

---

# COUNCIL

---

**Thursday, 25th September, 2025**

**Present:** Councillor Josh Allen (Mayor), Councillors Judith Addison, Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brerton, Danny Cassidy, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Loraine Cox, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson MBE, Stewart Eaves, Peter Edwards, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Steven Smithson, Tina Walker, Kimberley Whitehead, Clare Yates and Mohammed Younis

**Apologies:** Councillors Mike Booth, Stephen Button and Kate Walsh

---

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and made a brief statement about the filming of proceedings and filming generally within the Town Hall, followed by a fire safety announcement.

He also announced the sad passing of former councillor Nick Collingridge. Nick was an independent councillor who had served the residents of Clayton-le-Moors for 10 years between 2006 and 2015.

A minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect.

Councillors Melissa Fisher, Judith Addison, Dave Parkins and Bernard Dawson provided their reflections on his life and achievements as a local councillor, which included the opening of Mercer House for use by a voluntary group and the establishment of a drop-in centre in Barnes Square. All members offered their sincere condolences to his family and friends.

**158 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mike Booth, Steve Button and Kate Walsh. Apologies were also submitted on behalf of Councillor Scott Brerton, who would miss the start of the meeting, but who was expected to be present later in the evening.

Members were informed that Councillor Mike Booth had recently undergone a routine surgical procedure and was now recuperating. The Mayor, on behalf of all councillors, wished him a speedy recovery.

**159 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

In connection with Agenda Item 10 (Motion 2) – Urgent Review of the Article 4 Direction across Hyndburn, Councillor Melissa Fisher made the meeting aware that her husband owned an existing House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), details of which were included in her Register of Interests. The Motion, as drafted, did not directly relate to or affect that interest.

There were no formal declarations of interest or declarations of dispensations submitted.

## 160 **Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Mayor on this occasion.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, made the following announcements:

### 1) Local Government Association Peer Challenge Review

Councillor Dad was pleased to be able to update the Council on the outcome of the recent LGA Peer Challenge Review. The peer group had identified strong progress, with all actions either completed or underway. Good progress had been made on the Council's main strategic priorities, including the Accrington town centre interventions, Huncoat Garden Village and the Wilson Sports Hub. Staff engagement was good and officer/member relationships were strong. Further work was required to address the predicted financial challenges ahead and in supporting both staff and members in preparation for Local Government Reorganisation.

The Peer Group's final report would be available shortly and would be provided to the Cabinet. Councillor Dad thanked all who had participated in the review process, including officers and the cross-party working group.

### 2) Pride in Place Programme

The Leader of the Council reported that the Government had announced some additional funding on top of the £20m provided (over ten years) under the Plan for Neighbourhoods funding. The Pride in Place Impact Fund (PiPIF) would set aside a further £1.5m for the Borough.

The programme would be community led and should help local people to deliver improvements, for example, to parks, empty buildings and high streets. Residents could send their ideas to the Council and, in some cases, might sit on the Board which would help to shape the improvements.

David Welsby, Chief Executive, added that the Council had only received this news after 6pm today. Further details would be shared, as soon as possible.

### 3) Draft Local Plan – Examination Stage

Members were informed that the examination stage of the draft Local Plan had been underway since last Monday. The six day hearing phase had now been completed. The Council would now have to create a schedule of work with timescales. An interim report from the Inspector should follow within a few weeks. The overall aim of this stage was to determine if the draft Plan was sound.

A further 6 weeks' consultation would take place on any modifications made under this process. Cabinet approval would be required to the modifications made. The Inspector should then issue a final report.

### 4) Recognition of Palestine

Councillor Dad reported that the UK Government had recently recognised the State of Palestine and the inalienable right of its citizens to self-determination. This was in line with justice and international law. The Labour Muslim Network had been campaigning for a decade on this matter. An estimated 70,000 people had been killed in Gaza since October 2023.

The Government was being urged to press for an arms embargo, sanctions and action from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Local councillors would continue to raise their voice on this issue.

*The Mayor indicated that he had received a request from Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE to make a brief statement and that he had acceded to this request.*

5) Israel/Gaza Conflict

Councillor Fazal acknowledged and welcomed the Leader's announcement on the recognition of the state of Palestine by the UK Government. He noted that some 80 other countries had done so in 1988. This week had seen the UK, France, Italy and Canada join this movement. He expressed the view that it was impossible now to refute that genocide was taking place in Gaza. The United Nations (UN) had accepted this last week and some Jewish scholars also held this view.

We were all human beings together and the pain of conflict could regularly be seen live on television. Ordinary citizens were helpless in the face of war. He had hoped that the situation could not get any worse, but the reality was that it had, with citizens being bombed and starved to death and children simply waiting for death. Only last week a doctor had been quoted as saying he hoped that a child would die, as she had been so badly injured that she could not be saved and a quick death would be merciful.

Many residents wanted to be able to do something to help. Some, like himself, attended large-scale protests, including those planned soon in Liverpool and London. He noted that Councillor Dad was taking some key actions but, in the meantime, the Government was continuing to supply arms and aerial intelligence to Israel. The Council could boycott businesses that invested in Israel and ask the Lancashire County Pension Fund to divest from Israeli companies, which made up 1% of the fund (some £108m). In addition, it could encourage local companies, including BAE Systems, not to sell products to Israel. He considered that it would be unlawful for companies to sell weapons to countries that were committing genocide. A more worthwhile venture might be for local businesses to switch to manufacturing parts for renewable energy.

Councillor Fazal asked if the Council would observe one minute's silence in memory of those killed and in solidarity with the people of Gaza. The Mayor agreed to this request, adding that the silence should remember all those who were suffering across the world.

Accordingly, one minute's silence was observed in memory of those killed throughout the world and in solidarity with people who were still suffering as a result of conflict.

The Mayor thanked those in the public gallery for their solemn contribution.

There were no announcements from David Welsby, Chief Executive, on this occasion.

**161 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025 were provided.

In respect of Minute 83(6) – Question Time - King George V Playing Fields, Councillor David Heap thanked Councillor Stewart Eaves for his reply and noted that he had agreed to meet with him, local residents and representatives of Accrington Wildcats Amateur Rugby League FC. No meeting had yet taken place. Councillor Eaves responded that the take up of the lease was still being negotiated with a preferred lessee. It would not be appropriate to arrange a meeting with other interested groups until those discussions had concluded. He noted that the Wildcats had been content with the continued use of the Wilson Sports Hub, but might have been unsettled by the premature mention of the possible leasing of King George V Playing Fields.

