

Agenda



HYNDBURN

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Council

Thursday, 26 March 2026 at 7.00 pm,
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Accrington

Membership

Councillor Josh Allen (Mayor) in the Chair,
Councillors Judith Addison, Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth,
Scott Brerton, Stephen Button, 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, David Heap, Zak Khan, Clare McKenna,
Dave Parkins, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Steven Smithson,
Tina Walker, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead, Clare Yates and Mohammed Younis

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

3. **Announcements**
 - a) Mayor
 - b) Leader of the Council
 - c) Chief Executive

4. **Confirmation of Minutes** *(Pages 5 - 34)*



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Published on Wednesday, 18 March 2026

Page 1 of 3

To confirm as correct, the minutes of the Council Budget Meeting held on 26th February 2026. (attached)

5. Question Time (Pages 35 - 36)

To deal with any questions submitted under Council Procedure Rule A2.2(vi). The deadline for the receipt of questions has now expired. Two eligible questions have been received. (Report attached)

Rules of Debate

- Up to 30 minutes will be allowed for this item.
- Questions will be put by the chair of the meeting and will receive an oral answer.
- Questions which cannot be put within the allotted time will receive a written answer within 10 working days.

6. Draft Pay Policy 2026/27 (Pages 37 - 44)

Report attached.

7. Minutes of Cabinet (Pages 45 - 100)

To receive the Minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 21st January and 18th February 2026 (attached).

Rules of Debate

The Leader of the Council will move the Minutes, the Deputy Leader of the Council will second the Minutes.

- Non-executive Members will be invited to make comment or ask questions on the Minutes (5 Minutes).
- Cabinet Members will be invited to make comments and respond to any points raised (5 Minutes).
- The Leader of the Council will be given up to 15 Minutes to respond and to answer any questions raised.

8. Minutes of Committees (Pages 101 - 136)

To receive the Minutes of committees, as set out below:

Rules of Debate

- The Leader of the Council will introduce the Minutes as a whole.
- Any Member may raise any issue from the Minutes; the Chair of the relevant Committee may respond (5 Minutes).
- The Leader of the Council will close the debate (5 Minutes).

Meeting (Municipal Year 2025/26)	Date
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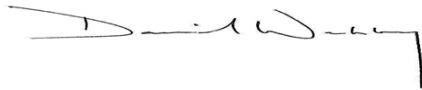
Special Scrutiny Committee	18th November 2025
Communities and Wellbeing O&S Committee	1st December 2025
Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10th December 2025
Planning Committee	11th February 2026
Audit Committee	16th February 2026
Planning Committee	11th March 2026

9. Motion(s) submitted on Notice

Report to follow.

Rules of Debate

- Each motion shall be debated for no more than 20 minutes before being put to the vote.
- No more than one and a half hours in totality shall be allowed at each meeting for the debate of all motions.



Chief Executive
 Scitcliffe House,
 Ormerod Street,
 ACCRINGTON BB5 0PF

Wednesday, 18 March 2026

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COUNCIL

Thursday, 26th February, 2026

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

Apologies: Councillors Heather Anderson, Andrew Clegg and Ethan Rawcliffe

321 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Heather Anderson, Andrew Clegg and Ethan Rawcliffe.

322 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

It was noted that, with the exception of one individual, all councillors present had a dispensation to speak and vote on matters in relation to the setting of the Council Tax or a precept under the Local Government Act 1992. Advice was provided, setting out the Government's view that a dispensation was not an essential requirement for participation in the debate or voting on such matters.

323 Announcements

The Mayor requested all Councillors to be respectful at today's meeting.

1. Councillor Marlene Haworth

The Mayor expressed his sadness at the loss of a dear colleague, Councillor Marlene Haworth. Marlene had served over two separate periods from 2004 to date in the St. Oswald's Ward, totalling almost 20 years in office. She had been the Leader of Hyndburn Borough Council in 2023/24, the first female Council Leader, as well as Leader of the Conservative Group from 2020 to 2024 and Mayor in 2015/16.

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

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Munsif Dad offered his condolences to her family and the Conservative Group. He noted that she had left her mark on all of the years of service that she had completed. He was looking forward to her eminent service being formally recognised at a future Council meeting.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Zak Khan spoke of his sadness, noting that the Council Chamber would not be the same without her. She had left a lasting impact on Hyndburn, inspiring, caring and strong, a dear friend who would not be forgotten.

Councillor Danny Cassidy, Clare Pritchard, Mohammed Younis, Noordad Aziz and Dave Parkins all spoke highly of Councillor Haworth and expressed sadness at her passing.

The Leader of the Council then made the following announcements:

2. Local Government Reorganisation

The next part of the reorganisation process was a public consultation, which had now been launched and would close on the 26th March 2026.

The consultation was open to all stakeholders, including:

- Residents;
- Businesses;
- voluntary and community groups; and
- local organisations.

Interested parties were encouraged to submit their views via the following website:

[Have your say – Lancashire Local Government Reorganisation](#)

3. Elections

On 16th February 2026, the Secretary of State had written to all Council Leaders and key stakeholders in affected areas to inform them that the original decision to postpone the local elections had been withdrawn. Elections would now be held in Hyndburn on 7th May 2026.

4. Manchester Mosque

Following the recent incident at a Manchester mosque, and not long since the attack on the Jewish community in Manchester, the Leader of the Council and colleagues at Lancashire County Council had written to the Constabulary and Police and Crime Commissioner to request all mosques across Lancashire be provided with appropriate support.

324 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th January 2026 were provided.

