatives that could align with the aims of the twinning proposal.

The Leader of the Council had recently indicated that he was happy for the Council to continue to pursue town twinning with Khust.

The Board was invited to reaffirm whether the Council should be invited to support a proposal to twin Accrington with Khust and, if so, to endorse the project aims as set out in the draft report and the intention to establish a working group to lead further development. Councillor Aziz commented that it was unfortunate that the presentation at the Council meeting last November had coincided with a protest in relation to hostilities in Palestine. Officers were asked to be mindful of other business on the Council agenda when this matter was due to be discussed again and, if necessary, to arrange a special meeting of Council with a single item agenda. Councillor Cassidy also approved progressing town twinning and agreed with the approach outlined above.

Councillor Aziz enquired when town twinning had last occurred in the Borough. Mr Joinson, Member Services Manager, commented that this had not occurred in recent years. Councillor Alexander indicated that nationally town twinning appeared to have tailed off. The Leader confirmed the controlling groups' commitment to town twinning and suggested that, if successful, other town twinning arrangements might be forged.

Agreed

- **To reaffirm the commitment to twin Accrington with Khust and to endorse the project aims as set out in the draft report and the intention to establish a working group to lead further development**

10 Remembrance Parades

Councillors considered a report of the Member Services Manager on a proposal to make changes to the Remembrance Sunday parades for Church and Rishton for 2024.

Members were reminded of an initial discussion on the matter of remembrance parades at the Board meeting held on 1st November 2023.

The Council proactively supported the arrangements for seven services across the Borough on Remembrance Sunday, organised by a mixture of RBL, councillors, churches and voluntary groups depending on the locality or township. Services took place in the following locations:

- Accrington;
- Huncoat;
- Church;
- Oswaldtwistle;
- Clayton-le-Moors;
- Rishton; and
- Great Harwood.

Each of these events included some form of parade for which the Council was wholly responsible. The RBL had in recent years issued strict instructions to their local branches that they must not themselves organise parades on the highway for insurance reasons. The Council's insurance did, however, cover it for parades, subject to appropriate risk assessments having been carried out. As part of the aforementioned guidance, the RBL had explained to their branches that they should respect the decision of local authorities regarding the viability of parades. The guidance was also clear that an act of remembrance did not need to include a parade. This position had also been acknowledged at an events planning meeting between regional RBL representatives and Council officers held in 2023.

In recent years the cost of parades had risen due to increasing costs of specialist traffic management and the need for improved marshalling to comply with control measures included in event risk assessments. The Police no longer undertook any traffic management duties. The costs in 2023 were approximately £1k for marshalling and £7k for traffic management. The total cost of funding Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day in 2023 was £13k, including musicians, wreaths and printing costs. The total Budget set aside for 2024 was £10,900. Accordingly, there was a need to consider some changes to keep within the overall Budget.

The traffic management costs by township in 2023 were as follows:

Accrington	Rolling Rd Block/ Half Closure	£975.00
Huncoat	HBC marshals only required on Burnley Lane	Nil
Church	Ln Closures & Stop+Go/ Rolling Road Block	£1,360.00
Oswaldtwistle	Rolling Rd Block/ Rd Closure & Diversion	£1,095.00
Clayton-le-Moors	Rolling Rd Block	£645.00
Rishton	Rolling Rd Block/ Stop+Go/ Rd closure kit	£815.00
Great Harwood	Rolling Rd Block/ Rd Closures	£975.00

In November 2023, the Board had agreed to request the Member Services Manager to review the parades to be arranged for 2024, in consultation with the service organisers, with a view to improving safety and managing costs.

Having regard to the above, the following observations were made:

- **Church** - The Church parade from Bank Street, via Henry Street, Dill Hall Lane, Buckingham Grove and Riding Barn Street, to Gatty Park (crossing Hyndburn Road/Dunkenhalgh Way) was the most expensive traffic management intervention and its cost was disproportionate to the number of people attending the parade. The closure of the Hyndburn Road/Dunkenhalgh Way junction was particularly disruptive to traffic flows given the route's status as the main artery from Church and Accrington to/from the M65.

Arrangements for the Church service were led by Church and Oswaldtwistle Branch of the RBL.

Proposed Change: It was recommended that this parade should no longer take place, with the participants instead gathering directly in Gatty Park for a memorial service. If this proposal was not supported, an alternative proposal could involve a shorter parade starting from the gardens at Manor Place at the bottom of Dill Hall Lane, but crucially above the Hyndburn Road/Dunkenhalgh Way road junction.

- **Rishton** - The Rishton parade from St Peter and St Paul's Church on Church Street, via Blackburn Road to the War Memorial on Churchill Avenue and return traditionally to Rishton Library was considerably disruptive to traffic. Stop/Go signs were in operation throughout the service to allow cars to use the Esplanade to avoid the closed section of Blackburn Road where the public gathered at the War Memorial. However, lorries and buses could not access this cut-through. Marshals regularly reported that the return parade was difficult to manage with key access points onto Blackburn Road not effectively closed to traffic. The return parade also delayed the end of the main road closure and was poorly supported, as people tended to disperse naturally after the service at the War Memorial had ended. A change of return route in 2023 to allow dispersal at the end of Station Road, close to the Rishton Arms, had added further complexity to crowd management, as the parade had split off from participants returning to the town centre.

Arrangements for the Rishton service were led by Councillor Kate Walsh and Father Eddie Carr (Vicar St Peter and St Pauls CE Church).

Proposed Change: It was recommended that the return parade did not take place to allow for a more natural dispersal of participants. This would allow the earlier reopening of Blackburn Road to all traffic. Marshals should remain in close contact with the crowd to ensure that pedestrians used the pavements to return to Rishton town centre and did not stray onto the highway. If this proposal was not supported, an alternative would be for the return parade to terminate at St Peter and St Paul's Church.

Early discussions would be required with the organisers of the services in Church and Rishton to consider the proposed changes. Prior to undertaking these consultations officers would find it helpful to gauge whether there was broad political support for the changes. It would also be important to inform the relevant ward councillors to ensure that they understood the reasons for the changes and were in a position to respond to any queries or criticism from local residents.

Any difficulties encountered during the consultation process would be reported back to the Board in late summer.

The Leader commented that residents were often attached to the tradition of holding a parade and it might not be easy to make the changes proposed. Councillor Cassidy considered that the decision might be easier to explain if the Council emphasised the safety and practical concerns around the parades, rather than the financial considerations. Members considered that consultations would need to take place with the RBL/relevant service organisers and local ward councillors.

Agreed

- (1) That approval be given, in principle, to the proposed changes to the Remembrance Sunday parades for Church and Rishton for 2024 and that officers be requested to undertake the necessary consultations.**
- (2) That a further report be provided to the next meeting of the Board.**

11 Process for Appointment of Independent Persons to Audit Committee

Members considered a copy of a report and recommendations which had been considered by the Audit Committee on 24th June 2024. Paragraph 2.1(1) of the report, recommending Council to appoint 2 independent persons, had been agreed by the Committee. Paragraph 2.1(2), proposing a methodology and process for the appointments, had not been approved, but had been referred back for further consideration.

The Board was requested to endorse Recommendation (1) of the report and to consider and make comments as to the methodology for the selection of candidates, with a view to final recommendations being put to the Audit Committee in September, prior to a decision being taken by the Council.

Ms Ellis commented that CIPFA was promoting the appointment of independent members. Councillor Alexander clarified that the decision at Paragraph 2.1(2) had envisaged councillors going back to their political groups to discuss the proposals and, in particular the interview process. It was likely the Mark Beard, Head of Internal Audit, would be involved in the interview process with other suitable officers. Mr Joinson added that paragraph 3.10 of the report currently envisaged interviews being carried out by senior officers of the Council and the Chair of the Audit Committee. Ms Ellis added that 'neutral' officers could be identified for the interview process if Members wished to ensure an element of independence from the audit process.

Councillors spoke about the need to take sufficient time consider this matter to ensure that the right process was established.

Agreed

- To endorse Recommendation (1) of the report to appoint 2 independent persons to the Audit Committee and to support further discussions taking place within the political groups about the methodology for the selection of candidates.**

12 Process for Selecting Aldermen and Freeman

Councillors considered a report of the Member Services Manager on the Process for Selecting Aldermen and Freeman.

At the Annual Council meeting on 23rd May 2024, Councillors had discussed the possibility of clarifying the process for selecting freemen and aldermen, with particular reference to the nomination procedure. Councillor Dad had an undertaking to discuss this at the Leader's Policy Development Board.

The report included an extract from the Civic Protocol in the Constitution which outlined the selection criteria for both Honorary Freemen and Aldermen.

Members were reminded that a nomination for a freemen must be capable of securing a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members who vote on it at Council.

There were a number of costs associated with the appointment of aldermen and freemen, which related to the following items (2024 prices incl. VAT):

Item	Cost (£)
Alderman/Freeman silver gilt badge and case	546
Certificate with frame and flowers or gift	40
Free meal at Mayor Making event	35
Up to 10 (free) family/friends meals	350
Total	971

The above expenditure was not specifically provided for within the Mayoralty budget, although in recent years officers had been able to contain the costs within the overall service budget. There was, however, significant financial pressure when multiple honours were bestowed in the same municipal year. The Protocol regarding freemen recommended that normally only one freeman should be appointed in any one year. Members were asked to consider whether to impose a limit on the overall number of honours awarded in any one year, including aldermen, other than in exceptional circumstances. If multiple awards were to be made, additional funding would need to be identified.

The Protocol included an outline of the role of this Board in the nomination process for both aldermen and freemen. In general, nominations for the honorary positions could come from anyone, including individual councillors, political groups, officers, partner organisations or a member of the public. In practice, nominations would usually require the support of at least one serving councillor to act as sponsor for the nomination.

A further consideration was the timing of the submission of nominations. In order to provide a degree of certainty for potential recipients of the award, it would be desirable for nominations to be put to Council by no later than the March meeting. This would ensure that any appointment was approved in good time, prior to the formal presentation at the Mayor Making meeting in June. This would also allow the recipient time to contact family members and friends who might wish to attend the presentation.

In addition, due to the high cost of aldermen/freemen badges, the Council did not generally keep these items in stock, which meant that they need to be ordered in accordance with demand. The specialist suppliers, Vaughtons, had a manufacturing time of 8-10 weeks following the placement of an order. Therefore, it would be helpful if the Board could sign off its recommendations to Council by no later than 1st March. This would also allow time to consider any additional funding requirements if multiple awards were being considered.

Ms Ellis added that historically the Board would sign off any awards before Christmas. This timing might also help to avoid any political controversy in the selection process. Amendments could be made to the Civic Protocol to tighten up the process. A maximum number of awards could be set, say no more than 4 in any one year.