In connection with Minute 83(10) Question Time – Accrington Neighbourhoods Board, Councillor Heap indicated that he was pleased to note that a new independent Chair, Sami Smithson, had been appointed to the Board. He asked if a plan was now being worked on and, if so, whether the new Chair had read the draft Plan for Neighbourhoods and had been in a position to digest the information available. Councillor Dad responded that he too was pleased to welcome Sami Smithson to the Board and was glad that other councillors supported this appointment. Her first meeting would take place next week. The first item was the draft Plan for Neighbourhoods. The Chair had already received all of the relevant paperwork. Once the plan had been approved, it would be submitted to Government before the deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Regarding Minute 87 - Minutes of Cabinet (Minute 46 – Accrington Stanley FC), Councillor Heap noted that the Leader had indicated that progress was being made and that positive news might be available soon. He asked what news was available. Councillor Dad responded that this subject had been raised on several occasions. ASFC was an important community club. He had attended an event there a few days ago at which football shirts, funded by the Council, had been distributed to local children. The club's Chief Executive Officer, Warren Eastham, had met with the Council's party and their subsequent press release had highlighted the good working relationship between the club and the Council. Both sides would continue to try to resolve all of the issues identified previously.

In respect of Minute 89(3) - Motions on Notice – Welfare Motion, Councillor David Heap queried whether there had been any positive outcomes as a result of the resolution agreed about proposed welfare reforms.

In connection with Minute 87 - Minutes of Cabinet (Minute 46 – Accrington Neighbourhoods Board), Councillor Khan also noted that Sami Smithson was the new Chair and considered that this was a good appointment. He expressed disappointment that he had not received further information about the appointment process for the previous Chair.

Regarding Minute 83(4) – Question Time – Council Owned Garages, Councillor Zak Khan indicated that no response had been received by Councillor Haworth about the possible creation of a budget to maintain the garages. Councillor Dad responded that he had given no undertaking to send a reply, but he had committed to look into the matter.

In respect of Minute 89(3) – Motions on Notice – Welfare Motion, Councillor Zak Khan outlined an error in the minutes and clarified that in Paragraph 10, his statement was that the Opposition group would ordinarily have supported that particular motion, in principle.

In connection with Minute 87 – Minutes of Cabinet (Minute 46 – Accrington Stanley FC) Councillor Heather Anderson, expressed the view that the comments directed to the Leader of the Council calling for his resignation were disrespectful. She reminded all councillors of the need to remain courteous during debates and to remember at all times the dignity expected of meetings held in the Council Chamber.

In respect of Minute 83(3) – Question Time – Reinstatement of BMX Track off Harvey Street, Councillor Smithson thanked Councillor Eaves for arranging the meeting with ward councillors.

Regarding Minute 82 (Minute 6 – Confirmation of Minutes (Minute 417), Councillor Smithson reported that the recent skip day in St Andrews ward had attracted only 3 or 4 people despite over 100 leaflets being hand delivered and face to face contact with residents. He asked if the Leader would now scrap this scheme in favour of more CCTV cameras and enforcement. Councillor Dad highlighted that skip days were a flagship Labour policy and would continue. Their use had been widely welcomed in the participating wards. The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, Councillor Stewart Eaves, had done an excellent job in providing this service.

In connection with Minute 89 –Motions on Notice, Councillor Dad remarked that the Opposition group had declined to engage in the debate and vote on the three Labour motions at the last meeting. He hoped that the group would participate in the debate on their four motions on today's Agenda.

*Councillor Kimberley Whitehead raised a number of matters under this heading, which were more closely linked to the Cabinet minutes set out at Agenda Item 8. Accordingly, these points are recorded as the first three matters at Minute 165, for ease of reference.*

**Resolved**

- **That, subject to the inclusion of the following amendments in Paragraph 10, of Minute 89(3) – Motions on Notice – Welfare Motion:**

**At Sentence 1, the deletion of the words “the motions put today” and their substitution by the words “the above motion”, and**

**At Sentence 2, the deletion of the word “them” and its substitution by the word “it”,**

**the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025 be approved as a correct record.**

**162      Question Time**

Nineteen eligible questions had been received, which were set out in the report. The Mayor confirmed that he would read out the questions as submitted.

The Leader of the Council expressed his appreciation for the questions submitted, both by councillors and members of the public, but noted that the time was now 7:45pm. The total time allowed for questions and answers to be put was 30 minutes, which would limit the opportunity to give any detailed responses. Accordingly, all of the questions would receive a written reply. He considered that it was important to provide a full reply to all who had raised a question.

He reminded all present that questions could be asked, at any time, about everyday Council services and policies via the Council's normal contact facilities.

The Mayor reiterated that, notwithstanding, the above, he was obliged to read out the questions in accordance with the Constitution.

**1)      Skip Days**

*To the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (Councillor Stewart Eaves)  
Submitted by Councillor Clare Pritchard on behalf of Mr C Martino*

“Could the portfolio holder please provide an update to Council on the recent skip days?”

*Response:*

Councillor Eaves indicated that a written reply would be provided.

2) Council Reserves

*To the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations (Councillor Vanessa Alexander)  
Submitted by Councillor Steven Smithson*

“How much money does this Council have in its reserves?”

*Response:*

Councillor Alexander referred to a recently published report and indicated that a written reply would be provided.

3) Great Harwood High Street Accelerator Plan

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder  
Submitted by Councillor Zak Khan*

“Following the successful roll out of £45,000 in grants for shop improvements in Great Harwood, will you roll this out this across the whole Borough and offer the same opportunity to other towns?”

*Response:*

Councillor Dad indicated that a written reply would be provided.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Khan on the following:*

Councillor Khan commented that the Leader of the Council appeared to be refusing to answer the substantive question and asked if he could answer it now.

The Leader reiterated that a written reply would be provided.

4) Local Nature Recovery Strategies

*To the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (Councillor Stewart Eaves)  
Submitted by Councillor Zak Khan on behalf of Vinette Davitt*

“How is Hyndburn engaging in the new Local Nature Recovery Strategies? - A new system to map the best opportunities for restoring nature to help focus efforts and target funding.”