Resolved – **That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th January 2026 be approved as a correct record.**

325 Appointments to Outside Bodies

This item was deferred.

326 Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Scheme - Proposed New Exemption for Care Leavers

Councillors considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, proposing an amendment to the current Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Scheme, which would provide for the inclusion of a local Council Tax exemption for care leavers up to the age of 25.

Councillor Alexander provided a brief introduction to the report.

Since 2017, Lancashire County Council had been committed to ensuring that care leavers in Lancashire up to the age of 25 did not have to face the responsibility of paying Council Tax.

A revised process was set out in the report, which streamlined the process down to two stages, rather than four.

The scheme had previously been reviewed in 2016 and 2021.

Consultations had taken place regarding the proposed changes.

Councillor Shabir Fazal spoke to confirm that he supported the scheme and welcomed the support to care leavers.

- Resolved**
- **That the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Scheme, attached to the report as Appendix 1, be approved and that the new local exemption be applied to Council Tax bills as soon as reasonably practical in order to provide the care leaver exemption from the 1st April 2026.**

327 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/2027 - 2028/2029

The Council considered report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, regarding the 3-year projections of income and expenditure for the Council ahead of formulating its 2026-2029 Revenue and Capital Budgets.

Councillor Dad gave a brief introduction to the report. A copy of the report had also been provided to the Cabinet on 18th February 2026.

The Council required an update on its medium-term financial outlook ahead of setting the Budget for 2026/27 and determining the level of Council Tax for the new financial year.

In summary, during 2025/26, the Council's work and finances were largely focused on delivering major capital projects, including the Levelling Up/Town Centre regeneration, the new Cath Thom Leisure Centre at Wilson Playing Fields, and progress on the Huncoat Garden Village project, which would provide 1,800 new homes. These efforts had been delivered alongside the Council's day-to-day services and other key strategic priorities.

It was expected that these key events and their impact on the Council's finances, would continue over the next few financial years, with the potential for the effects to continue beyond the MTFS period.

The Council would operate a roll forward Budget for 2026/27 based on the 2025/26 Budget with adjustments for changes to salary and wages, energy and other cost

pressures. This would provide Service Managers with a degree of stability for 2026/27. Overall expenditure would need to be contained at around £17.608m in 2026/27 to set a balanced budget.

If necessary, the Council might have to use some of its reserves to help balance the Budget. This was likely given the reductions made to Government funding across Business Rates and grants as part of the Fair Funding Review. Additionally, it might be necessary to use reserves if it was believed that in the current economic climate, it would be inappropriate to raise Council Tax.

The Council would face significant financial challenges over the next three years as it sought to overcome the consequences of both national and global issues. It would also face the challenges of Government funding reforms and increased pressures on spending over this period.

The 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) had introduced the major reforms consulted on as part of the Fair Funding Review, including a multi-year funding approach (the first in 10 years) and changes to grant funding and business rates. While national Core Spending Power (CSP) was projected to grow steadily, Hyndburn Council itself faced real-terms reductions due to formula changes and limited tax-raising capacity.

The Government had issued its Fair Funding Reform 2.0 consultation paper in June 2025, which had proposed fundamental changes to local government finance.

The proposals had included:

- A revised funding formula with a stronger link to deprivation levels and population size.
- A full reset of the baseline for retained business rates in 2026/27.
- Ending the New Homes Bonus and reallocating the funding to the core settlement.
- Simplifying and merging multiple grant streams, including those for homelessness prevention, rough sleeping, and temporary accommodation.
- Introducing transitional funding, including a minimum funding floor, to protect councils from the full impact of the changes.

Although, most councils received cash flat protection against their 2025/26 baseline, Hyndburn was identified early in the consultation as being among the authorities furthest from their assessed funding level. As a result, the Council would lose 5% of its 2025/26 baseline funding by 2028/29.

Despite an anticipated loss of almost £6.35m over the MTFS period, the multi-year settlement offered a level of certainty that enabled the Council to prepare for future challenges. The Council had addressed the £6.35m reduction through, savings and use of resources.

It was recognised that the 2027 spending round (and those in future years) might bring about alterations, however these were likely to be minor in terms of quantum and would likely only be upwards with the announced 3-year settlement representing a minimum level of funding.

The certainty that the 3-year settlement had provided around Government funding had resulted in a relatively stable outlook across all scenarios, pessimistic, standard and optimistic. Any variances might occur due to diverging assumptions over service income and expenditure with the most severe of the scenarios assuming no or low growth in

income but an above inflationary rise in expenditure. The Pessimistic Model assumed a modest increase in Council Tax below the Local Plan and Government targets. The Standard Model assumed growth in the Council Tax base in line with the Local Plan.

A third, Optimistic Model was also presented which showed the Council's potential position if it was able to boost its own tax revenue due to a buoyant tax base, and expenditure inflation being low. This Optimistic Model was considered to have a much lower probability of occurring compared to the other two models but was provided to illustrate the wide range of potential outcomes.

In these circumstances, it was prudent for the Council to look to increase its reserves and revenue streams such as Council Tax and Business Rates whenever it could and to avoid committing to any new revenue expenditure while continuing to concentrate on its work to reduce internal costs.