Councillor Dad suggested that the number of guests at the Mayor Making meal per appointee could be reviewed. 10 seemed to be too generous. He also commented that the nomination of freemen was often close to the election as a means of rewarding active members of the community for their achievements. It might be appropriate to nominate 2 persons each year. Councillor Khan concurred that the number of free guests seemed excessive. Additional guests could be invited, but would need to be at the expense of the recipient of the honour. He observed that the appointment of freemen was not generally political and was based on their contribution to the Borough. He would be happy to work with the Leader of the Council to propose nominees. Councillor Cassidy supported the suggestion that the number of new aldermen should be capped each year.

Members enquired about when the Civic Protocol could be amended. Ms Ellis confirmed that this could occur at any time during the year but would need Council approval. A revised draft could be submitted to the next meeting of the Board. The Mayoral Cadet implications could also be included in any revision.

Councillor Aziz noted that the current year was Hyndburn Borough Council's 50th Anniversary and that freemen could be selected with this landmark honour in mind.

Agreed

- (1) To note the report on the selection process for Freemen/Aldermen and the timeframe for final nominations to be approved by the Board for submission to Council.**
- (2) To approve a limit of 2 freemen and 2 aldermen appointments per year, other than in exceptional circumstances.**
- (3) To agree to nominations generally being submitted to the Board around Christmas.**
- (4) To request the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) to provide a revised Civic Protocol to the next meeting of the Board.**

13 Councillors and Disability

Councillors considered a report of the Member Services Manager on Councillors and Disability.

The Council was committed to understanding and supporting councillors who might have a disability to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. The authority had a statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of councillors with a disability, which might include adaptations to equipment, use of assistive technology, or amendments to its usual procedures, where practicable.

The welcome letter sent to new councillors, as part of the induction process, outlined this commitment to councillors and invited any members with a disability, who wished to do so, to discuss their needs in confidence with Member Services officers. In addition, so as to capture information from existing councillors, an e-mail had been sent to all councillors on 21st May 2024 repeating this message.

A single response had been received to the e-mail survey, as follows:

“We need to look at microphones and speaker system for the Council Chamber. It’s a real problem for some of our councillors who are hard of hearing.

I know this has been previously raised and is this something we can look at. Also, the chairs in the QE Room are extremely uncomfortable for meetings and I doubt would pass a DSE assessment. How do we go about getting these replaced?”

In addition to the above response, Member Services was aware of three councillors who required paper copies of agendas to be printed on coloured paper, to assist with cognitive disorders, such as dyslexia.

The disability survey would be repeated annually by Member Services and would include all councillors.

Agreed - **To note the outcome of the disability needs survey and the Council’s on-going commitment to supporting councillors who might have a disability.**

14 Other Business

There were no other items of business raised.

15 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed

Agenda Item 6.

REPORT TO:		CABINET	
DATE:		30 th October 2024	
PORTFOLIO:		Councillor Noordad Aziz – Deputy Leader; Councillor Vanessa Alexander – Resources & Council Operations	
REPORT AUTHOR:		C Worthington – Principal Accountant / A Martin – Principal Accountant M Dyson – Executive Director - Resources	
TITLE OF REPORT:		Prudential Indicators Monitoring and Treasury Management Strategy Update – Quarter 2 2024/25	
EXEMPT REPORT:	No		
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report updates Cabinet on the Treasury Management activities since the start of this financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 To note the Treasury Management activities and position during the second quarter of 2024/25.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To keep Cabinet updated on the Treasury Management activities during the year.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* requires the Council to set Prudential Indicators annually for the forthcoming three years to demonstrate that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable. The Council adopted its prudential indicators for 2024/2025 at its meeting in February 2024.
- 4.2 The Prudential Code requires the Council, having agreed at least a minimum number of mandatory prudential indicators (including limits and statements), to monitor them - in a locally determined format on a quarterly basis.

4.3 The indicators are purely for internal use and not designed to be used as comparators between authorities. If it should be necessary to revise any of the indicators during the year, the Executive Director (Resources) will report and advise the Council further.

4.4 ‘*Treasury Management*’ relates to the borrowing, investing and cash activities of the authority, and the effective management of any associated risks. In February 2024 in the same report referred to at 4.1 above the Council also set out and then approved its current Treasury Management Strategy. This was in accordance with the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) code of practice on treasury management in public services, the Council having previously adopted, via Cabinet, the then revised code of practice. Associated treasury management Prudential Indicators were included in the February 2024 report.

5. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS MONITORING

5.1 Appendix 1 shows the monitoring information for each of the prudential indicators and limits. They relate to:

- External debt overall limits
- Affordability (e.g. implications for Council Tax)
- Prudence and sustainability (e.g. implications for external borrowing)
- Capital expenditure.
- Other indicators for Treasury Management.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

6.1 The forecast balance sheet position at 30th September 2024 for treasury management activities is shown in the table below.

Forecast Treasury Balance Sheet Position 2024/25

Portfolio Position 2024/25 Q1	Original Estimate 2024/25 £'000	Position 30 Sept 2024 £'000
<u>EXTERNAL DEBT</u>		
Borrowing	9,595	9,595
Other Long-Term Liabilities	1,274	1,408
Total External Debt	10,869	11,003
Capital Financing Requirement	8,798	8,932
Under/(Over) Borrowing	(2,071)	(2,071)
<u>INVESTMENTS</u>		
Total Long-Term Investments	-	-
Total Short-Term Investments	-	35,059
Total Investments	-	35,059

6.2 As can be seen from the above table we are performing within the original targets set at the start of the year. Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operates its activities within well-defined limits. In general, the requirement is that the Capital Financing Requirement exceeds gross debt. However, in 2024/25 the gross

debt exceeds the Capital Financing Requirement. This is due to the Council having historical debt with a maturity repayment profile (meaning all principal is paid at the loans maturity date) but the accounting treatment requires that the Capital Financing Requirement is reduced each year by the payment of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Other Liabilities in prior years reflect finance liabilities relating to vehicles and plant and in the current year reflect the transfer of all leases onto the balance sheet to comply with the new IFRS 16 – Leases accounting standard.

- 6.3 The requirement to have Capital Financing Requirement exceed Gross Debt centres around providing an assurance that borrowing is not taking place for Revenue purposes. However, as the Council is not borrowing additional funds at this time, this is not an issue.
- 6.4 The current position of the treasury function, and its expected change in the future, introduces risk to the Council from an adverse movement in interest rates. The Prudential Code is constructed on the basis of affordability, part of which is related to borrowing costs and investment returns.
- 6.5 Investment balances were higher than had been forecast when the Prudential Indicators and strategy were set. This is mainly due to grants received in advance of capital spend being incurred, as well as slippage in the capital programme.
- 6.6 The Capital Programme 2024/25 is expected to be funded by the use of Government Grants (including Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and other external financing. It has also been supported during the year by greater use of internal sources of capital finance (including capital receipts and use of the Council's reserve balances). No external borrowing is expected to be required during the year.

7. INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD

- 7.1 During the first half of the year the Council has invested funds with other Local Authorities, the Governments Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility and uses Money Market Funds and Bank deposit accounts.

Portfolio Position 30 Sept 2024	Position 30 Sept 2024 £'000
Local Authorities	26,000
Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility	4,979
Money Market Funds	2,000
Lancashire County Council Call Account	2,000
Bank Deposit Accounts	80
Total Short-Term Investments	35,059

7.2 The table below shows the investments the Council had in place at 30th September 2024 with other local authorities:

Local Authority	Date From	Date To	Amount £'000	Interest Rate
Loans Outstanding at 30 September 2024				
Basildon Borough Council	13-Oct-23	11-Oct-24	2,000	4.850%
Cheltenham Borough Council	25-Apr-24	25-Oct-24	2,000	5.250%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	03-Jul-24	04-Nov-24	2,000	5.200%
North Lanarkshire Council	05-Feb-24	05-Nov-24	2,000	5.450%
Central Bedfordshire Council	24-Sep-24	25-Nov-24	2,000	4.900%
PCC for Merseyside	21-Dec-23	19-Dec-24	2,000	5.700%
Broxbourne Borough Council	29-Aug-24	06-Jan-25	2,000	5.150%
Wirrall MBC	27-Sep-24	27-Jan-25	2,000	4.900%
East Hertfordshire Council	30-Sep-24	31-Jan-25	2,000	4.900%
Reading Borough Council	05-Sep-24	15-Apr-25	2,000	4.750%
West Dunbartonshire Borough Council	23-May-24	22-May-25	2,000	5.150%
Falkirk Council	16-Aug-24	16-May-25	2,000	4.650%
Rushmoor Borough Council	08-Jul-24	07-Jul-25	2,000	5.200%
Total Local Authority Loans			26,000	

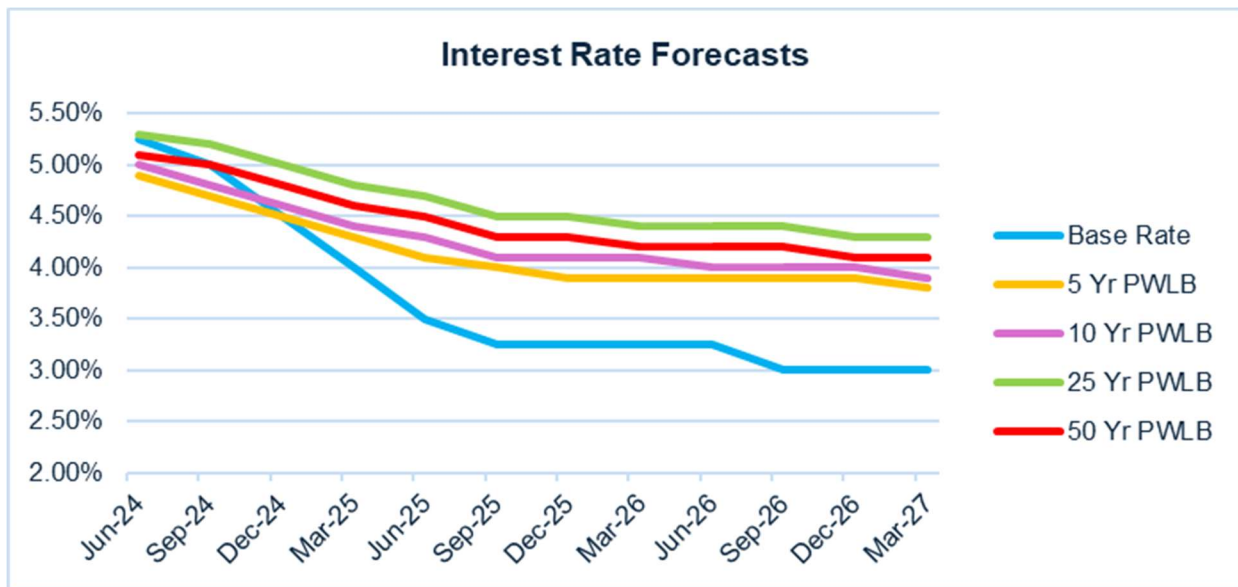
7.3 The Council also had a future dated loan agreed at the end of the quarter:

Local Authority	Date From	Date To	Amount £'000	Interest Rate
Future Dated Loans Agreed				
Basildon Borough Council	11-Oct-24	11-Apr-25	2,000	4.900%
Total Future Dated Local Authority Loans			2,000	

7.4 The Council's Finance team have a number of checks in place before any loans to other local authorities are agreed, to prioritise the security of any funds invested.