*Response:*

Councillor Eaves indicated that a written reply would be provided and reminded all that routine questions could be submitted via the Council's Contact Centre.

5) King George V Playing Fields

*To the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (Councillor Stewart Eaves)  
Submitted by Councillor David Heap*

“Please could the portfolio holder give an update on the reopening of King George’s playing fields?”

*Response:*

Councillor Eaves indicated that a written reply would be provided.

6) Accrington Cemetery

*To the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (Councillor Stewart Eaves)  
Submitted by Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE on behalf of Khuram Mehrban*

“What action will Hyndburn Council take to stop dogs fouling and walking over graves at Burnley Road Cemetery, and when will the promised fencing, water tap, and review of burial regulations for the Muslim section finally be delivered?”

*Response:*

Councillor Eaves indicated that a written reply would be provided.

7) Vehicle MOT Requirements

*To the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration (Councillor Melissa Fisher)  
Submitted by Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE on behalf of Sohail Asghar*

“Wolverhampton Council has implemented a policy requiring 12-month MOTs for private hire vehicles to ensure consistent safety standards. Is Hyndburn Council planning to adopt a similar approach, especially in light of the recent proposal to end 'in-house' MOT testing and allow local garages to conduct these checks?”

*Response:*

Councillor Fisher indicated that the proposed new Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy was set out at Appendix 2 to Agenda Item 7. However, a written reply would be provided.

8) Fly-Tipping

*To the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (Councillor Stewart Eaves)  
Submitted by Councillor Steven Smithson*

“In Oswaldtwistle we have seen a recent increase of fly-tipping - what plans do the Council have in place to tackle this ongoing issue?”

*Response:*

Councillor Eaves indicated that a written reply would be provided.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Smithson on the following:*

Councillor Smithson commented that residents had a right to know what the Council was doing on this matter. He asked if the Council had considered other options to reduce fly-tipping.

No further response was provided.

9) Friendship/Twinning with a Palestinian City

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder  
Submitted by Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE on behalf of Hasnain Fazal*

“Preston City Council is progressing with building connections with a Palestinian city, Hebron, as part of their friendship and twinning arrangements. Can the Leader please confirm whether Hyndburn Borough Council has any plans to consider similar friendship links, particularly with a Palestinian city, and if not, whether this is something that will be explored in the future?”

*Response:*

Councillor Dad indicated that a written reply would be provided.

10) Unused Land at Perth Street/Willows Lane and Pendle Street

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder  
Submitted by Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE*

“What are Hyndburn Council’s plans for the unused land at the Perth Street/Willows Lane junction and the Pendle Street site where homes were demolished years ago, and when can residents expect progress or development?”

*Response:*

Councillor Dad indicated that a written reply would be provided.

11) Support for Cultural and Sports Events

*To the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport  
(Councillor Kimberley Whitehead)*

*Submitted by Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE on behalf of Tanveer Khan*

“Hyndburn Council runs fantastic events like the Accrington Soapbox Challenge and Food Festival. Will the Council commit to supporting future cultural and sports events—such as Kabaddi, cricket and weightlifting—especially those that celebrate our borough’s diversity, with the same level of funding and backing as other major events?”

*Response:*

Councillor Whitehead indicated that a written reply would be provided. She commented that this and other such questions would be more suitable for ward councillors to answer as part of their ordinary casework.

12) Council Debt

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

*Submitted by Councillor Steven Smithson on behalf of Mr and Mrs J Westell*

“How much debt does the Council currently have?”

*Response:*

Councillor Alexander referred to a recently published report and indicated that a written reply would be provided.

13) Baxenden Village Clock

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder*

*Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of Kevin Laycock*

“Please can I have an update on Baxenden's broken village clock?”

*Response:*

Councillor Dad indicated that a written reply would be provided.

14) Minutes of Meetings

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder*

*Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of Catherine Laycock*

“Why are the minutes from meetings only published just before the next meeting and not within 2 weeks of the meeting happening?”

*Response:*

Councillor Dad indicated that a written reply would be provided.

15) Cath Thom Leisure Centre

*To the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration (Councillor Melissa Fisher)*

*Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of Peter Shaw*

“The Council have spent 10.5 million on the new Clayton leisure centre and will expect a return on that investment. What process has been set up for councillors to monitor the achievements of these targets and how often will the public be informed?”

*Response:*

Councillor Fisher commented that the process had just been approved at a Leisure Trust meeting, which she and Councillor Loraine Cox had attended earlier this afternoon. A more comprehensive written reply would follow.

16) Empty Retail Unit on Hyndburn Road

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder  
Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of: Carol Hoyle*

“What is happening with the empty unit formerly the hot tubs on Hyndburn Road?”

*Response:*

Councillor Dad indicated that a written reply would be provided.

17) Baxenden Recreation Ground

*To the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services (Councillor Stewart Eaves)  
Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of Nicola Harvey*

“Will the portfolio holder meet with our councillor (Cllr Heap) to look at having a pump track for our youth on Baxenden rec?”

*Response:*

Councillor Eaves indicated that a written reply would be provided.

18) Accrington Victoria Hospital Site

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder  
Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of Mary Bilsborough*

“What is happening with the ‘Accy Vic’ site ?”

*Response:*

Councillor Dad indicated that a written reply would be provided.

19) Access to Allotments in Baxenden

*To the Portfolio Holder for People and Communities (Councillor Ethan Rawcliffe)  
Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of Anne Metcalfe*

“With the allotment monies collected, is there any plan to reinstate and maintain the pathway at Hey Street around to Hill Street, Baxenden so that plot holders can get to their plot with a vehicle.”

*Response:*

Councillor Rawcliffe indicated that a written reply would be provided within 10 working days.

Councillor Judith Addison raised a point of order in connection with the controlling group's intention to provide written responses, in the light of Council Procedure Rule 2.2 (vi), which stated, *inter alia*, the following:

"Questions will be put by the chair of the meeting and will be taken in the order in which they are received by the Chief Executive and will receive an oral answer. Questions that cannot be put within the allotted time will receive a written answer within 10 working days."

Councillor Dad asserted that oral answers had been given, indicating that written responses would be provided. The Mayor, indicated that he had taken advice on the matter prior to the meeting, and ruled that the oral answers provided were in accordance with the Rule as stated.