The main MTFS document, provided as an Appendix to the report, included the following detailed sections:

- Snapshot View
- Corporate Strategy Summary
- Summary
- Elements of the MTFS
- Background
- Resources (including Government Grant, Council Tax, Business Rates)
- Changes in Costs
- Budget Pressures
- Capital Costs
- Growth
- Reserves
- Other Assumptions
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Scenarios ((including Breakdown of Pessimistic, Standard and Optimistic Models and a suggested Course of Action)
- Robustness of the Forecast
- Overall Net Position
- Statutory Obligations of the Responsible Financial Officer (s151 Officer) and
- Meeting Future Funding Gaps

Councillor Dad reported that the Council faced some real reductions in Government funding over the next three years. Given the difficult position these reductions in funding had placed upon the Council, it was a testament to the Council's financial management that it would still be able to meet all its financial commitments over this period, including funding for its Capital Programme and growth in staffing for key service areas.

The Council would remain cautious in its take up of any other future financial commitments that might arise, unless any additional surpluses or Government grant funding could be identified.

Resolved

- **That the Council notes the report and the accompanying Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as approved by the Cabinet on 18th February 2026.**

**328 Prudential Indicators, Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies
2026/27 - 2028/29**

Councillors considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, setting out the Council's policy and objectives with respect to treasury management, to explain how it would achieve its objectives and manage its activities; and to agree an investment strategy for 2026/27.

Councillor Dad provided a brief introduction to the report. A copy of the report had also been provided to the Cabinet on 18th February 2026.

The Council required an update on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management activities, and the strategy for the upcoming year.

Treasury Management was defined as:

“The management of the Council's investment and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions.

The effective control of the risks associated with these activities.

And the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.

The Council was required to operate a balanced budget which meant that cash raised during the year would meet cash expenditure. Part of treasury management was to ensure the cash flow was properly planned with cash available when needed. Surplus monies were invested in line with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of treasury management was funding the Council's capital plans. The plans gave a guide to the future borrowing need of the Council. The management of this longer-term cash flow might involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer term cash flow surpluses. Occasionally, outstanding debt might be restructured to reduce Council risk or meet cost objectives.

The report had been prepared in line with the Treasury Management Code and Guidance (2021) written by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA). In the case of local authorities in England and Wales, the Code was significant under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003. This required local authorities 'to have regard:

- (a) to such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue, and
- (b) to such other guidance as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify'.

The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 in paragraph 24 required local authorities to have regard to this guidance. Acceptance of this report fulfilled those obligations.

CIPFA had published revised codes on 20th December 2021 and the Council had now adopted the liability benchmark treasury indicator to support the financing risk management of the capital financing requirement.

Appendix 1 of the covering report comprised the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 – 2028/29 document, which included the following detailed sections:

- Background
- Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators
- Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing Requirement
- International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 – Leasing
- Minimum Revenue Provision
- Affordability Prudential Indicators
- Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 – 2028/29
- Current Treasury Position
- Expected Movement in Interest Rates
- External Debt Overall Limits
- External v Internal Borrowing
- Liability Benchmark
- Limits on Activity
- Debt Rescheduling
- Investment Strategy
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)
- Treasury Management Practices (TMP)
- Policy on the use of External Service Providers; and
- Treasury Management Strategy In-Year and Year End Reporting

Appendix 2 of the report comprised the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement 2026/27.

Appendix 3 set out the detail of the authority's Treasury Management Practices 2026/27, comprising the 12 identified TMP areas, as follows:

- TMP1 Risk Management
- TMP2 Performance Management
- TMP3 Decision Making and Analysis
- TMP4 Approved Instruments, Methods and Techniques
- TMP5 Organisation, Clarity and Segregation of Responsibilities and Dealing Arrangements
- TMP6 Reporting Requirements and Management
- TMP7 Budget, Accounting and Audit Requirements
- TMP8 Cash and Cash Flow Management
- TMP9 Money Laundering
- TMP10 Training and Qualifications
- TMP11 Use of External Service providers
- TMP12 Corporate Governance

Appendix 4 provided the Capital Strategy 2026/27, which included information on the following:

- Overview and Scope
- Capital Expenditure
- Capital v Treasury Management
- Service and Commercial Investments
- Council Objectives
- Capital Budget Setting Process
- Monitoring of the Capital Programme Expenditure

- Multi Year Schemes
- Funding Strategy and Capital Policies
- Procurement and Value for Money
- Partnership and Relationships with Other Organisations
- Management Framework
- Performance Management
- Risk Management; and
- Other considerations

Councillor Dad and Councillor Khan both thanked the Finance officers for all their hard work.

- Resolved** – **That the Council approves the recommendations of Cabinet as follows:**
- (1) **To adopt the Prudential Indicators and limits detailed in the report.**
 - (2) **To approve the Treasury Management Strategy, and associated indicators, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.**
 - (3) **To approve the Investment Strategy as set out in section 13 of Appendix 1 to the report.**
 - (4) **To approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for the year 2026/27 – as set out in section 5 of Appendix 1 to the report.**
 - (5) **To approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2026/27 – Appendix 2 of the report.**
 - (6) **To approve the Treasury Management Practices Statement 2026/27 – Appendix 3 of the report.**
 - (7) **To approve the Capital Strategy 2026/27 – Appendix 4 of the report.**

329 General Fund Revenue Budget, Council Tax Levels and Capital Programme 2026/27

Members were provided with a Budget Debate Procedure Note at the start of this item. Councillors were asked to consider the note and to adopt the proposed amendments to the Council Procedure Rules for the duration of this item.

- Resolved** – **That the temporary amendments to the Council Procedure Rules be approved, for the duration of this item.**

Members then considered the following information:

- a) General Fund Revenue Budget 2026/27

An updated version of the report considered by the Cabinet on 18th February 2026 was provided, a summary of which is set out below along with the recommendations made.