8. EXPECTED MOVEMENT IN INTEREST RATES

8.1 The Council appointed Link Asset Services as treasury adviser to the Council and part of their service is to assist the Council in formulating a view on interest rates. The following graph gives Link's latest available view of the expected future movement in interest rates.



Link interest rate forecasts as at 01/08/2024.

- 8.2 The latest forecast sets out a view that both short and long-dated interest rates will start to fall, as inflation has fallen closer to the Bank of England's target of 2.00%.
- 8.3 The Council's exposure to interest rate movements is largely neutralised currently as our borrowings are effectively at a fixed rate until a trigger point is reached, where the lender believes a better rate can be achieved elsewhere. Interest rates would have to exceed current levels before this is likely to happen. The above graph indicates that this is unlikely to happen in the next few years as interest rates are expected to fall, although this will continue to be closely monitored.
- 8.4 The revenue outturn position on the Council's Treasury Management activities is shown in the table below.

Forecast Treasury Revenue Outturn – 2024/25 Q2

Portfolio Position 2024/25	Working Budget 2024/25	Forecast Outturn 2024/25	Forecast (Under)/ Over Spend
	£'000	£'000	£'000
INTEREST RECEIVABLE			
Interest Receivable on Temporary Lendings	(401)	(1,372)	(971)
Other Interest Receivable	-	-	-
Total Interest Receivable	(401)	(1,372)	(971)
INTEREST PAYABLE			
Interest Payable on Long-Term Borrowings	513	440	(73)
Interest Payable on Finance Leases	41	38	(3)
Other Interest Payable	-	-	-
Total Interest Payable	554	478	(76)
Minimum Revenue Provision	1,085	1,006	(79)
Net (Income) / Expenditure from Treasury Activities	1,238	112	(1,126)

8.5 Interest Receivable

8.6 The Council has invested amounts of surplus cash on a short-term, temporary basis. The interest received from these investments is above the budgeted expectations for the full year, mainly due to higher levels of funds being held and the Bank of England maintaining interest rates at higher levels than were anticipated when the budget was set. The Council's strategy continues to focus on the security of deposits and the liquidity of funds. The additional interest forecast to be generated is now expected to be £1,372,000 for the year ending March 2025.

8.7 The Council continues to invest surplus cash in top rated financial institutions. We continue to spread our money around a number of institutions to ensure that we are not potentially damaged by the unforeseen collapse of any one bank. Deposits are also held with banks where we believe that the respective governments are likely to be able to guarantee deposits in the event of bank failure. This strategy is continuing to yield an appropriate rate of return, though at a lower rate, as there is less risk attached to these deposits. We also operate a policy of holding no more than £2m in any one bank (with the exception of the liquidity account held with Nat West Bank where the limit is £3m) to ensure that the risk is spread. The council can place unlimited funds with the Government Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility (DMADF). This allows greater flexibility for placing of funds with potential for higher returns with minimal risk.

8.8 Interest Payable

An estimate of interest on additional borrowing was included in the budget, no new borrowing is expected to be required during the year.

8.9 Minimum Revenue Provision

Minimum revenue provision charge is forecast to be below budget due to new vehicles being delivered later than was expected.

9. PERFORMANCE AGAINST PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

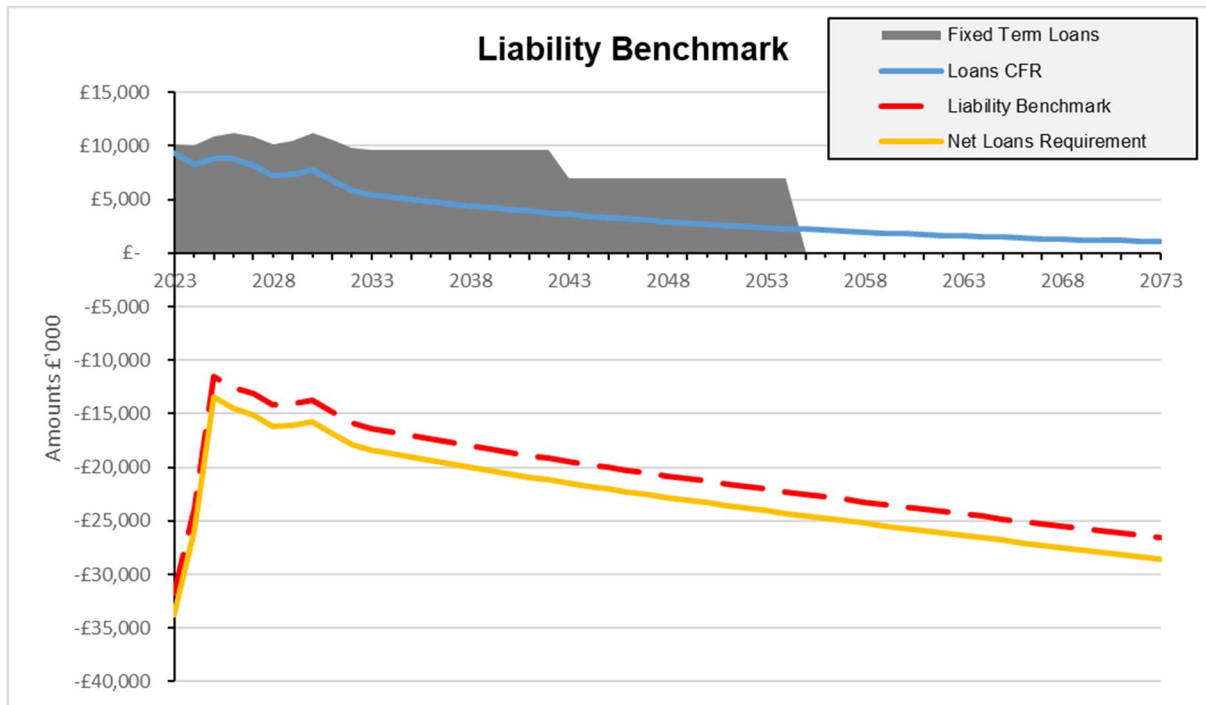
9.1 The Council's performance to date, and current forecasts for the year, against the Prudential Indicators set in the Treasury Management Strategy approved by full Council on 27th February 2024 are shown in **Appendix 1**. The Council has remained within the Prudential Indicators set out in the approved Treasury Management Strategy.

9.2 Liability Benchmark

9.3 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy also set out a Liability Benchmark. This compares the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, the liability benchmark was calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing.

9.4 The liability benchmark is a useful tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or a long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategy focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans, while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

9.5 There have been no significant changes to the inputs to this calculation, therefore there have been no updates to this indicator. The chart below reflects that presented in the approved Treasury Management Strategy.



10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASONS FOR REJECTION

None applicable.

11. CONSULTATIONS

None applicable in this instance.

12. IMPLICATIONS

Financial (Including any future financial commitments for the Council)	There are none arising directly from this report.
Legal and human rights implications	The Local Government Act 2003 (part 1) and associated regulations gave statutory recognition to the Prudential Code - therefore there is a statutory backing to the background and local purpose of the report. Treasury Management activities of local authorities are prescribed by statute – the source of powers is, in England & Wales, the 2003 Act. 'Statutory Guidance' on investment is given by the MHCLG to local authorities.

Assessment of risk	There are inherent risks in capital finance and treasury management. When appropriate the risks are identified and assessed as part of the various recommendations made on Prudential Capital Finance and in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
Equality and diversity implications	There are no specific implications for customers' equality and diversity arising directly from the recommendations in this report

13. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985:

List of Background Papers

- The Local Government Act 2003 and related regulations
- The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (CIPFA 2021)
- The Treasury Management Code of Practice (CIPFA 2021)
- Prudential Indicators, Treasury Management and Investment Strategy (Including Capital Strategy) approved at full Council 27th February 2024

13. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Indicator	As Approved February 2024		As at 30 Sept 2024		Comments	
Estimated Capital Expenditure	£36.104M		£34.426M		The current figure takes account of additional slippage from 2023/24 in the capital programme where spend will now be incurred in 2024/25. It also takes account of slippage from 2024/25 where it is forecast that this will now be spent in future years.	
Estimated Capital Financing Requirement at Year End	£8.798M		£8.932M		Capital Financing Requirement is a prescribed measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the authority which has been financed by external or internal borrowing.	
Estimated Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	10.20%		8.50%			
External Debt Prudential Indicators (Operational Boundary and Authorised Borrowing Limit)	Operational Boundary	£20M	Borrowing to Date		Borrowing has been within both the Operational Boundary and Authorised Borrowing Limit throughout the year.	
			£M			
	Authorised Borrowing Limit	£35M	Long-Term Borrowing	9.595		
			Finance Lease Debt	1.408		
		Total	11.003			
Variable Interest Rate Exposure	100%		Exposure to Date	43%	In 2016/17 Barclays notified the Council that the debt held by Barclays was being converted into fixed rate debt from its original agreement as a LOBO. All remaining LOBO debt is classified as having a variable interest rate.	
Fixed Interest Rate Exposure	100%		Exposure to Date	57%		
Prudential Limits for Maturity Structure of Borrowing				Actual Maturity Structure to Date		
	Period	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Period	£M	%
	< 1 Year	0%	75%	< 1 Year	4.120	43%
	1-2 Years	0%	75%	1-2 Years	-	0%
	2-5 Years	0%	75%	2-5 Years	-	0%
	5-10 Years	0%	75%	5-10 Years	-	0%
	>10 Years	0%	75%	>10 Years	5.405	57%
			Total	9.525	100%	
Total Investments for Longer than 364 Days	£3M		No Long-Term Investments Made			

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Agenda Item 7.