*NOTE: The full list of responses was subsequently published on the Council's website and can be viewed using the following link:*

[Council Meeting Question Time | Hyndburn Borough Council](#)

### **163 Appointments to Committees**

Members were informed that the Council had duty to give effect to the wishes of a political group in relation to appointments to committees and other bodies in accordance with s16(1) Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The Council was invited to consider and give effect to a request from the Labour and Co-operative group, as follows:

The appointment of the following members to the Standards Committee: Councillors Noordad Aziz, Clare Pritchard and Kimberley Whitehead, to replace Councillors Stephen Button, Bernard Dawson and Ethan Rawcliffe and the appointment of Councillor Noordad Aziz as Chair.

There were no additional requests for changes submitted at the meeting.

Councillor Zak Khan expressed disappointment at the changes being made to the membership of the Standards Committee, as he considered that the existing members were working well together. He was particularly supportive of the Chair, Councillor Stephen Button, who he considered to be fair and impartial in his approach. The role of Standards Committee member, required decision-making based on sound judgement and independence from political motivations. He expressed concern that the changes were being made to politicise the committee.

Councillor Clare Pritchard considered that the above remark was unwarranted. She gave an assurance that she would not politicise the role, if appointed, and that she would act fairly along with any Opposition members. She added that Councillor Button had stepped down as a result of changes to his work schedule. Another member had stepped down due to university commitments. In any event, the Standards Hearings Panels also comprised an independent member.

Councillor Noordad Aziz commented that he was being proposed as Chair. He was currently Chair of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was supportive of cross-party working. He asked that the remark about politicisation be withdrawn.

Councillor Kimberley Whitehead indicated that she had served on the committee previously and considered herself to be fair. Hearing Panels would not be constituted to include members who had an interest in the particular matter complained of.

Councillor Dad summed up by affirming the nominations proposed, which the Council was required to accept. He asserted that the councillors and Chair put forward were experienced members and would act in a professional manner.

**Resolved**

- **To approve the appointment of the following members to the Standards Committee: Councillors Noordad Aziz, Clare Pritchard and Kimberley Whitehead, to replace Councillors Stephen Button, Bernard Dawson and Ethan Rawcliffe and the appointment of Councillor Noordad Aziz as Chair.**

**164 Rules Regulations and Procedures for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing - Amendment / Mechanical Testing of Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles**

Members considered a report of Councillor Melissa Fisher, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, advising members of the outcome of a recent consultation relating to proposed changes to the taxi licensing policy in relation to the mechanical testing of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, and seeking approval for a change to the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy which would allow mechanical testing to be carried out externally.

Should the decision be made to proceed with the proposed changes, Members would be invited to approve the suggested criteria for a testing station to become approved (as set out at Appendix 1 to the report), to approve fees for testing stations to become approved and to approve a maximum number of testing stations in the Borough – the recommendation being 4 or 5.

Councillor Fisher referred members to the detail within the report and advised the Council of a minor change to the wording of Paragraph 2.1, which she then moved as the first paragraph of the Substantive Motion.

The report set out the following information:

**Current Position**

Provisions within the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permitted district councils to grant licenses to vehicle proprietors to use a vehicle as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.

Under Section 50 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licensed by a district council had to present for inspection and testing on no more than three occasions during any one twelve month period. The primary reason for this legislation was to maintain public safety, both in respect of taxi passengers and other road users.

Currently in Hyndburn vehicles up to the age of 2 years when tested would be issued with a 12 month licence. Any car over the age of 2 years of age would be required to pass the Council's vehicle examination test twice yearly and would be issued with a 6 month licence each time. When a vehicle reached 15 years of age it would be subject to the Council's vehicle examination test three times per year and would be issued with a 4 month licence each time.

The inspection and testing was currently undertaken by staff employed by the Council and based at the Council's Vehicle Maintenance Unit (CVMU) located on Library Street in Church. The tests were booked via the Council's licensing team.

In addition to the standards required for a class 4 MOT test by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), the Council had additional supplemental standards which vehicles had to pass in order to be licensed by the Council. The supplementary testing manual supplemented the Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing and had been established so as to ensure that all vehicles licensed by Hyndburn Borough Council were of a high standard and were suitable, safe and fit to be licensed by this authority to transport members of the public. The additional elements of the supplementary testing manual were essential as there were certain criteria that a licensed vehicle must meet over and above the MOT standards. For example, all licensed vehicles must have 4 doors. A vehicle with only 2 doors would not fail an MOT on that criteria, but it would not be suitable to be licensed as a private hire or hackney carriage vehicle.

The Council currently issues a Certificate of Compliance (COC) to all vehicles that had reached the MOT standards as well as those set out in the supplementary testing manual. The COC was a certificate that the DVSA permitted only local authority employees to issue when testing at a local authority premises. The COC would exempt the licensed vehicle from requiring a class 4 MOT.

If a vehicle failed any part of the class 4 MOT test, including any elements of the supplementary test, it would not be issued with a compliance certificate, and would not be licensed until it had fully passed the test. All re-tests would have to take place within ten working days of the original test otherwise a full taxi test would be required at the full test taxi fee. Only one re-test was permitted per vehicle, thereafter a full taxi test was required and a full test fee charged.

The overriding aim of any Licensing Authority when carrying out its functions in relation to the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and private hire operators must be the protection of the public.

#### The proposal to externalise

In March 2025, the Cabinet had asked officers to consider ending taxi testing by CVMU and instead outsourcing this activity to a set number of independent testing stations throughout the Borough. This would involve testing stations being invited to apply to become Council approved for the mechanical testing of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles (sometimes referred to generically in the report as "taxis") and vehicle owners would be able to choose which testing station to use from the list of approved garages. The proposed changes, including criteria that the testing station would have to meet, application procedure, selection procedure and circumstances whereby approved status could be removed would require amendments to the Council's existing policy for private hire vehicles and hackney carriages.

A public consultation in respect of the proposal had taken place between 23<sup>rd</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The consultation had been emailed to all current drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators, plus elected members. The consultation survey had also been published on the Council's website for use by the public. Social media posts had been published, inviting both trade and public to participate in the consultation exercise and a press release had been published in the local press. The questions asked in the consultation survey were set out at Appendix 3 of the report.