The report set out the Council's Revenue Budget for 2026/27. This would require net expenditure of £17,607,700.

Under these proposals, Council Tax for Hyndburn residents would see no increase in the charge for Hyndburn Council provided services and the charge for a Band D property would remain at £276.46 for 2026/2027.

A number of national and global issues had undoubtedly had an impact on the Council's budgets, including the impact of higher inflation and forecast pay settlements. Despite this the Council had chosen to prioritise affordability for its residents and freeze its element of the Council Tax for 2026/2027.

At the time of drafting the report, Lancashire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority had not yet formally taken their decisions on Council Tax Levels for 2026/27. The County Council had proposed a Council Tax increase of 3.8%, as opposed to the maximum of 4.99% that would be possible without referendum. The Police and Crime Commissioner had proposed an increase to the Band D Property charge of £15.00 (5.41%) and the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority had proposed a £5.00 (5.57%) increase.

Altham Parish Council had set a separate precept for its activities. This year the Parish Council had decided not to increase the Band D charge for Altham Parish Council, which would therefore remain at £44.33 for 2026/27. The Parish Council would precept the Collection Fund for £14,141 for 2026/27. Details of the proposed position on other Bandings for properties in Altham were shown in Appendix 6 to the report.

In setting the Budget for 2026/27 the Council faced continued volatility around some of the most significant items within its Budget. Major reforms of local government finance had transferred the risk of business rate revenues and Council Tax Benefits to the Council. The certainty on which the Council could budget and manage its finances had therefore decreased since 2013 and it would be important going forward to plot any deviations away from the expected figures and take appropriate action if these should start to emerge. This might result in the need to reduce spending during the year, if revenue monitoring started to indicate the amounts of funds received would fall short of the target or if the Council faced an upsurge in spending.

The Cabinet intended to continue the good financial stewardship of the Council's affairs by continuing its successful policies to manage costs effectively and promote appropriate service investment. This Budget would therefore deliver:

- A continuation of the Council's established approach of limiting enhancements on early retirement, continuing its rigorous approach to absence management and committing to minimising borrowing costs. These actions had already stemmed the build-up of unproductive costs within the organisation. In each of these cases the authority had put a stop to the costly and financially damaging policies of the past and created a healthier and more financially stable culture within the Council.
- The Capital Programme for 2026/27 would continue to deliver key investment in council and public facilities adding another £7.86m to the £56.51m that the Council currently had approved.

- A large proportion of the Capital Programme would be phased over the next few financial years, and this included the continued delivery of £29m investment in the Huncoat Garden Village Project, with all the funding coming from Homes England, and finalising the Levelling Up works in Accrington Town Centre along with other complementing Town Centre regeneration.
- The additions to the programme in 2026/2027 of £7.86m included:
 - a) £689,000 of investment into Parks and Play areas of which the Council expected to be able to utilise £630,000 of external grant funding to contribute to the improvements.
 - b) £1,359,906 to provide Disabled Facility Grants this year which was fully funded from the Better Care Fund.
 - c) £2,161,135 to maintain and invest in its operational assets and vehicle fleet.
 - d) £165,000 to improve and develop new ICT and technical equipment to deliver services in a more efficient way.
 - e) £435,000 on Community projects that involved War Memorial restoration, Christmas decoration replacement and Maden Street Clock Towner lighting.
 - f) £2,600,000 towards the future development of the Market Chambers building linked to a bid for additional grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to re-imagine the interior and exterior of the building into a Heritage and Arts venue.
 - g) £450,000 for the continuing repurposing of Mercer Hall Leisure Centre and the contribution towards Accrington Stanley Community Trust's capital investment in sports initiatives.
- The Capital Programme for 2026/2027 was partly funded from the Government's grants to deliver a Pride in Place Impact Fund. Hyndburn would receive £1.5m to be committed to projects that delivered visible improvements to community spaces; public spaces and high street and town centre revitalisation.
- Despite costs of around £90,000 to provide car parking in Hyndburn for residents and visitors and particularly for shoppers, the authority would continue to provide this facility free of charge and not introduce charges for parking in Hyndburn. The Council believed this action would help bolster its town centres through these difficult economic times and provide an incentive for people to shop locally rather than drive and pay to shop elsewhere across the North West.
- The Council had once again prioritised affordability for residents and cleanliness across the borough by freezing green waste charges at £35 per annum and offering bulky household waste collections free of charge. This service currently cost the Council approximately £169,000 each year.
- Further reductions in the authority's accommodation costs, building on the success over the last 15 years, including further rationalising Council accommodation and looking at more ways of using that accommodation more effectively. The Council would also continue its actions to reduce its carbon emissions and energy costs and continue contributing to the improvements of its environmental footprint by positive action.

The Council intended to continue to deliver all the above and remained committed to a radical agenda of improvement while managing within its available resources. This would be more difficult in the years to come, given the reduced resources from the Government.

However, there remained a firm commitment and absolute determination amongst Members and Officers of the Council to control the finances of the Council, drive forward on the efficiency agenda and continue to improve service delivery. The Council wished to continue to push forward on the drive for delivering value for money as a key priority for the authority.

The rewards of strong financial control remained clearly evident. The Council had built itself back from experiencing major difficulties in controlling expenditure and a position of negative reserves in 2003/04 to a situation by March 2026, in which general reserve balances were expected to be just under £1.9m. The Council had been able to operate within its existing financial resources over the last four years, through good financial management and would continue to deliver strong financial performance in the years to come.