REPORT TO:	Cabinet		
DATE:	30 October 2024		
PORTFOLIO:	Councillor Noordad Aziz/Councillor Vanessa Alexander - Finance and the Budget Process		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Jody Spencer-Anforth, Head of Finance		
TITLE OF REPORT:	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2024/25 – Quarter 2 to end of September 2024		
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	No	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report informs Cabinet of the financial spending of the Council up to the end of the September 2024 for the financial year 2024/25 and the forecast impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet notes the report and asks CMT to continue to monitor the financial position of the Council over the remaining months of the year.
- 2.2 Cabinet notes the pressures and risks highlighted in section 5 of this report and that regular updates will be provided on any potential impact on the current forecast underspend in year and the future Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3 Revenue Budget Forecast 2024/25

- 3.1 At the Full Council meeting on 27th February 2024, Council agreed the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024/25. This set a budget for the Council's total spend in 2024/25 of £16.122M.
- 3.2 The current forecast spend to the end of the financial year in March 2025 is £16.037M. This brings the forecast underspend for the year against the budget to £0.085M. Further analysis of changes in forecast spend are shown in section 4 of the report.

Table 1: Forecast Performance Against Budgets

Department	Original Budget £'000	In Year Budget Changes £'000	Working Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Environmental Health	793	-	793	823	30
Environmental Services	5,491	18	5,509	5,552	43
Legal and Democratic	1,834	-	1,834	1,811	(23)
Planning and Transportation	725	-	725	701	(24)
Regeneration and Housing	1,496	(48)	1,448	1,483	35
Resources	4,651	-	4,651	5,524	873
Net Cost of Services	14,990	(30)	14,960	15,894	934
Non-Service	1,238	30	1,268	143	(1,125)
Cabinet Approved Contributions	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Savings Target	(106)	-	(106)	-	106
Total Net Expenditure	16,122	-	16,122	16,037	(85)
Funding	(16,122)	-	(16,122)	(16,122)	-
(Under)/Overspend	-	-	-	(85)	(85)

- 3.3 The current forecast spend to the end of the financial year shows a reduction of £0.099M from the last report at QTR1, this brings the forecast underspend for the year against the budget to £0.085M. The table below details the changes by service from the last report at QTR1.

Table 2: Movements in Forecast During Quarter

Department	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000
Environmental Health	793	30	823
Environmental Services	5,569	(17)	5,552
Legal and Democratic	1,844	(33)	1,811
Planning and Transportation	725	(24)	701
Regeneration and Housing	1,532	(49)	1,483
Resources	4,719	805	5,524
Net Cost of Services	15,182	712	15,894
Non-Service	756	(613)	143
Cabinet Approved Contributions	-	-	-
Corporate Savings Target	-	-	-
Total Net Expenditure	15,938	99	16,037
Funding	(16,122)	-	(16,122)
(Under)/Overspend	(184)	99	(85)

3.4 Details of the most significant changes in the forecast variance are shown in the table below.

Table 3: Main Changes in Forecast Variance

Main Variances / Movements	Changes Since Last Report - Quarter 1		
	Quarter 1 Forecast Variance	Forecast (Under)/Over Spend	Movement in Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Staffing Costs	10	(433)	(443)
Additional Utility Costs	17	10	(7)
Increased Costs for New Crematorium Depot Building	22	22	-
Cleaning contract costs	10	10	-
Appointment of Aldermen - Medals	10	10	-
Huncoat Garden Village Project Costs	53	53	-
Legal Costs - Council Tax and NNDR Recovery	40	50	10
Legal Costs - Council Tax and NNDR Recovery - Use of Reserve	-	(50)	(50)
Finance - Collection Fund Accounting Advice	10	13	3
Additional Cost of Housing Benefits Exempt Properties	-	284	284
Support to Hyndburn Leisure	-	850	850
Planning Legal Fees - Judicial Review	-	18	18
Past Service Pension Contributions	-	44	44
Other	20	53	33
Total Net Cost of Services	192	934	742
<u>Non-Service</u>			
Additional Investment Income	(409)	(971)	(562)
Reduction in Interest Payable	(73)	(76)	(3)
Reduction in Minimum Revenue Provision	-	(78)	(78)
Total Non-Service	(482)	(1,125)	(643)
Total Corporate Savings Target	106	106	-
Total (Under)/Overspend	(184)	(85)	99

Variance by Service

4.1 The narrative below provides more detail on the variances from the original budget and the forecast outturn at Quarter 2.

Environmental Health

4.2.1 The forecast outturn position for Environmental Health is an overspend of £0.030M.

Table 4: Environmental Health – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Department	Working Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Environmental Health	343	343	-	343	-
Environmental Protection	450	450	30	480	30
Total Environmental Health	793	793	30	823	30

4.2.2 Environmental Protection are forecasting a £30,000 overspend which is mainly due to spending on agency staff to cover a vacancy. This vacancy is expected to be filled on a permanent basis from January 2025.

4.3 Environmental Services

4.3.1 The forecast outturn position for Environmental Services is an overspend of £0.043M.

Table 5: Environmental Services – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Department	Working Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Environmental Maintenance	(33)	(33)	(8)	(41)	(8)
Levelling Up	-	-	-	-	-
Other Environmental Services	127	103	30	133	6
Parks and Cemeteries	1,200	1,284	6	1,290	90
Town Centre and Markets	610	610	(40)	570	(40)
UK Shared Prosperity Funding	-	-	-	-	-
Waste Services	3,605	3,605	(5)	3,600	(5)
Total Environmental Services	5,509	5,569	(17)	5,552	43

The main reasons for this forecast variance are as follows:

4.3.2 Environmental Maintenance are forecasting an underspend of (£8,000) due to savings from staffing vacancies.

4.3.3 Other Environmental Services are forecasting an overspend of £6,000 due to an increase in animal kennelling costs.

4.3.4 Parks and Cemeteries are forecasting an overspend of £90,000. This is due to higher than expected inflationary increases on contracts and utility services provided in the cemetery and crematorium.

- 4.3.5 Town Centre and Markets are forecasting an underspend of (£40,000) due to savings from staffing vacancies.
- 4.3.6 Waste Services are forecasting an underspend of (£5,000) which is mainly due to staffing savings of (£18,000) from unfilled posts, offset against an increase of £13,000 in vehicle hire costs and the cost of vehicle fuel.

4.4 Legal and Democratic Services

- 4.4.1 The forecast outturn position for Legal and Democratic Services is an underspend of £0.023M.

Table 6: Legal and Democratic Services – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Department	Working Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Democratic Services	809	818	(25)	793	(16)
Human Resources and Policy	644	645	(7)	638	(6)
Legal	265	265	(6)	259	(6)
Management - Legal and Democratic	116	116	5	121	5
Total Legal & Democratic	1,834	1,844	(33)	1,811	(23)

The main reasons for this forecast variance are as follows:

- 4.4.2 Democratic Services are forecasting an underspend of (£16,000). This is mainly due to staffing savings from vacancies of (£36,000), offset by additional costs of delivering elections of £10,000 and additional costs of £10,000 in relation to medals for the new Aldermen of the Borough.
- 4.4.3 Human Resources and Policy are forecasting an underspend of (£6,000). This is due to savings from staffing vacancies.
- 4.4.4 Legal are forecasting an underspend of (£6,000). This is due to savings from staffing vacancies.
- 4.4.5 Management – Legal and Democratic is forecasting an overspend of £5,000 due to the Deputy Head of Paid Service role now being attached to the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic) role. This additional cost is offset by savings within the Resources directorate.

4.5 Planning and Transportation

- 4.5.1 The forecast outturn position for Planning and Transportation is an underspend of £0.024M.

Table 7: Planning and Transportation – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Department	Working Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Building Control	7	7	(21)	(14)	(21)
Engineers and Transportation	257	257	-	257	-
Green Infrastructure	70	70	(4)	66	(4)
Planning	391	391	1	392	1
Section 106	-	-	-	-	-
Total Planning & Transportation	725	725	(24)	701	(24)

The main variances are as follows:

- 4.5.2 Building Control are forecasting an underspend of (£21,000) and Green Infrastructure are forecasting an underspend of (£4,000) as a result of savings on staffing costs due to vacancies within the teams.
- 4.5.3 The overspend forecast within Planning is in relation to £18,000 of costs incurred as part of a judicial review in respect of a planning decision, this is partially offset by staffing savings in respect of vacant posts of (£17,000).

4.6 Regeneration and Housing

- 4.6.1 The forecast outturn position for Regeneration and Housing is an overspend of £0.035M.

Table 8: Regeneration and Housing – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Department	Working Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Economic Development	-	53	-	53	53
Facilities	614	645	(31)	614	-
Haworth Art Gallery	183	183	1	184	1
Housing Advice	250	250	(19)	231	(19)
Property	182	182	-	182	-
Selective Licensing	-	-	-	-	-
Strategic Housing	219	219	-	219	-
Total Regeneration & Housing	1,448	1,532	(49)	1,483	35

The main variances are as follows:

- 4.6.2 Economic development is forecasting to spend an additional £53,000 in respect of costs for Huncoat Garden Village. This spend may be recoverable should the Cabinet agree to accept the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund (BIL) grant offer from Homes England.
- 4.6.3 Haworth Art Gallery is forecasting a small overspend of £1,000. This is mainly due to staffing savings from vacancies of (£5,000), offset by additional gas and electricity costs of £6,000.
- 4.6.4 Housing Advice are forecasting an underspend of (£19,000) due to savings as a result of vacant posts.

4.7 Resources

- 4.7.1 The forecast outturn position for Resources is an overspend of £0.873M.

Table 9: Resources – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Department	Working Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Assurance	569	569	14	583	14
Benefits and Customer Contact	1,019	1,066	148	1,214	195
Finance	1,196	1,210	(111)	1,099	(97)
ICT	751	751	(112)	639	(112)
Leisure	212	212	854	1,066	854
Management - Resources	904	911	12	923	19
Total Resources	4,651	4,719	805	5,524	873

The main variances are as follows:

- 4.7.2 Assurance is forecasting an overspend of £14,000 due to a proposed 9.5% increase in the external audit fees charged to local authorities for 2024/25. These fees are determined by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) arm of the Local Government Association (LGA).
- 4.7.3 Benefits and Customer Contact are forecasting a net overspend of £195,000. There are forecast underspends on staffing costs due to vacancies of (£89,000), but these are offset by a net overspend on Housing Benefit payments of £284,000.

The Council processes Housing Benefit claims on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the majority of which it recovers through subsidy grant funding. However, there are certain categories of benefit claims which the Council is unable to recover. The Council has seen a significant increase over the last quarter in claims related to the 'exempt properties' category of which the Council is unable to recover. A working group has been established to address this issue and future updates will be provided to Cabinet.

- 4.7.4 The forecast underspend in Finance is (£97,000). Additional costs of £13,000 were incurred in relation to year end collection fund accounting assistance for 2023/24, however, this is offset by forecast savings of (£110,000) from staffing vacancies.
- 4.7.5 ICT are forecasting an underspend of (£112,000). This is due to staffing savings of (£103,000), as a result of vacant posts, and costs of supplies and services expected to be below budget by (£9,000).
- 4.7.6 An overspend of £854,000 is forecast in relation to Leisure Services, which is mainly due to the expected level of financial support which will be required by Hyndburn Leisure for the current financial year.
- 4.7.7 Management – Resources is forecasting an overspend of £19,000. This is due to staffing savings of (£25,000) offset by an additional £44,000 for pension contributions in respect of past service remaining at a higher level than was forecast in the budget. These are related to pension payments for some past officers and are payable as long as the individuals continue to receive their pension.