There were 130 responses to the consultation. Details of those responding were as follows:

Description of respondent

- Members of the public – 100
- Taxi / private hire trade – 25
- Garage owners – 5

Respondents' link to Hyndburn

- Respondents living in the Borough – 97%
- Respondents working in the Borough – 70%

Respondents' usage of taxi's / private hire vehicles

- Use every week – 32%
- Use every month – 22%
- Use a few times a year – 30%
- Never use – 16%

Some key data from the consultation was as follows:

- 69% believed that taxi safety would decrease, 12% thought safety would improve and 17% thought the change would have no effect on safety, whilst 2% had no opinion on what the effect would be;
- 58.21% of respondents who identified themselves as taxi trade believed the proposed changes would not be an improvement to current arrangements. However, more respondents answered this question than had identified as taxi trade earlier in the survey (67 responses); and
- 59.62% replied that they were not happy with the proposed selection criteria. However, the reasons given suggested that a portion of those respondents were unhappy with the proposal rather than the specific selection criteria.

The concerns raised about the proposal included the following:

- A large number of the respondents had expressed concerns about a drop in the standard of vehicle testing and a resulting decline in taxi safety for the travelling public and other road users;
- A number of the respondent's had expressed concern about the potential for unscrupulous garages to be involved in taxi testing and that externalisation could be more open to fraud and corruption than the current arrangement; and
- Some of the respondents were concerned the Council would not be able to properly monitor the activities of the approved garages and would therefore have less control over vehicle standards.

In response to the concerns above, members were asked to note that the DVSA approved all MOT testing stations, and would only approve those it considered to be of a high enough standard to carry out MOT tests. Concerns relating to MOT standards could be referred to the DVSA for review and investigation. The MOT aspect of the test would be the standard MOT that all road vehicles were required to pass. Furthermore, the Council would not be

allowing all garages in the Borough to carry out taxi testing, as the proposal envisaged that only a limited number of garages would be permitted to undertake taxi testing. These garages would be required to meet the specified criteria and would be subject to ongoing monitoring. If a garage failed to meet the required standards, then its authorisation could be removed. In addition, if externalisation occurred the Council would increase the number of random vehicle checks and safety operations it carried out each year. Also, the taxi / private hire compliance certificate would still be issued, and the garages would be required to carry out the additional testing specified in the Council's supplementary testing manual (details of which were set out at Appendix 4 of the report).

Respondents who were in favour of the externalisation of taxi testing had given the following reasons:

- An easier process might entice drivers to return from Wolverhampton;
- The testing would be of the same standard as CVMU;
- Testing stations were all professionals who carried out the same tests;
- It provided opportunities for local garages;
- It would be easier to book a convenient slot when there were multiple garages offering testing; and
- It would be cheaper, quicker and easier.

In relation to Hyndburn's neighbouring authorities, Blackburn and Rossendale carried out internal vehicle testing. Burnley and Pendle allowed approved testing stations to carry out testing and Burnley had 3 approved garages, whilst Pendle had 5.

Should the Council decide to proceed with this proposal, the opportunity to become an authorised garage would be advertised for at least 3 weeks. The opportunity would also be publicised via the Council's social media channels. Once applications were received, the garages would be inspected by Licensing Officers to ensure that they met the suggested criteria (as set out at Appendix 1 of the report). The applications from those garages that passed this stage in the selection process would then be considered by the Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services), with support from the Licensing Manager, relevant Portfolio Holder and the Chair of Judicial Committee, prior to a determination being made by the Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services).

There were costs in terms of staff time associated with setting up the arrangement, the application and inspection process, as well as ongoing monitoring and administration costs. The initial set up cost was £92.40 per garage (assuming 5 garages were to be approved). Each application would cost £48.60, an inspection would cost £145.80 and the ongoing cost per garage was £148.80 per year. The Licensing Manager proposed that fees were charged to each applicant on a staged basis, as follows:

- Application cost - £50
- Inspection Charge (if the garage met the criteria) - £120
- Approval and Set-Up cost (if approved) - £80

Consideration would need to be given as to whether an annual fee should be applied to cover ongoing costs and monitoring and there would be a further report to Council about this in due course. The calculation of costs was provided as Appendix 5 of the report.

In reaching a decision in respect of this matter members were referred to the following Appendices set out in the report:

- Appendix 1 – Proposed selection criteria for approved testing stations

- Appendix 2 – Proposed amendment to taxi and private hire policy
- Appendix 3 – Consultation Questions
- Appendix 4 – Supplementary Testing Manual
- Appendix 5 – Fee Calculations
- Appendix 6 – Equality impact assessment

Councillors Loraine Cox, Mohammed Younis, Steven Smithson, Zak Khan and Munsif Dad all spoke in favour of this change to the policy. The proposals had taken some time to come to fruition and a number of councillors and former councillors who had worked on this over a lengthy period were thanked for their efforts. Councillor Plummer noted that only three testing stations in the Borough would currently meet the proposed criteria within the first 12 months of operating any new arrangements. She asked if this number was sufficient. Councillor Judith Addison enquired if the changes would result in redundancies at CVMU.

Councillor Dad reassured members that public safety was the Council's primary concern and that standards would be monitored. He cited examples of other Lancashire districts that had similar arrangements in place, which worked well. He also hoped that the changes would help to reduce the numbers of taxi proprietors becoming Uber drivers and seeking licences from Wolverhampton or Knowsley Councils. In response to the questions raised by Councillors Plummer and Addison, he reported that the Council was looking to approve a maximum of five testing stations and confirmed that no redundancies were anticipated at CVMU. He also acknowledged and thanked Councillor Plummer for her work in previous roles on the Taxi Liaison Group and Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing).