Within the Budget for 2026/27 there were a number of areas which were subject to the Council's best estimation. There were therefore a number of risks around the Budget, should these estimated costs or revenue amounts vary during the year.

After the introduction of the Government reforms to Business Rates Funding of Local Government, the Council now carried a significant risk around the level of monies available, fluctuating substantially from this source. In addition, as the calculation of how much funds would be available was dependent on a number of factors: including debt collection rates; the size of appeals against business rates assessment and the success of these appeals; new rules around levies, safety nets and pooling; the introduction of new multipliers on rates for retail, hospitality and leisure premises; as well as predicted levels of growth or decline in business activities; and the estimation of a number of figures which would only truly emerge after the end of the financial year, the imprecision in these estimates was regarded as high and could be subject to variations of hundreds of thousands of pounds. The volatility around these forecasts had increased due to the impact recent national and global issues had had on the Business Community.

The detailed Revenue Budget Report 2026-2027, as set out at Appendix A of the report, included the following information:

- Background;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Continuation Budget;
- Growth and Inflation Pressures;
- Available Resources;
- Resources Summary;
- Budget Proposal;
- Budget Saving Proposals;
- Reserves;
- Risks and Management;
- Consultation;
- Conclusion; and
- Appendices Nos. 1 – 6 (comprising the detailed Budget figures for the Council and the proposed or estimated levels of Council Tax by property band for both Hyndburn Borough Council and all precepting authorities)

The following recommendations were approved by Cabinet:

- (1) *That Cabinet recommends the proposal that the Council Tax for 2026/27 not be increased, thus the charge for a Band D property will remain at £276.46.*

- (2) *The Budget for 2026/27 will therefore be £17,607,700 as detailed in Appendices 1 to 3 of the Revenue Budget 2026-2027 report attached at Appendix A of the report.*
 - (3) *That Cabinet recommends approval of the changes in budget requirement through including inflation, growth and savings as identified in Appendix 3 of the Revenue Budget 2026-2027 report, to ensure the Council can set and approve a balanced budget.*
 - (4) *That Cabinet notes the significant improvement made in relation to budget monitoring and cost reduction within the Authority over the past 20 years and confirms its commitment to continuing this approach in the year ahead.*
 - (5) *That Cabinet recommends during the financial year 2026/27, the Executive Director (Resources) be delegated responsibility to amend the Budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) for technical reasons, such as the restructuring of cost centres, the re-apportionment and re-allocation of overheads etc., provided such amendments have an overall neutral impact on the Budget.*
 - (6) *That Cabinet recommends during the financial year 2026/27, the Executive Director (Resources) be delegated responsibility to amend the Budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) should the estimate of Business Rates not be sufficiently accurate, by drawing on reserves if needed or paying over additional contributions to reserves.*
 - (7) *That, to aid future financial management planning, any surpluses generated during 2026/27 are set aside to help the Council reduce its cost base over the next three years, to support its long-term capital programme or to strengthen its overall reserve position.*
 - (8) *That Cabinet recommends that any additional funds from Government that are not ring-fenced funding, as well as any other surplus funds, can be used, if required, to support capital expenditure as determined by the Executive Director (Resources) in the overall financing of capital expenditure or be transferred to reserves.*
- b) Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2028/29

An updated version of the report considered by the Cabinet on 18th February 2026 was provided, a summary of which is set out below along with the recommendations made.

The report set out the Council's Capital Programme for 2026/27 including forecast slippage on schemes from 2025/26 and the additions of new schemes to the Council's Capital Programme for 2026/27.

The significant level of investment in previous years had only been possible by the Council obtaining external financial support, as well as the Council's own effective financial management over recent years which had allowed it to have the funds necessary to finance these major projects when other funding had become available.

The new additions to the capital programme for 2026/27 had increased to £7.860m (including £1.020 leasing costs), compared to £2.476m in 2025/26. External funding of £3.20m had been confirmed towards the cost of these new capital schemes (Disabled Facilities Grant, Extended Producer Responsibility Grant (EPR) and Pride In Place Impact Grant) with a further £0.03m funding to be secured.

The additions to the programme in 2026/27 would bring the total approved capital programme to £38.565m, including forecast slippage of the unspent programme from 2025/26 of £30.706m, which could be seen at Appendix 1 to the report. The forecast slippage from the 2025/26 programme included £22.366m (£3.815m slippage to 2027/28) for Huncoat Garden Village, £0.40m for the Leisure Estate Investment Programme and £6.251m for the Levelling Up Programme. The capital budgets for the Levelling Up Programme were based on the latest forecast of costs however as these are not tendered figures, they were still subject to change and should there be any changes to the current forecast, these would be reported during the year.

It was important to note that the Council funding of the 2026/27 Capital Programme was based on using Council reserves and potential capital receipts. There would be a continued emphasis relating to the realisation of additional capital receipts during the year. The programme assumed £3.010m of expenditure would be funded from capital reserves, and £0.6m from unfunded receipts. Any new receipts received would replace the funding required from these reserves.

The small number of expected new schemes for 2027/28 and 2028/29 (totalling £1.910m) were detailed in Appendix 3 of the report. This was for information only as funding would need to be identified for these schemes before they were put forward for approval into the programme in future years, alongside any Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) consequences.

The Council intended to continue its strong policies of financial management and look only to borrow what it needed to fund major investment projects. The Council would continue to rely on securing external sources of funding, using capital receipts, making revenue contributions to capital projects and would use unspent monies to fund its programme. It would also apply a rigorous approach to selecting projects by examining all proposals against its corporate objectives and only selecting the most pressing and deserving projects to fund. This was in accordance with Council policy.