4.8 Non-Service and Corporate Savings Target

- 4.8.1 The forecast outturn position for Non-Service income and expenditure is an underspend of £1.125M.
- 4.8.2 When Council set the budget for 2024/25 in February 2024, savings of £106,400 were required to be able to set a balanced budget. In the forecast outturn any underspends are included in the department areas and therefore no figure should be included in the savings target line.

Table 10: Non-Service – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Department	Working Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Interest	152	(329)	(565)	(894)	(1,046)
Minimum Revenue Provision	1,085	1,085	(79)	1,006	(79)
Revenue Contribution to Capital	31	-	31	31	-
Movement in Bad Debt Provision	-	-	-	-	-
Total Non-Service	1,268	756	(613)	143	(1,125)
Corporate Savings Target	(106)	-	-	-	106
Total Corporate Savings Target	(106)	-	-	-	106

The main variances are as follows:

- 4.8.3 The Council is currently forecasting to receive additional treasury investment income of (£971,000). This is due to interest rates remaining higher for longer than was forecast

when preparing the budget. Also, cash levels have remained higher than expected due to slippage in the capital programme.

4.8.4 Interest payable is expected to be under budget by (£76,000), this is due to the Council now not expecting to need to borrow any additional funds during 2024/25.

4.8.5 The minimum revenue provision is forecast to be (£78,000) lower than the budget which is mainly as a result of new vehicles being delivered later than was forecast when the budget was produced.

4.9 Funding

4.9.1 There are currently no expected variances on the Council's funding.

Table 11: Funding – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Department	Working Budget £'000	Quarter 1 Forecast Outturn £'000	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter £'000	Forecast Outturn Quarter 2 £'000	Forecast Outturn Variance to Working Budget £'000
Council Tax	(5,931)	(5,931)	-	(5,931)	-
Non-Domestic Rates	(7,803)	(7,803)	-	(7,803)	-
Government Grants	(2,388)	(2,388)	-	(2,388)	-
Total Funding	(16,122)	(16,122)	-	(16,122)	-

4.10 Reserves

4.10.1 The Council is currently forecasting a reduction of £14.383M in its usable reserves during the year, bringing them to £11.721M at the end of the year. Forecast movements in reserves are shown in the table below.

Table 12: Reserves – Forecast Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

Reserve	Opening Balances £'000	Transfers to/From Reserves £'000	Capital Contributions £'000	Used for Capital Financing £'000	Closing Balances £'000
General Fund - Unallocated	1,868	-	-	-	1,868
Total Unallocated Reserves	1,868	-	-	-	1,868
Planning S106 Fund	364	-	-	(119)	245
Invest to Save	616	(233)	-	-	383
Communities for Health Funding	54	(46)	-	-	8
Dilapidations Reserve	4	-	-	-	4
Revenue Funding for Capital Schemes	2,638	7	-	(657)	1,988
Collection Fund Volatility Reserve	455	90	-	-	545
Climate Change Reserve	750	(154)	-	(72)	524
Balances Set Aside to Fund Specific Future Expenditure	3,549	430	-	-	3,979
Levelling Up and Leisure Investment	10,608	(272)	-	(9,459)	877
Total Earmarked Reserves	19,038	(178)	-	(10,307)	8,553
Capital Receipts Reserve	2,746	-	181	(2,458)	469
Capital Grants Unapplied	2,452	-	19,558	(21,179)	831
Total Reserves	26,104	(178)	19,739	(33,944)	11,721

4.10.2 As shown in the table above, the most significant movements in reserves are the forecast spending on the capital programme.

5 Potential Pressures and Risks in Year

5.1 Although the forecast underspend at Quarter 2 stands at £0.085M, there are some further pressures and risks that need to be considered, some of which are not currently built into any financial forecasts.

5.2 The main pressures/risks to be considered are detailed below:

5.2.1 **Waste Disposal Site/Transfer Station** – Negotiations are underway with Lancashire County Council regarding their contract situation for the disposal of waste at the Whinney Hill site. This may require Hyndburn and the other East Lancashire districts to find alternative sites to dispose of their residual household waste. It is not known to date the additional costs that may be incurred by the Council, but initially these may involve surveys and legal fees around potential site options and once determined they will be report in due course. Cabinet put £500,000 into reserves in 2023/24 to be used for this purpose, and a further contribution of £200,000 is included in the budget for 2024/25.

- 5.2.2 **Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre** – The closure of the theatre and return of the lease to the Council has resulted in the need to undertake surveys and compliance works to understand the condition of the building, prior to it being ready for potential future occupation. The facilities management team will report back the potential costs once the surveys are complete. The Council approved £120,000 in the budget for 2024/2025 to cover any associated costs.
- 5.2.3 **Crematorium/Cremators** – There is a risk that there may be a change in legislation to enforce new systems for mercury abatement to be installed/retro fitted to the current incinerators at the crematorium. It is expected that these changes may come into place in 2 to 3 years' time and there will be a significant capital cost for works to ensure compliance. The parks team are currently investigating this further and will inform cabinet of the requirements as soon as the information is available. Possible considerations could be the set aside of income/surplus from the service and/or further investigation into the charging/pricing structure for cremations. Cabinet put £50,000 into reserves in 2023/24 to be used for this purpose, and a further contribution of £150,000 is included in the budget for 2024/25.
- 5.2.4 **Food Waste Collections** – From April 2026 the Council must provide a food waste collection for residents. A grant has been received from DEFRA to be used towards the capital costs of implementing the new collection (e.g. purchasing new vehicles, bins and food caddies), however the estimates of the capital costs exceed the grant which has been provided. It is expected that a further grant will be provided to assist with the additional ongoing revenue costs, but there have been no confirmations of how much this grant will be or how long it will be provided for. A report was presented to Cabinet in June 2024 detailing the most up to date position on this issue.
- 5.2.5 **Hyndburn Leisure** – The Council is currently undertaking an external review to determine the best service model for delivering its Leisure provision, with the recommendations expected to be reported to Cabinet at its meeting in November. As detailed in the paragraphs above, £850,000 of financial assistance for Hyndburn Leisure has been included in the forecasts for the current financial year to support the trust with the impact of inflationary increases in staffing and utility costs. These financial pressures are consistent with those being experienced across the Leisure sector and the Council applied but was unsuccessful in achieving additional revenue funding to ease the pressure on current operational costs but was successful in achieving a capital grant award of £241,447 to install energy efficiency systems at Hyndburn Leisure centre, which will reduce the costs in future years.
- 5.2.6 **Housing Benefit Supported / Exempt Accommodation** – The additional pressure of these unrecoverable benefit payments are expected to be managed in 2024/2025 largely due to the additional investment income returns, although for future years, the Council will need to take action to try to reduce these costs through introducing planning restrictions and supporting housing regulation unless there is additional support from the government to address this issue nationally.
- 5.2.7 **Pay Award** – The pay award for the current financial year has still not been agreed, and union strike ballots are currently being undertaken. A pay award offer has been put forward by the National Employers. This is a flat rate of £1,290 (pro-rata for part time

employees) for NJC scale points 2 to 43 inclusive and 2.5% for all other employees. For the Council this represents an average increase of just under 4%, compared to a 5% estimate included in the budget. Due to the uncertainty, no changes in relation to the pay award have been included in these forecasts. The Chief Officers pay award was agreed in July 2024, this was at a flat rate of 2.5%. Therefore, this is reflected in the forecast figures in this report.

- 5.3 These pressures/risks will need to be considered over the course of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy along with an appropriate action plan to ensure the Council can meet any future predicted budget gaps.

6 Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 Not Applicable. This report is for information purposes only.

7 Consultations

- 7.1 None applicable in this instance.

8 Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	As outlined in the report
Legal and human rights implications	Not applicable
Assessment of risk	Not applicable
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	None

9 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: List of Background Papers

- 9.1 General Fund – Revenue Budget, Council Tax Levels and Capital Programme 2024/25 – Council 27th February 2024

10 Freedom of Information

- 10.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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Agenda Item 8.

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	
REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	30 October 2024
PORTFOLIO	Councillor Noordad Aziz– Deputy Leader of the Council Councillor Vanessa Alexander – Resources & Council Operations
REPORT AUTHOR:	Martin Dyson, Executive Director – Resources
TITLE OF REPORT:	Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25 – 2nd Quarter Update to 30th September 2024
EXEMPT REPORT:	No
KEY DECISION:	No
	If yes, date of publication:

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update for Cabinet on the Council’s Capital Programme Monitoring. It sets out the latest phasing of the programme including the latest estimate of available resources and any additions or changes in forecast outturn since the last monitoring position was presented to the Cabinet on 24th July 2024.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet notes the progress on capital expenditure to date.