**Resolved**

- (1) **That the Council resolves to discontinue the mechanical testing of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and to externalise this function on the basis set out in this report.**
- (2) **As a consequence of (1) above, that the Council:**
  - i. **agrees to designate up to 5 garages within the Borough as approved testing stations to carry out mechanical testing of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and that, where possible, those garages will be located in different parts of the Borough;**
  - ii. **delegates authority to the Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services) following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing), to select and appoint approved testing stations for this purpose (noting that the scheme of delegation to officers will be amended to this effect so that the delegation arrangement will cover the appointment of replacement garages in the event of changes being required in the future);**

- iii. approves the revised taxi and private hire licensing policy and supplementary testing manual set out at Appendices 2 and 4 to the report and in particular the criteria for selection as an approval testing station and for removal of designation as an approved testing station set out at Appendix 1 to the report.
- iv. delegates authority to the Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services) following consultation with the Chair of the Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing), to remove designation as an approved testing station in accordance with the criteria set out in the Council's taxi and private hire licensing policy (noting that the scheme of delegation to officers will be amended to this effect);
- v. delegates authority to the Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services), following consultation with the Chair of Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing), to suspend designation as an approved testing station to enable an investigation to be carried out where there are reasonable grounds to consider that one or more of the criteria for removal of designation as an approved testing station may have been met (noting that the scheme of delegation to officers will be amended to this effect);
- vi. approves the fees proposed in Paragraph 3.11 of the report.

*Councillor Pritchard raised a point of order in connection with a post about the Question Time item that had just appeared on social media, which she considered amounted to a misrepresentation by a councillor of what had transpired during the consideration of that business. The Mayor considered that this was not a valid point of order, as it did not relate to a Council Procedure Rule, but that the issue of misrepresentation could potentially be raised as a standards matter. The Chief Executive added that there was no Council Procedure Rule which prevented councillors from using personal communication devices during meetings.*

## **165 Minutes of Cabinet**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 30<sup>th</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025 were submitted.

The following matters were raised:

In connection with the Cabinet meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Minute 399 - Reports of Cabinet Members – Oak Hill Park Bowling Greens, Councillor Kimberley Whitehead had spoken to the bowlers recently and had heard a disappointing comment that an Opposition member had indicated that the controlling group was not supporting the project to provide perimeter fencing. In fact, the Labour group was fully committed to this project. A tender exercise had been completed and the plans had now been approved. Councillor Munsif Dad added that he too was disappointed at the apparent spreading of misinformation and hoped that the individual would be held accountable. Councillor Heap commented that he had recently visited the bowlers at Oak Hill Park, when they had won the bowling league. They had expressed their gratitude that the fencing was due to be erected, as the greens had previously suffered some damage due to vandalism. The club members had also enquired if there was any more funding available to erect a small shelter for use by those keeping score. Councillor Eaves confirmed that the fencing was due to be erected and that he would look into whether any funding might be available for a shelter.

In respect of the Cabinet meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Minute 406 – Bullough Park Community Woodland Enhancement, Councillor Whitehead was pleased to see the investment in this park. Phase 2 would create paths and steps and develop a pond and wetlands. A celebration event was due to take place in early December. The final improvements would see cricket return to the park and a survey of the pavilion had now been carried out. The intention was to bring back a local cricket team, a move which she believed had not been supported by the Green Party. Councillor Dad reiterated that the controlling group would continue to invest in this scheme.

Regarding the Cabinet meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Minute 408 – Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre Working Group, Councillor Whitehead reported that it had been planned to hold a meeting of the Civic Working Group, but this had not been necessary. A revised date was now being scheduled for November/ December 2025. Several expressions of interest had been received from persons who wished to be included in the Working Group. The roof survey report had now been completed. Significant remedial works would be required which would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. The project was out to tender and the closing date was 13<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 2pm. Local contractors were encouraged to apply. The Council had already set aside £500k for repair works and £110k had been received from Theatres in Trust. There remained strong local support for the reopening of the Civic.

In connection with the Cabinet meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Minute 400 – LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, Councillor Marlene Haworth highlighted Key Recommendation 7, at Paragraph 3 of the *Reasons for Decision*, which referred to ‘Internal and External Communications’. She asked whether councillors would all receive the new iPads which were being rolled out, regardless of whether, or not, they wanted one. She noted that some members had already received their devices, but did not recall any consultation about this project. Councillors Haworth and Khan queried when the decision to roll out new iPads had been taken. Councillor Haworth described her own circumstances, in which she could easily use a PC, but might struggle to familiarise herself with any other device. She had also been made aware of the potential inconvenience for councillors who currently used personal devices to manage their Council e-mail accounts, no longer being permitted that access. This would impact on those working councillors who used smart phones, for example, to respond to residents’ queries during their lunch break. Her view was that the current system worked well and did not need to be changed. She also queried the overall cost of rolling out new iPads and suggested that the money could have been better spent on other priorities. She asked if the relevant Portfolio Holder would reconsider this project.

Councillors Zak Khan and Steven Smithson spoke in support of the retention of Council e-mail access on personal devices and Councillor Addison spoke about the flexibility of having a single device for both Council and personal use.

Councillors Noordad Aziz, Vanessa Alexander and Kimberley Whitehead spoke about cyber security, which was the rationale for the rolling out of Council provided devices. All acknowledged that this might lead to councillors carrying more than one portable device at a time, but this was necessary to strengthen security. Councillor Aziz highlighted the recent cyber-attack at Jaguar Land Rover (JLR). Councillor Alexander reported that use of personal devices increased the risk of data breaches and would no longer be an option. David Welsby, Chief Executive, added that, in addition to JLR, recent attacks on M&S, the NHS and today's attack on the Kido nursery chain had all demonstrated the need for increased security. Councillor Whitehead clarified that the roll out of iPads had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Leader's Policy Development Board.

In respect of the Cabinet meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Minute 399 – Reports of Cabinet Members, Waste Transfer Station, Councillor Steven Smithson asked if any progress had been made towards the future method of transferring waste to the disposal authority. Councillor Eaves indicated that a tender exercise had commenced for this provision.

Regarding the Cabinet meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Minute 408 – Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre Working Group, Councillor Smithson was pleased to see progress being made on the preservation of this asset. He asked if both he and Councillor Gilbert, as the relevant ward councillors, could be included in the working group. Councillor Gilbert thanked Councillor Smithson for including him in his request, but explained that he might have some difficulty in committing to this group, given his personal family care commitments. He would be happy to abide by the wishes of the Cabinet as to his possible appointment.

In connection with the Cabinet meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025, Minute 150 – Telecommunications Mast at Harvey Street Oswaldtwistle, Councillor Smithson welcomed this decision and was pleased that the Council would resist this development. He commented that some alternative locations had been suggested to the developer as part of the discussions about a suitable site.