The Revenue implications to finance the Capital Programme continued to be a key element in the affordability issues on the Revenue Budget this year. The programme contained a limited amount of risk this year. The level of risk remained increased compared to previous years due to the size of the overall programme. However, to further reduce the risk the Council had supplemented its own project management and cost control capacity by the appointment of experienced professionals in both disciplines for its two largest projects. The Council's overall resources and management systems were believed to be sufficiently robust to effectively monitor these risks and ensure appropriate action was taken if they should materialise.

The Council would continue with its strategy to reduce its level of debt wherever possible by restricting borrowing and repaying debt and would continue to work extensively with external funders to bring forward realistic plans for capital investment in the area.

A detailed report on the Capital Programme was provided as Appendix A to the covering report, which set out information on the following:

- Summary of the Major Additions to the Capital Programme;
- Improving the Management of Capital Investments;
- Conclusion;
- Appendix 1 - Capital Programme 2026/27 (Summary);
- Appendix 2 - Capital Programme 2026/27 (Detailed);

- Appendix 3 - Capital Programme 2026/27 (New Additions); and
- Appendix 4 - Capital Programme 226/27 – Pride in Place.

The following recommendations were approved by Cabinet:

- (1) *To approve the Capital Programme for 2026/27 including new scheme additions of £7,860,041 with a net cost to the Council of £3,609,970 as set out in Appendix 3 of Appendix A to the report.*
- (2) *To approve the funding of the programme by the use of newly awarded direct external grants totalling £3,229,909, lease vehicle borrowing costs £1,020,165 and the remaining funding of £3,609,970 to come from the Council's resources.*
- (3) *To note the expected new scheme additions for 2027/28 onwards set out in Appendix 1 of Appendix A to the report.*
- (4) *To give delegated authority to the Executive Director (Resources), following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations to flex the programme in accordance with the available funding, provided this does not require any additional borrowing.*
- (5) *To agree that the individual projects within the Capital Programme will require the written authorisation of the Executive Director (Resources) following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations before commencing and incurring expenditure and that Service Managers must provide the Executive Director (Resources) with written details of estimated project costs and a full justification of the need for and benefits from undertaking the capital expenditure before such approval is provided; and that the ability to approve commencement of capital projects is delegated to the Executive Director (Resources); in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations and that the Executive Director (Resources) is given delegated authority to release capital funding in stages if deemed appropriate to ensure effective financial control and risk management.*
- (6) *To agree that in-year underspends will not be made available to fund new projects during the year.*

c) Comments and Recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny

The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met on 23rd February 2026 to consider the budget proposals for 2026/26.

The following recommendation was approved by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

That Council notes the following resolutions of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) *That the Committee note the content of the reports relating to Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2028/29; Prudential Indicators, Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies 2026/27 – 2028-29; General Fund Revenue Budget 2026/27 and Capital Programme 2026/27 – 2028/29;*

- (2) *That having reviewed and debated the budget reports submitted, the Committee supports the content of the General Fund Revenue report and Capital Programme reports for 2026/27.*
 - (3) *That the Committee thanks the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and the Budget Process, Councillors Alexander and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Munsif Dad, and Executive Director (Finance) Martin Dyson for responding to the questions submitted by Members and members of the public and their participation in the Scrutiny meeting and debate;*
 - (4) *That the Executive Director - Resources, and all other officers involved, be commended for their work in producing the budget;*
 - (5) *That Council be requested to take the recommendations into consideration when setting the 2026/27 Budget.*
- d) Council Tax Resolution 2026/27

A further report was provided which set out the Council's budget requirement for 2026/2027 as presented to Cabinet on 18th February 2026, its Precept on the Collection Fund and the formal details surrounding the Precepts of other bodies on the Collection Fund.

The Localism Act 2011 had made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and now required the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year, not its budget requirement as previously. Details of the budgetary proposals were contained with the Agenda and in the supporting papers to this Council meeting from the Cabinet Meeting on 18th February 2026.

The Cabinet Budget proposals (18th February 2026) had been submitted with the agenda for today's meeting. The additional report outlined the precepts from the other councils and sought permissions to roll forward any unspent Capital and Revenue balances and make a transfer of sums to the Local Government Pension Scheme to reduce any long-term pension liability.

The overall Council Tax requirement for a Band D property was to be frozen at 2025/2026 rate, thus keeping a Band D property at £276.46 and the Council's Budget for 2026/27 was £17,607,700.

The County Council would hold its Council meeting to approve its budget on 26th February 2026. Indications were that it would be proposing to increase its Council Tax requirement for each household by 3.80%. This was an increase of £65.96 for a Band D property from the previous year's figure of £1,735.79 to £1,801.75.

The Office of the Lancashire Police & Crime Commissioner had notified Hyndburn Council of its Council Tax charges for 2026/27. It would be implementing an increase to its Council Tax requirement for a Band D property household by £15.00. This was an increase of 5.4% for a Band D property from the previous year's figure of £277.40 to £292.40.

The Lancashire Combined Fire Authority would seek to approve an increase to its Council Tax requirement from £89.73 to £94.73 for a Band D property at its budget meeting being held on 23rd February 2026. This was a rise of 5.57%.

Altham Parish Council had notified Hyndburn Council that it intended to freeze its Council Tax requirement for a Band D property at £44.33 for 2026/27.