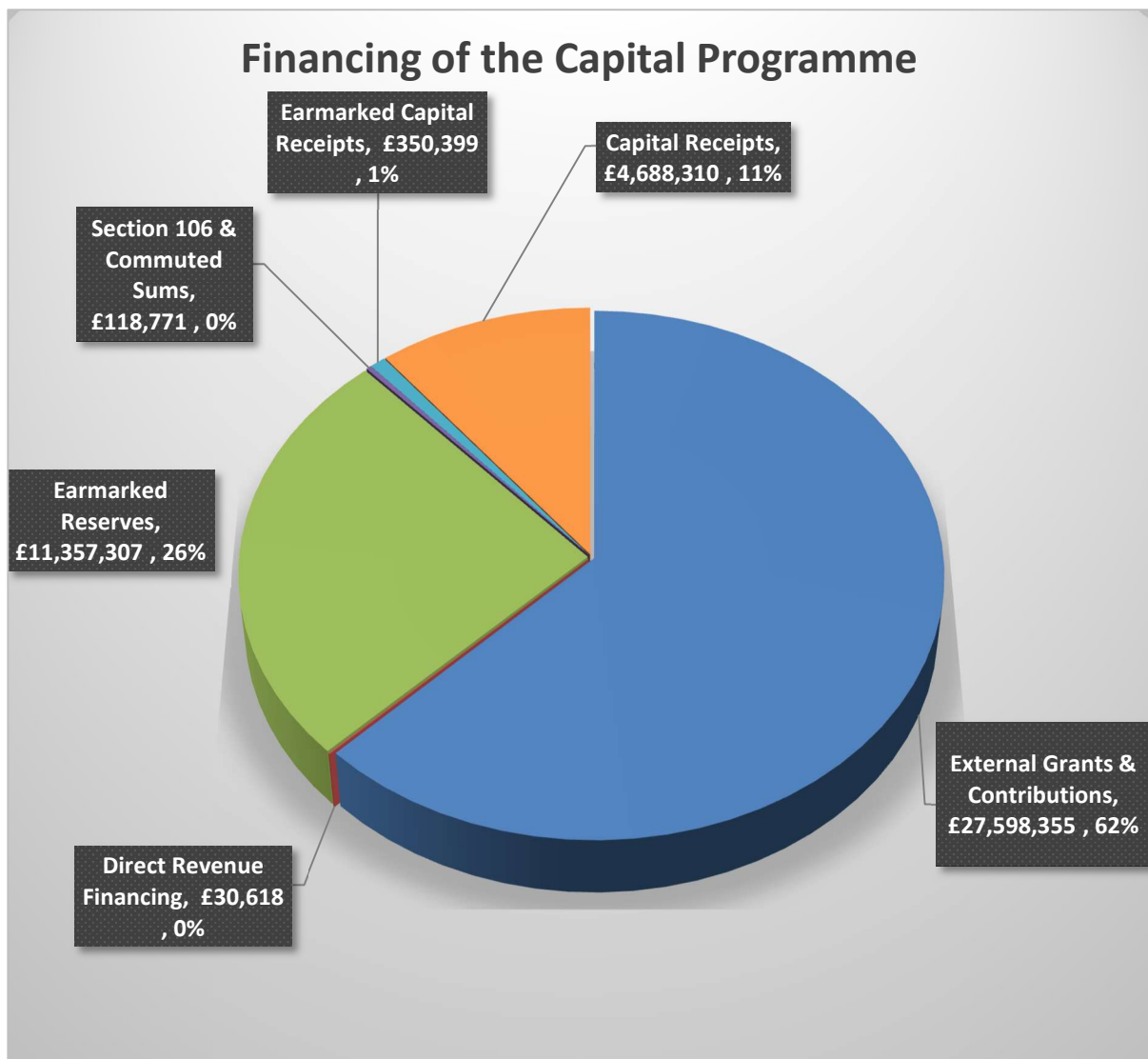
3. 2024/2025 Capital Programme

- 3.1 The Council authorised new additions to the capital programme of £4.404m at its meeting on the 27th February 2024.
- 3.2 Since the Council meeting in February 2024 new schemes totalling £0.531m have been approved and added to the programme. The additional expenditure approved is to be fully funded from by external grants and receipts that have been awarded and or / received.
- 3.3 In addition, the capital spend outturn from 2023/2024 slipped £40.656m into 2024/2025, of which £37.769m relates to the Levelling Up scheme for Accrington Town Centre, the Leisure Estate Investment and Housing Schemes including Disabled Facilities Grants.

3.4 The total approved Capital programme now totals £44.144m and is shown in the table below:

	£m
New Additions to the Capital Programme (Reported at February Council 2024)	4.404
Budget Changes	
Slippage from 2023/24	40.656
Budgets removed from the programme	-1.558
New Schemes and Additional Funding approved in year	0.642
Current Approved Capital Programme Budget 2024/25	44.144

3.5 The financing of the programme in 2024/2025 is as follows:



- 3.6 The current programme of £44.144m will not be capable of being delivered in the current financial year and it is proposed to now rephrase the programme into the years in which it is now expected to be spent. The phasing of the programme is now summarised as below.
- 3.7 Summary of the Scheme Profiles over the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Programme Area	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Operational Buildings	788	291	-	1,079
Parks and Open Spaces	669	830	-	1,499
IT Projects	234	-	-	234
Recreation and Sport	-	-	-	-
Vehicles and Equipment	101	666	-	767
Community Projects	78	-	-	78
Planned Asset Improvement Programme	210	-	-	210
Leisure Estate Investment Programme	10,625	1,000	-	11,625
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme	-	-	-	-
Levelling Up Fund	19,386	6,937	-	26,323
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	388	-	-	388
Transitional Housing Programme	-	-	-	-
Housing Improvement Programme	1,941	-	-	1,941
Total	34,420	9,724	-	44,144

4. 2nd Quarter Update Position

- 4.1 The Actual expenditure to 30th September 2024 is £8.589m against the latest rephrased budget for 2024/2025 of £34.420m. This equates to 24.95% spend.
- 4.2 As shown in the table above, there is expected to be £9.724m of budget to be rephrased into 2025/2026, in respect of capital schemes which will now not be completed during the current year.
- 4.3 As the programme has been rephrased, the latest forecasts remain in line with the budgeted profile and are expected to be spent in year.
- 4.4 The significant elements of the programme to be spent in year are shown in the table below with a more detailed breakdown shown in Appendix 1.

Programme Area	Total Budget £000	Spend to Date £000	Forecast Spend for Remainder of Year £000	Forecast Outturn Position for the Year £000	Variance (Under) / Overspend £000
Operational Buildings	788	29	759	788	-
Parks and Open Spaces	669	363	306	669	-
IT Projects	234	101	139	240	6
Recreation and Sport	-	-	-	-	-
Vehicles and Equipment	101	31	70	101	-
Community Projects	78	40	38	78	-
Planned Asset Improvement Programme	210	32	178	210	-
Leisure Estate Investment Programme	10,625	3,292	7,333	10,625	-
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme	-	(3)	3	-	-
Levelling Up Fund	19,386	3,683	15,703	19,386	-
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	388	104	284	388	-
Transitional Housing Programme	-	-	-	-	-
Housing Improvement Programme	1,941	917	1,024	1,941	-
Total	34,420	8,589	25,837	34,426	6
% of Budget Spend		24.95%	75.06%	100.02%	0.02%

4.5 Close monitoring of the capital programme will be undertaken throughout the year to ensure that the projects are kept in line with spend forecasts and are considered in the council's cash flow forecasts. Deviations from the spending profiles and any financial implications will be considered in future treasury and revenue budget forecasts.

5. Financial Risks of the Capital Programme

5.1 Capital Receipts

The financing of the programme is reliant on using receipts of £4.688m, which have been generated from the sale of Council land and buildings. To date the Council still needs to sell land and buildings to the value of £1.555m to achieve all its required financing from capital receipts. It is now not expected that all these receipts will be achieved by the end of 2024/2025. Work will be progressing on the sale of the assets identified in these receipts. If some of these asset sales are delayed, the Council has sufficient reserves in place to fund the existing programme in the short term. It is crucial that the planned sales continue to be progressed to ensure the Council achieves the required receipts that will enable future capital programme works to be undertaken.

This is a medium level risk.

5.2 External Grants and Contributions

The Capital Programme is reliant on £27.598m in external funding, with the Council providing additional match funding. It is crucial that the external funding is secured, and grant works are claimed on a frequent basis. To date £8.440m has been received, leaving £19.158m still to be received / claimed over the next two years.

The majority of external funding is to be provided by:

- **Levelling Up Project (LUF)** – this scheme is largely funded by a government grant of £20m and a further £1.5m contribution from Lancashire Council. To date the Council has received £10.409m of this funding and further claims are being submitted on a quarterly basis to minimise the impact on cash flow. The government has prepaid some elements of this grant to assist councils with their cash flows.
- **UK Shared Prosperity** – The council has already received the full allocation £1.030m for 2023/24 and 2024/25. All these works must be completed within the agreed timescales to ensure that there is no threat of clawback.
- **Disabled Facilities Grant** – the Council receives grant funding from the Better Care Fund via Lancashire County Council which includes £1.195m of funding which the council has received.
- **Leisure Estate Investment Programme** – The Council was successful in obtaining external funding of around £2.4m from Sport England. Most of this grant has already been received by the Council, with the remainder to be claimed at a later stage of this scheme.

This is a medium level risk.

5.3 Major Schemes in Capital Programme

The programme contains some major schemes that require close monitoring to ensure they are on target and that any external financing has been secured and is being claimed frequently. Major schemes include:

- Levelling Up Programme - with £19.386m in year and £6.937m in 2025/26
- Disabled Facilities Grant - with £1.941m in year
- UK Shared Prosperity Grant – with £0.388m in year
- Leisure Estate Investment Programme – Originally forecast £10.625m in year & £1m in 2025/26. The profile of these works will be updated when further information is known regarding the recommencement of works on the Wilson playing field site following the recent administration of the main contractor.
- Asset Programme works £2.080m in year and £1.787m in 2025/26. These works include maintenance of operational buildings and the continued investment in Parks and Playgrounds

6. **Conclusion**

- 6.1 The capital programme has significantly grown over the past two financial years to a current programme totalling £44.144m. Although the programme is approximately 63% funded from external grants and contributions, it nevertheless puts a strain on the Councils staffing resources to be able to procure and deliver these projects. It is therefore key to ensure that projects are well planned and phased to deliver within the required time limits.
- 6.2 The Programme will continue to be carefully monitored, and it may require further revisions in its phasing in the future.

7. **Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection**

- 7.1 Not applicable

8. **Consultations**

- 8.1 Not applicable

9. **Implications**

Financial implications (including mainstreaming) As outlined in this report

Legal and human rights implications None

Assessment of risk None

Equality and diversity implications None
A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.

10. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: List of Background Papers**

Council 27th February 2024 – Capital Programme 2024/25

11. **Freedom of Information**

- 11.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 20

Scheme	Net Budget 2024/25 £	Spend to Date at 30 September 2024 £	Commitments at 30 September 2024 £	Forecast Spend for Remainder of Year £	Total Forecast Expenditure in 2024/25 £	Variance (Under) / Over Spend £
OPERATIONAL BUILDINGS						
External Security Improvements	12,763	-	-	12,763	12,763	-
Fire Safety Improvements	250,000	11,013	595	238,392	250,000	-
CCTV Upgrades - Various Buildings	30,143	-	-	30,143	30,143	-
Accington Town Hall External Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accrington Townscape Heritage Initiative	-	(6,842)	-	6,842	-	-
Accrington Cemetery Welfare & Depot Facilities	-	(14,127)	-	14,127	-	-
Fire Assessment Building Alterations Accrington Crematorium	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cremators Accrington Crematorium	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accrington Crematorium Remedial Repairs and Facelift	137,500	37,697	-	99,803	137,500	-
Vehicle Security Barrier Willows Lane	30,000	1,230	522	28,248	30,000	-
Air Heating and Cooling Units Replacement Programme	60,618	-	-	60,618	60,618	-
Oswaldtwistle Civica Theatre Refurbishment Works	267,000	-	-	267,000	267,000	-
TOTAL OPERATIONAL BUILDINGS	788,024	28,971	1,117	757,936	788,024	-
PARKS AND OPEN SPACES						
Oakhill Park Tennis Court Refurbishment	-	(1,077)	-	1,077	-	-
Rhyddings Play Area Partial Refurbishment	80,143	-	-	80,143	80,143	-
Baxenden Woodland Improvements	5,663	-	-	5,663	5,663	-
Knuzden Recreation Ground Play Area + MUGA	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nook Lane / Bury Meadows Acquisition Oswaldtwistle	72,128	7,720	-	64,408	72,128	-
Memorial Park Heritage Lottery Project	132,570	87,164	-	45,406	132,570	-
Artificial Cricket Wicket - Bullough Park	1,558	-	-	1,558	1,558	-
Rhyddings Park	17,811	-	17,177	634	17,811	-
Mercer Park Play Area CLM	94,155	91,567	-	2,588	94,155	-
Chess in Parks	2,600	2,600	-	-	2,600	-
King George V Pavillion and Pitches	-	-	-	-	-	-
Milton Close Play Area Gt Harwood	149,250	144,066	300	4,884	149,250	-
Foxhill Bank Boundary Enhancement	33,500	31,447	-	2,053	33,500	-
Oak Hill Park Duck Pond	6,965	-	-	6,965	6,965	-
Gatty Park Polytunnels & Greenhouse Replacement	20,000	-	-	20,000	20,000	-
Leeds Liverpool Canal Cycle Path	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jackhouse Nature Reserve Footbridge	15,000	-	-	15,000	15,000	-
Bullough Park Woodland Enhancement	30,000	-	-	30,000	30,000	-
Clayton Woodland Upgrade	7,210	-	-	7,210	7,210	-
TOTAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES	668,553	363,487	17,477	287,589	668,553	-