In respect of the Cabinet meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025, Minute 146 - Report of Cabinet Members – Accrington Neighbourhoods Board, Councillor Paul Cox commented that he had seen numerous plans to regenerate the town centre of Accrington over the years. He expressed a view that the draft Plan for Neighbourhoods would benefit from input from representatives with a keen interest in the town centre, rather than the 'usual suspects'. He suggested that the Board's membership should be opened up to wider talent. There was a further opportunity to make a difference using the new Pride in Place Impact Fund monies. His home was close to Accrington town centre and he had witnessed much change over the last 30 years. This could be the last chance reinvigorate the area. Accordingly, a cohesive group with a clear vision was essential in deciding its future.

**Resolved**

**- That the Minutes be received and noted.**

**166 Minutes of Committees**

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Planning Committee	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing)	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2025

Planning Committee	9 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
Special Scrutiny Committee	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2025
Cabinet Committee (Street Naming)	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
Planning Committee	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
Planning Committee	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2025

In respect of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2025, Minute 103 – Apologies for Absence, Councillor David Heap noted that no apologies had been submitted on behalf of a portfolio holder who had not been present for a particular item of business. Asked the Leader of the Council if portfolio holders were expected to attend overview and scrutiny meetings and if they should present apologies if unable to attend.

Councillor Smithson recalled that there had been some good open debate at the above meeting, but that during the one particular item of business (Performance Review Report) the officer present had been unable to answer some questions in relation to specific details of services being monitored. The officer had undertaken to report those questions back to the relevant services, but to date no follow up information had been received by members of the committee.

Councillor Munsif Dad indicated that he was not aware of any instances of a portfolio holder not attending an overview and scrutiny committee, if invited. The Leader had himself attended overview and scrutiny committees and he was certain the portfolio holders would also attend, as necessary. He indicated that following any meeting, where officers had not subsequently provided responses to unanswered questions, the matter should be referred to the Leader, so that he could chase up a reply.

**Resolved** - That the Minutes be received and noted.

## 167 Motion(s) submitted on Notice

The Mayor confirmed that all motions submitted had received the minimum number of signatories required (or higher). He then called upon the mover of the first motion to speak.

*Given that the time was now 8:55pm and there were four motions to debate, Councillor Smithson asked if the Mayor now wished to seek the consent of the meeting that the proceedings continue beyond 10:00pm, under Council Procedure Rule A7. The Mayor considered that it would be premature to determine that question at this stage.*

*The meeting was then adjourned for 5 minutes to allow members to take short break.*

### 1) Live streaming of Meetings

The following motion was proposed by Councillor David Heap and seconded by Councillor Zak Khan, with support from signatory Councillors Steven Smithson, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A9:

*“This Council requests that the Cabinet consider making arrangements for all council meetings to be live streamed online for public viewing, this includes full council, cabinet and scrutiny meetings.”*

Councillors Mohammed Younis, Steven Smithson, Zak Khan spoke in favour of the motion on the grounds of transparency. Councillor Kimberley Whitehead, Andy Gilbert and Munsif Dad spoke against the proposals, noting that livestreaming was desirable, but that the Leader's Policy Development Board had considered this on several occasions and had concluded that the set up costs (in the region of £110k) could not be justified; there were other financial pressures on the Council; local government reorganisation might reduce the usage of the Council Chamber; and, in any event, members of the public regularly posted video recordings of the meetings on social media.

Councillor Heap summed up by querying the detailed costs within the quote and stating that the public wanted to be able to view meetings on line.

*In accordance with Council Procedure Rule A6.5, six councillors present called for a recorded vote, the outcome of which was as follows.*

For (10)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen (Mayor), Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Steven Smithson, Tina Walker and Mohammed Younis.

Against (18)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Scott Breton, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson MBE, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates

Abstain (0)

Nil

Accordingly, the **MOTION** was **LOST**.

2) Urgent Review of the Article 4 Direction Across Hyndburn

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Steven Smithson and seconded by Councillor David Heap, with support from signatories Councillors Loraine Cox and Zak Khan, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A9:

“This Council calls on the Cabinet to urgently review its decision regarding the implementation of the Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across Hyndburn, and to provide a clear, transparent explanation as to why seven wards have been excluded from this policy.”

The following **AMENDMENT** was moved by Councillor Munsif Dad and seconded by Councillor Melissa Fisher:

The substitution of the following wording for the whole of the original Motion:

“This Council gives thanks for the advice and hard work of planning staff at Hyndburn Borough Council in bringing in the first stage of the Article 4 Direction across a range of wards in Hyndburn.

This Council calls on the Cabinet to resolve to continue working towards the consideration of a full Article 4 across the Borough of Hyndburn which, if fully evidenced, is implemented in a timely and sustainable manner.”

*With the agreement of the meeting, the Mayor approved a brief adjournment to allow time for Members to consider the amendment.*

*The meeting then reconvened.*

Councillor Khan indicated that the Opposition group was not willing to adopt this wording in place of their original motion. Accordingly, members proceeded to debate the amendment.

Councillor Dad introduced the amendment and explained that the controlling group had been pleased to introduce the Article 4 Direction. The proposal had been adopted last December, consultation had taken place in March 2025, but the policy could not then be implemented for a period of twelve months. The question about extending Article 4 was asked at the original Cabinet meeting at which Councillor Smithson was present, and an explanation had been provided than that sufficient evidence could only be identified for nine of the Council's sixteen wards. The advice, at that time, was to wait for at least six months before undertaking a review of whether this could be rolled out to the other wards. In the meantime, the controlling group would be happy to work with the Opposition in response to new applications for HMOs. He noted that other Lancashire Boroughs were adopting similar Article 4 measures.

Councillors Clare Pritchard and Melissa Fisher spoke in favour of the amendment and reported that there remained a need for HMOs for young/single people on low income and that it should not be assumed that all occupants would have chaotic lifestyles. Ensuring good management of HMOs by responsible landlords was essential. Furthermore, an Article 4 Direction would not stop all HMO applications from being approved, as each would have to be considered on its own merits.

The following members spoke against the amendment. Councillor Zak Khan acknowledged the above points, accepting the need for some HMOs. However, he was of the view that residents wanted more control over their establishment and he considered that the original assessment of the evidence available in support of a Borough wide Article 4 Direction was flawed. Hence, an immediate review of this evidence base was being requested.

Councillor Judith Addison added that speculators often took advantage of the cheaper property prices in the region to establish HMOs and children's care homes. Councillor Smithson replied to the amendment, indicating he was not against this on a matter of party political principle, but because he believed that residents wanted an urgent review of the existing arrangements to enable a borough-wide Article 4 Direction to be implemented.

*The Mayor noted that the time was now 9:50pm and invited members to agree to extend the terminal hour of the meeting to 10:30pm, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A7. This was agreed.*

**The AMENDMENT** was then put to the **VOTE**.

*In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.5, six members called for a recorded vote on the amendment, the outcome of which was as follows:*

For (16)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brereton, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson MBE, Stewart

Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates

Against (9)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen (Mayor), Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker.

Abstain (0)

Nil

Accordingly, the **AMENDMENT** was **CARRIED**.

There was no debate on the substantive motion, which was then put to the vote immediately.

*In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.5, six members called for a recorded vote on the substantive motion, the outcome of which was as follows:*

For (16)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Scott Breton, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson MBE, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates

Against (9)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen (Mayor), Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker.

Abstain (0)

Nil

**Resolved**

- (1) **This Council gives thanks for the advice and hard work of planning staff at Hyndburn Borough Council in bringing in the first stage of the Article 4 Direction across a range of wards in Hyndburn.**
- (2) **This Council calls on the Cabinet to resolve to continue working towards the consideration of a full Article 4 across the Borough of Hyndburn which, if fully evidenced, is implemented in a timely and sustainable manner.**

3) Support for Local Businesses amid Financial Pressures

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Zak Khan and seconded by Councillor Steven Smithson, with support from signatory Councillor David Heap, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A9:

“This Council recognises the significant financial challenges currently facing local businesses across Hyndburn. The recent increase in taxes, predominately National

Insurance (NI) contributions, has placed additional strain on employers, while high business rates - particularly within the hospitality and retail sector - are contributing to a worrying rise in business closures.

Our local businesses are vital economic drivers. They create employment opportunities, support local supply chains, and help build a thriving community where families can live, work, and prosper. It is a priority for this Council to ensure these businesses are supported during this difficult period.

This Council:

1. Requests that the Cabinet develops an urgent report outlining practical and targeted measures to support local businesses, tailored to individual sectors. This may include steps to promote and increase uptake of existing business rate relief schemes.
2. Requests that the Cabinet reviews the importance of establishing an Economic and Regeneration Fund – as proposed during the February 2025 budget-setting process – and the Cabinet revisit the viability and implementation of such a fund to support long-term business recovery and growth.
3. Requests the Leader of the Council & Leader of the Opposition write a joint cross-party letter to Sarah Smith MP; urging her to recognise that the country cannot tax its way to grow and to stand up for Hyndburn businesses by vocally opposing any new tax rises.

Through these actions, the Council aims to provide meaningful support to the businesses that form the backbone of Hyndburn's economy and long-term transformation, before it is too late for more of our local hard-working business owners."

Councillor Khan, highlighted the current financial pressures on businesses and the cost to the nation of out-of-work benefits. Councillor Smithson also spoke in favour of the motion and highlighted a particular restaurant business in his ward which had recently ceased trading. Councillors Andrew Clegg, Scott Brerton and Munsif Dad spoke against the motion, citing:

- the need for big corporations to support the economy;
- the influence on business of factors outside of the control of the Council and Government;
- the work that the Council was already doing to support local businesses;
- a willingness to work cross-party on any initiatives; and
- the existence of regular meetings and dialogue between the Leader of the Council and the local MP, including discussions about businesses.

Councillor Khan summed up by expressing disappointment that it appeared that the motion would not be supported by the controlling group.

On being put to the **VOTE**, the motion was **LOST**.

#### 4. Fair Funding Review

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Zak Khan and seconded by Councillor Joyce Plummer, with written support from signatory Councillor Danny Cassidy (who was no longer present), in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A9:

"The Cabinet Report of 10 September 2025 detailing an update on the Fair Funding Review notes:

"Hyndburn could experience a substantial reduction in funding under the revised methodology. Hyndburn has been identified as one of the 49 most adversely affected authorities, with projected funding levels falling well below the baseline set out in the government's consultation."

This Council:

Requests the Leader of the Council, along with Leaders of the Opposition parties, write a joint cross-party letter on behalf and signed by all Councillors, to Sarah Smith MP, the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for MHCLG - to urge them to conduct an urgent review and reverse Hyndburn's inclusion on the list of adversely affected authorities - in order to provide certainty to the residents in Hyndburn that they will not be disproportionately affected at a time of significant need across the Borough."

Councillor Khan recognised the need to avoid creating anxiety amongst the public about the potential outcome of the Fair Funding Review, but he highlighted the statement above contained within the recent Cabinet report. He hoped that a cross-party letter to the MP and relevant Government ministers would help to add weight to the previous consultation response. The predicted shortfall in funding was likely to be over £1m across all three scenarios outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Councillor Plummer also spoke in favour of the motion and commented that a funding reduction of 7% - 10% could have significant implications for the Council.

Councillor Dad responded he did not support the motion and that the recommendations of the Review were only proposals at this stage. The Finance Team had answered some 46 questions on the impact of the proposals as part of the consultation. The Leader and MP had also written separately to Minister. A reply provided by the Minister had indicated that the Department were still considering the consultation responses. The outcome should be known in November 2025, following which the political groups could work together, if there remained any issues to resolve. However, the controlling group remained optimistic about the position and, in any event, the Council had good financial management arrangements in place. He thanked the Finance Team for their hard work.

Councillors Alexander and Whitehead spoke against the motion, noting that work was ongoing in preparation for various financial scenarios and reminding councillors that exaggerating any potential negative impacts could be detrimental to staff morale.

Councillor Khan summarised by noting that he had only been made aware of the outcome of the Fair Funding Review as a result of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. He expressed disappointment that the situation had not been shared with him earlier.

On being put to the **VOTE**, the motion was **LOST**.

The Mayor thanked all for their attendance tonight and reported that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 7:00pm.

At this meeting, the Council would be able to discuss the varying models and business cases in respect of Local Government Reorganisation in Lancashire and any recommendations from the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

On 19<sup>th</sup> November, Cabinet would take the final decision on Hyndburn's preferred option in time for the Government's deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Signed:.....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
at which the minutes were confirmed