Scheme	Net Budget 2024/25 £	Spend to Date at 30 September 2024 £	Commitments at 30 September 2024 £	Forecast Spend for Remainder of Year £	Total Forecast Expenditure in 2024/25 £	Variance (Under) / Over Spend £
IT PROJECTS						
Tech Refresh Annual Replacement Programme	36,249	39,766	1,835	-	41,601	5,352
Financial System Software	31,850	7,509	1,600	22,741	31,850	-
Computer Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) System	7,389	-	-	7,389	7,389	-
Wi-Fi Upgrade Scaitcliffe House	2,969	2,969	-	-	2,969	-
ICT Replacement Microsoft Dynamics - CRM Digital Services	105,605	-	495	105,110	105,605	-
ICT Remote Working Upgrade - MiCollab Software	50,000	50,270	-	-	50,270	270
TOTAL IT PROJECTS	234,062	100,514	3,930	135,240	239,684	5,622
VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT						
Workshop Compressor	5,890	5,890	-	-	5,890	-
Scarab Sweeper	20,000	20,000	-	-	20,000	-
E Bikes	4,968	5,466	-	(498)	4,968	-
Food Waste Collection	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	30,858	31,356	-	(498)	30,858	-
COMMUNITY PROJECTS						
Accrington Town Centre Paving and Reserve	2,509	618	-	1,891	2,509	-
Car Park Amenity Improvements	45,000	39,593	-	5,407	45,000	-
TOTAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS	47,509	40,211	-	7,298	47,509	-
COMMUNITY PROJECTS - LOCAL AREA MANAGEMENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES						
Local Area Management Capital Improvement Schemes	30,962	-	-	30,962	30,962	-
TOTAL LOCAL AREA MANAGEMENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES	30,962	-	-	30,962	30,962	-
TOTAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS	78,471	40,211	-	38,260	78,471	-
PLANNED ASSET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME						
Planned Asset Improvement Programme - Not Defined	84,609	-	-	84,609	84,609	-
Replacement Boilers	37,500	-	-	37,500	37,500	-
Mercer Park Bowls Pavilion	21,345	20,795	-	550	21,345	-
Walls Around Parks & Open Spaces	31,490	7,250	-	24,240	31,490	-
Fences	34,766	4,330	-	30,436	34,766	-
TOTAL PLANNED ASSET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME	209,710	32,375	-	177,335	209,710	-

Scheme	Net Budget 2024/25 £	Spend to Date at 30 September 2024 £	Commitments at 30 September 2024 £	Forecast Spend for Remainder of Year £	Total Forecast Expenditure in 2024/25 £	Variance (Under) / Over Spend £
LEISURE ESTATE INVESTMENT PROJECT						
WPF Leisure Estate Investment Project (pre construction costs)	8,103	8,103	-	-	8,103	-
MHLC Leisure Estate Investment Project	9,850,214	3,283,534	-	6,566,680	9,850,214	-
WPF Development Contract	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL WILSONS PLAYING FIELDS	9,858,317	3,291,637	-	6,566,680	9,858,317	-
HYNDBURN LEISURE CENTRE						
Hyndburn Leisure Centre Mechanical & Electrical Plant Replacement	465,085	-	-	465,085	465,085	-
Car Park Lighting at Hyndburn Leisure Centre	50,000	-	-	50,000	50,000	-
Wilson's Playing Fields Storage and Welfare Facilities	10,000	-	-	10,000	10,000	-
Hyndburn Leisure 3G Pitch Full Replacement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hyndburn Leisure Centre Efficiency Works	241,447	-	-	241,447	241,447	-
TOTAL HYNDBURN LEISURE CENTRE	766,532	-	-	766,532	766,532	-
3G PITCH FLOODLIGHTS						
3G Pitch Floodlights	-	22	-	-	22	22
TOTAL LEISURE ESTATE INVESTMENT PROJECT	10,624,849	3,291,659	-	7,333,212	10,624,871	22
PUBLIC SECTOR DECARBONISATION SCHEME						
PSDS - Hyndburn Leisure Centre	-	(2,364)	-	2,364	-	-
PSDS - Scaticliffe House	-	(455)	-	455	-	-
TOTAL PUBLIC SECTOR DECARBONISATION SCHEME	-	(2,819)	-	2,819	-	-
LEVELLING UP FUND						
Market Hall	7,839,780	1,659,056	-	6,180,724	7,839,780	-
Market Chambers	4,278,773	745,531	-	3,533,242	4,278,773	-
Burton Chambers	6,113,992	1,278,214	-	4,835,778	6,113,992	-
TOTAL LEVELLING UP FUND ELEMENT	18,232,545	3,682,801	-	14,549,744	18,232,545	-
MARKET OTHER FUNDED ELEMENTS						
Internal Development of Accrington Market Hall - Replace Passenger Lift	239,250	-	-	239,250	239,250	-
Toilet Facilities at Accrington Market Hall	92,567	-	-	92,567	92,567	-
Market Hall Fire Compliance Works	322,000	-	-	322,000	322,000	-
Market Hall Façade Works	500,000	-	-	500,000	500,000	-
TOTAL MARKET OTHER FUNDED ELEMENTS	1,153,817	-	-	1,153,817	1,153,817	-
TOTAL LEVELLING UP FUND	19,386,362	3,682,801	-	15,703,561	19,386,362	-

Scheme	Net Budget 2024/25 £	Spend to Date at 30 September 2024 £	Commitments at 30 September 2024 £	Forecast Spend for Remainder of Year £	Total Forecast Expenditure in 2024/25 £	Variance (Under) / Over Spend £
UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND						
Accrington PAL's Garden	91,076	87,962	35	3,079	91,076	-
Improve Town Centre Car Parks / Planting	297,365	16,288	-	281,077	297,365	-
TOTAL UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND	388,441	104,250	35	284,156	388,441	-
HOUSING IMPROVEMENT						
Disabled Facilities Grant	912,641	669,549	181,441	61,651	912,641	-
DFG Affordable Warmth Grant	200,000	155,159	-	44,841	200,000	-
DFG Emergency Works Grant	75,000	42,738	-	32,262	75,000	-
DFG Home Security Grant	25,000	-	-	25,000	25,000	-
DFG Hospital Discharge Grant	75,000	171	-	74,829	75,000	-
DFG LCC Unit at Great Harwood	300,000	-	-	300,000	300,000	-
DFG Health and Wellbeing Board	250,000	-	-	250,000	250,000	-
LCC Affordable Warmth Grant	103,058	49,699	-	53,359	103,058	-
TOTAL HOUSING IMPROVEMENT	1,940,699	917,316	181,441	841,942	1,940,699	-
VEHICLE AND PLANT ANNUAL REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME	70,000	-	-	70,000	70,000	-
TOTAL	34,420,029	8,590,121	204,000	25,631,552	34,425,673	5,644

Agenda Item 9.

REPORT TO:	Cabinet		
DATE:	30 th October 2024		
PORTFOLIO:	Cllr Kate Walsh – Sustainability & Families		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Ian Marfleet, Regeneration Projects Manager		
TITLE OF REPORT:	Allotment Rental Charge 2026 & 2027		
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	No	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:	Yes	If yes, date of publication:	22/10/24

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval for a proposed increase in allotment rent charges from the 1st January 2026 and 1st January 2027.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Cabinet approves the increased allotment rent charges from 1st January 2026 and 1st January 2027 as set out in Paragraph 3.1 of the report, allowing for the statutory notification period, as noted in Paragraph 3.5 of the report.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

- 3.1 It is recommended that from 1st January 2026 the allotment rent charge be increased from 28.5p/m² annum to 30.0p/m² annum, and the minimum plot charge be increased from £55.00pa to £60.00pa, and that that from 1st January 2027 the allotment rent charge be increased from 30.0p/m² annum to 32.0p/m² annum, the minimum plot charge be increased from £60.00pa to £65.00pa.
- 3.2 During 2012 the Council consulted with the allotment tenants. 83% of those responding said that rent should be increased regularly in small amounts rather than single large increments at irregular intervals.

3.3 Since 2014 the Council has progressively increased the allotment rents in small annual increments to ensure that the annual rate of increase is kept reasonable. Allotment rents are charged by calendar year.

2014	11p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £35.00.
2015	12p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £35.00.
2016	13p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £35.00.
2017	14p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £35.00.
2018	16p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £40.00.
2019	18p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £40.00.
2020	22p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £45.00.
2021	23p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £50.00.
2022	23.5p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £50.00.
2023	24p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £50.00.
2024	25p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £50.00.
2025	28.5p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £55.00.
2026	30.0p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £60.00. Recommended for approval.
2027	32.0p/m ² annum. Minimum charge £65.00. Recommended for approval.

The minimum charge is the lowest amount of rent charged per plot regardless of plot size.

3.4 Prior to 2014 the allotment rents had not been increased since 2006 and were amongst the lowest in England (data supplied by the National Allotment Society). Between 2006 and 2014 the annual allotment rents were charged 7.5p/m² (Average).

3.5 The Council has a legal duty to notify tenants 12 months in advance of an allotment rent increase. To facilitate the 1st January 2025 rent increase, allotment tenants must be advised by the 31st December 2023.

3.6 The Councils allotment service is operated on a 'cost neutral' basis, without profit. Having taken into account inflationary pressures in financial years 2026-2027 & 2027-2028, and increased Council costs, the recommended rent increase will enable the Council to continue to provide the present 'cost neutral' service level.

3.7 The Allotment Act 1950 says that an authority may charge such rent as a tenant may "reasonably be expected to pay". The recommended rental increase has taken account of all of the following factors:

- Comparison with other neighbouring Local Authorities (Section 3.8).
- Comparison with other local recreational activities (Section 3.9).
- National Allotment Society Policy Document 103. Rents (Section 3.10).
- Consultation with the Hyndburn Federation of Allotments (Section 5.1).

3.8 Comparison with neighbouring allotment authorities:

The following information was supplied by the various allotment authorities attending the North West Allotment Officers meeting held on the 16th October 2019. The following rents are charged in 2019, with the latest 2023 & 2024 rents provided for comparison:

	2019	2023	2024
Bradford	17p/m ²	22p/m ²	40p/m ²
Bury (includes water)	68p/m ²	£1.25/m ²	£1.25/m ²
Cheshire West	16.5p/m ²	16.5p/m ²	21p/m ²
Colne Town Council	36p/m ²	36p/m ²	36p/m ²
Kendal	37p/m ²	37p/m ²	41p/m ²
Leeds	29p/m ²	31p/m ²	31p/m ²
Preston	34p/m ²	37p/m ²	37p/m ²
Skipton	35p/m ²	35p/m ²	35p/m ²
St Helens	24p/m ²	45p/m ²	45p/m ²
Tameside	44p/m ²	50p/m ²	52p/m ²
Trafford	41.5p/m ²	41.5p/m ²	41.5p/m ²

The average 2024 rent (excluding Bury) is 38p/m².

The following rents are charged by the nearest neighbouring local authorities:

	2023	2024	2025
Blackburn with Darwen	28p/m ²	28p/m ²	28p/m ²
Burnley	30p/m ²	30p/m ²	31p/m ²

The allotment rent charged by Hyndburn remains similar when compared to the rents presently charged by Hyndburn's immediate neighbours Blackburn with Darwen and Burnley. It is reasonable to conclude that the proposed rent increase is consistent when compared to other local authorities.

3.9 There are no local recreational activities which are directly comparable to the allotments. The Council has introduced rents for the use of football pitches and bowling greens, set at an incremental rate to ensure that the use of these facilities become cost neutral. The increase in allotment rents has followed the same trajectory.

3.10 The National Allotment Society has produced Policy Document 103 – Rents. The National Allotment Society recognises within its Policy the significance of rent to the allotment provider as an income, and further adds that rents must be reasonable and set in accordance with the legal requirement (Section 3.11). When considering NAS Policy 103 the Council has taken the following into account:

- The long-term financial sustainability of the allotments.
- The nature, quality and cost of facilities provided, including the cost of maintenance.
- Expenditure on management and administration.

With reference to the NAS Policy 103 it is reasonable for the Council to make the allotment service cost neutral. The demand created on the service has established the management cost to the Council, and therefore through necessity the level of rent charged onward to the allotment tenants.

3.11 Summary of legislation, case law and procedures

Section 10(1) of the Allotments Act 1950 states that “Land let by a Council under the Allotments Acts 1908 to 1931 for use as an allotment shall be let at such rent as a tenant may reasonably be expected to pay...”:

Additionally the Council has taken account of existing case law relating to rent increases on allotment sites, the most relevant of which is Harwood –v- Borough of Reigate and Banstead (1982). In this case the Court determined that it was the “right approach” for the Council “not to discriminate against this recreational activity as compared with other recreational activities”. This case emphasised that it was the Council that was required to determine the rent, although representations made by or on behalf of tenants should be listened to, the rent was not a matter for agreement between the Council and the tenant. The Council was, under section 10(1) of the Allotments Act 1950 required to determine the rent that a notional tenant might reasonably be expected to pay, the appropriate test for the Council in determining the rent is that it “must take into account all relevant circumstances in a broad, common sense way, giving such weight as the Council thought fit to various factors in the situation so that it might come to a conclusion that it thought right and fair”.

3.12 The Allotments Acts 1908-1950 are prescriptive regarding the provision of allotments. The Council has had regard to the Allotments Acts when considering the rent on allotment sites. In considering Section 10(1) of the Allotments Act 1950, the Council has taken the following into account when proposing the level of allotment rent:

- The rate by which the allotment rent has been increased is comparable to that set by other recreational activities within Hyndburn.
- The tenant consultation during 2012 established that allotment tenants were in favour of small regular increases, rather than large increases at irregular intervals.
- The allotment rent set by Hyndburn Borough Council remains comparable to that set by neighbouring local authorities.
- Consultation with the Hyndburn Federation of Allotments (HFA), has produced a favourable response, accepting that a rent increase is needed to enable the service to continue at its present level.
- The rent increase takes into consideration the rent policy set by the National Allotment Society.

4. **Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 No rent change or reduced rate of rent increment:

Owing to inflationary pressures and increased Council costs the allotment service will become under-funded during 2026 & 2027 resulting in the need to achieve cost savings. In this event the allotment service would reduce its ability undertake functions in compliance with its management role and that described within the allotment tenancy agreement.

In officers' opinion, there are no other reasonable alternatives. Officers recommend that option 4.1 is rejected on the grounds that the allotment service should continue to provide a cost neutral, effective and efficient service in its present format. The recommended option (Section 3.1) is reasonable to ensure that the allotment service continues to provide the level of service expected by allotment tenants.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 The proposed allotment rent increase was consulted with the Hyndburn Federation of Allotments. Cath Holmes, Chair of the Hyndburn Federation of Allotments, held no objections to the proposed rent increase and said *“These are in line with what allotment tenants opted for in the survey carried out in 2018 and previously. The rent remains one of the lowest in the area and low in comparison to rents charged in other areas of the UK.”*
- 5.2 Regular Portfolio Holder discussions are part of the active allotment service arrangements.
- 5.3 A consultation with the allotment community was carried out by questionnaire during October/November 2012, which has informed some content of this report.

6. Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	Please refer to Sections: 3.1
Legal and human rights implications	Please refer to Sections: 3.5 3.7 3.11 3.12
Assessment of risk	N/A
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	Attached

List of Background Papers

[Cabinet Report dated 9th January 2013](#) “Allotment Rental Charges Review”
[Cabinet Report dated 23rd October 2013](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2015”
[Cabinet Report dated 3rd December 2014](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2016”
[Cabinet Report dated 21st October 2015](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2017”
[Cabinet Report dated 7th December 2016](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2018”
[Cabinet Report dated 6th December 2017](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2019”
[Cabinet Report dated 6th June 2018](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2020 and 2021”
[Cabinet Report dated 21st October 2020](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2022 and 2023”
[Cabinet Report dated 19th October 2022](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2024”
[Cabinet Report dated 18th October 2023](#) “Allotment Rental Charge 2025”

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 30th October 2024

Portfolio: Cllr Kate Walsh – Sustainability & Families

Report Author: Ian Marfleet, Regeneration Projects Manager

Title of Report: Allotment Rental Charge 2026 & 2027.

Customer First Analysis

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to introduce of a reasonable level of allotment rent charge from the 1st January 2026 & 1st January 2027.
- 1.2 Two key aims of the allotment service are to maximise the productive use of the allotment resource and to enable more people to benefit from food growing and the wider social, health and well-being benefits of allotment life. This includes encouraging and providing opportunities for more people from disadvantaged groups to get involved.
- 1.3 There are a number of the equality characteristics which are relevant to the allotment resource and service:-
 - Age, with consideration of older age groups and younger people
 - Disability, including wider considerations of well-being, mobility and mental health
 - Pregnancy and maternity, in relation to suitability of site conditions and facilities
 - Race, religion or belief, in relation to ethnic communities

2. Evidence

- 2.1 An allotment consultation carried out in November 2012. Although the consultation is somewhat out of date the cohort of allotment users is not expected to have altered greatly since. A second consultation was carried out in 2018, however the response rate was so low that the results cannot be effectively considered. The low response rate may be considered as an overall indicator of satisfaction with the allotment service.
- 2.2 122 people responded to the 2012 allotment consultation. While it is not certain that they are representative of the whole of the allotment community, the results provide an indication of equality related characteristics of the allotment community.

Age

18 – 24 yrs	1.5 %
25 – 44 yrs	11.5 %
45 – 64 yrs	47%
65 – 74 yrs	35%
Over 75 yrs	5%

Health

Very good	26%
Good	50%
Fair	19%
Bad	5 %
Very bad	0%

Day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability

Not limited	68%
Limited a little	27%
Limited a lot	5%

- 2.3 Age ranges are perhaps more wide ranging than in the past, with 13% of the respondents in the younger age groups, 47% in the middle age groups and 40% of the respondents in the older age groups.
- 2.4 While health and mobility is good for the majority, it is significant that around 24% of respondents experience less than good health and 32% of respondents have some level of mobility limitation.
- 2.5 23% said their health is better than before they had an allotment. And of those whose health had declined, a massive 83% said that having an allotment had helped to slow down the effects of illness or age.

3. Impact

- 3.1.1 The Council now has tangible evidence that allotment provision contributes to improved health and well-being.
- 3.2 The key equality consideration relating to the rental increase proposal is to ensure that no-one is discriminated from being able to access the allotment resource for reasons of affordability.

- 3.3 The rent review has taken account of all of the relevant factors as follows:-
- Consultation with the Hyndburn Federation of Allotments.
 - Rent comparison with other North West Local Authorities.
 - Comparison of costs with other recreational activities.
 - National Allotment Society policy.
 - Affordability, social and health improvement considerations.
- 3.4 The allotment resource includes special provisions with raised beds and ‘easy access’ beds on a number of sites and accessible and manageable plots of small sizes at Meadoway, Norden, Woodhook, Heys and Peel Park. These provide for people with limited mobility, including older age groups, activities for young people and schools involvement, disability support groups and encourage involvement from more people who are new to food growing or who only have limited time for example due to work, family or study commitments.
- 3.5 The Cabinet report shows that the recommended rent increase is reasonable by, balancing all the relevant considerations, including comparison with other similar recreational activities, and other local authorities.
- 3.6 The allotment resource is very wide ranging with plots of many sizes available. This means that people can choose a plot type and size that is directly relevant to their needs and affordability. It is also often possible for an existing plot holder to reduce the size of their plot, or to move to more suitable provision, should their needs change over time.
- 3.7 The proposal ensures that the Councils allotment resource remains affordable and accessible to all the residents of Hyndburn, regardless of individual circumstances.
4. Actions
- 4.1 The proposals inherently provide for equality considerations and no further action is required.

Simon Prideaux
Chief Officer Planning and Transportation
8th October 2024

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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