The overall increase in Council Tax for 2026/27 compared with 2025/26 was 3.61% (Altham 3.55%). A Band D property would have to pay an additional £89.96 over the year. The amounts charged by each authority for each Council Tax Band were shown in the tables included within the report's recommendations, along with the combined amount due for each Council Tax Band. Information was also provided in those tables for the charges for each band payable for residents in the parish of Altham.

2025/26 Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit)

The estimated amounts due in relation to Council Tax collection fund surplus/(deficit) 2025/26 were reported:

Preceptor	Council Tax £
Lancashire County Council	323,193
Lancashire Police & Crime Commissioner	51,650
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	16,707
Hyndburn Borough Council	51,594

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

In accordance with Section 59A of The Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended by The Local Government Finance Act 2012, the report informed members of the calculations carried out in estimating the level of National Non-Domestic Rates (the business rates tax base) the Council anticipated collecting in 2026-27. The business rates tax base, reported in the NNDR1 submission to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), was noted as £33,984,456 (Part 1a, line 12).

The estimated amounts due to each authority in relation to NNDR surplus/(deficit) collection fund for 2025/26 were reported as follows:

Preceptor	NNDR £
Central Government	552,651
Lancashire County Council	99,477
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	11,053
Hyndburn Borough Council	442,120

Currently the Council operated a policy that required surplus funds to be returned to a central pot at the end of the year. The Cabinet had previously indicated that it would allow Area Councils or their successor bodies to utilise unspent monies into the future until these sums were exhausted. This recommendation paved the way for this to continue to occur.

The financial pressures on the Council in 2025/26 indicated that it might be difficult to achieve a surplus in 2026/27, and it was recommended that if a deficit was to occur, the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to take any action necessary to maintain the Council's General Reserve at the level advised by the Executive Director (Resources).

If a surplus was generated in 2025/26 it was recommended that, as in previous years it would be used to assist the Council to address any shortfall in funding occurring in future years, the need to continue to reduce its long-term cost base via invest to save actions, funding additional capital expenditure, meeting other costs and enhancing its reserves. The surplus would be placed under the direction of the Chief Executive to ensure it could be used effectively and flexibly in response to the continuing financial pressures the Council faced.

Overall Financial Position and Robustness (Local Government Act Section 25 Statement)

There were a number of significant areas within the Budget for 2026/27 that required a degree of estimation. These estimates were based on the best professional judgements, developed upon data that was available to the Council at the time of drawing up its budget. However, there was always potential for the actual figures to vary from the estimates during the year. Within the Budget there was therefore a degree of risk. The most notable areas of risk were:

- a pay settlement above the estimate used in rolling forward the Budget;
- the impact of non-pay inflation;
- further fluctuations in interest rates and the collapse of any Bank where the Council deposited its funds;
- the impact of changes on funding around business rates and council tax, particularly council tax support; and
- the corporate savings target incorporated into the budget had to be achieved during the year..

Council Tax Motion

Councillor Dad **MOVED** the Budget recommendations, including alterations comprising seven additions to the Revenue Budget and two additions to the Capital Programme, as set out at Addendum A, which was tabled at this point in the meeting.

A brief adjournment was agreed to allow time for Councillors to discuss the Budget recommendations and Addendum information.

The alterations proposed at Addendum A were as summarised below:

Proposed Additions to the Revenue Budget 2026/2027	
1. Council Tax Freeze	Cost of £184,000.00 in 2026/2027 Cost of £375,000.00 over next 2 years
2. Business Growth & Support	Additional funding of £75,000.00 per annum Additional funding of £150,000.00 over next 2 years
3. Sports Development Initiatives	£100,000.00 in 2026/2027
4. Culture, Heritage, Arts & Town of Culture	£100,000.00 in 2026/2027
5. Crisis & Resilience Fund Top - Up	£50,000.00 per annum £100,000.00 over the next 2 years
Total Revenue Cost	£825,000.00

Proposed Additions to the Capital Programme 2026/2027	
1. Sports Development Initiatives	£75,000.00 in 2026/2027
2. Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre	£100,000.00 in 2026/2027
Total Capital Cost	£175,000.00

The Controlling Group considered that the above schemes were deliverable and had highlighted suggested methods of funding. The costing of the schemes had been confirmed with the Executive Director (Resources) / S.151 Officer.

Upon recommencement of the meeting, Councillor Dad highlighted the various reports provided within the Agenda, and outlined the Controlling Group's aims, some key priorities, the additional projects included in Addendum A and the overall financial impact on Council Tax payers. Key successes and priorities included the following:

Regeneration and Major Capital Projects

- Accrington Town Square projects;
- Market Hall – Bringing Services in-House;
- Market Chambers (the Dome);
- Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre;
- King George V Playing Fields;
- Cath Thom Leisure Centre;
- Mercer Hall,

Housing, Infrastructure and Local Plan

- Huncoat Garden Village,
- Draft New Local Plan,

Community, Wellbeing and Cost of Living Support

- Cabinet Action Fund;
- Household Support Fund and Crisis Support;
- Pensioner Benefit Take-Up,

Environment, Climate and Parks

- Green Flag Awards/Parks Team of the Year;
- Waste and Recycling Performance,

Culture, Heritage and Events

- 63 events successfully delivered;
- Culture and Heritage Strategy;
- Strong visitor numbers at Haworth Art Gallery;
- Partnerships and Youth Panel,

Economic Development and Business Support

- Business Support Team activity;

- #GetHyndburnWorking Initiative;
- Business Rates Revaluation Preparation,

Loal Government Reorganisation

- Business Case submitted;
- Timetable in place for Ongoing Work.

Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations

Members had regard to the comments and recommendations as submitted by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The **MOTION** was then **SECONDED** by Councillor Vanessa Alexander and was as follows:

That Council approves:

- (1) The acceptance and adoption of the Cabinet’s recommendations on the Revenue and Capital Budgets (incorporating this Council’s alterations at Addendum A) and Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management Report for 2026/27 to 2028/29 made at the Cabinet meeting on 18th February 2026.
- (2) That Council Tax for Hyndburn Borough Council be frozen at charge of £276.46 for the year for a Band D property.
- (3) That the Council commits to continuing to strengthen its Reserves during the year and requires the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Resources to take appropriate action to protect the Council’s overall financial position and further strengthen its reserves during the forthcoming year.
- (4) That the Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive to take such action as they consider necessary to implement the measures contained in the Revenue Budget for 2026/27.
- (5) That it is noted that on 21st January 2026 Cabinet approved the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):
 - 22,183 “D” Band equivalent units, being the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); and
 - 319 “D” Band equivalent units, being the Council Tax Base for dwellings in that part of the Council’s area to which a parish precept relates, being Altham Parish.
- (6) That Council agrees that the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purpose for 2026/27 (excluding Parish precepts) is £6,132,712.
- (7) That Council agrees that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2026/27 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

a)	£59,491,800	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act
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		taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
b)	£53,344,947	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
c)	£6,146,853	Being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
d)	£277.10	Being the amount at 4(a) above less the amount at 4(b) above, divided by the amount at 2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31(B) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
e)	£14,141	Being the aggregate amounts of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
f)	£276.46	Being the amount at 2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
g)	£320.79	For part of the Council's area, Parish of Altham, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area 4(e) above divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
h)	Being the amounts shown below that are given by multiplying the amounts at 4(f) and 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.	

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Parish of Altham	£213.86	£249.50	£285.14	£320.79	£392.08	£463.36	£534.65	£641.58
All other parts of the Borough	£184.31	£215.02	£245.74	£276.46	£337.90	£399.33	£460.77	£552.92

i) That it be noted that for the year 2026-27 the Lancashire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the Categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
LCC Total	£1,201.17	£1,401.36	£1,601.56	£1,801.75	£2,202.14	£2,602.53	£3,002.92	£3,603.50

At the time of publication, the above rates have not been approved

j) That it be noted that for the year 2026-27 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£194.93	£227.42	£259.91	£292.40	£357.38	£422.36	£487.33	£584.80

At the time of publication, the above rates have not been approved

k) That it be noted that for the year 2026-27 the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	£63.15	£73.68	£84.20	£94.73	£115.78	£136.83	£157.88	£189.46

l) That, being calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4.2(h) above and 4.2(i), (j) and (k) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2025-26 for each of the categories of dwellings show below:-

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Hyndburn Borough Council	£184.31	£215.02	£245.74	£276.46	£337.90	£399.33	£460.77	£552.92
Lancashire County Council	£1,201.17	£1,401.36	£1,601.56	£1,801.75	£2,202.14	£2,602.53	£3,002.92	£3,603.50
Police & Crime Commissioner	£194.93	£227.42	£259.91	£292.40	£357.38	£422.36	£487.33	£584.80

for Lancashire								
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	£63.15	£73.68	£84.20	£94.73	£115.78	£136.83	£157.88	£189.46
Total Non Parished Area	£1,643.56	£1,917.48	£2,191.41	£2,465.34	£3,013.20	£3,561.05	£4,108.90	£4,930.68
Parish of Altham	£1,673.11	£1,951.96	£2,230.81	£2,509.67	£3,067.38	£3,625.08	£4,182.78	£5,019.34

- (8) That Council determines in accordance with Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 that the Council’s basic amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 is not excessive in accordance with principles determined by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC. As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 is excessive and therefore the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (9) That the Executive Director (Resources), is given delegated authority to amend the budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) for technical reasons or to comply with legal requirements, such as the restructuring of cost centres, the re-apportionment and re-allocation of overheads etc., so long as these changes have an overall neutral impact on the budget.
- (10) That any continuing balances on Revenue or Capital previously earmarked for Area Councils continues to be set aside for use by these or their successor bodies.
- (11) That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority to use any unallocated surplus generated in 2026/27 should this occur to fund any future shortfall in income or additional expenditure, to support “Invest to Save” projects that will help reduce the Council’s long term costs (including additional payments to the Pension Fund as outlined at (12) below), or support specific capital projects, or finance other commitments that he deems to be in the best long term interest of the Council or to transfer funds to Reserves as required and to allocate funds between Reserves should an overspend occur in 2026/27 to maintain the General Fund Reserve at that appropriate level as advised by the Executive Director (Resources).
- (12) That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority following consultation with the Leader to make a payment or payments to the Lancashire Pension Authority to help reduce any of the Council’s pension liabilities, if this is calculated to be an appropriate use of Council Funds.
- (13) That the estimated amounts due in relation to Council Tax collection fund surplus/(deficit) 2025/26, as set out at Paragraph 3.9 of the Council Tax Resolution report, are noted.
- (14) That the business rates tax base, reported in the NNDR1 submission to MHCLG, of £33,984,456 be noted and the estimated amounts due to each authority in relation to NNDR surplus/(deficit) collection fund for 2025/26, as set out at Paragraph 3.10 of the Council Tax Resolution report, are noted:

Conservative Amendments

Addendum B, which contained five **AMENDMENTS** to the Budget recommendations, was tabled at this point during the meeting by the Opposition Group. Council Zak Khan **MOVED** the amendments *en bloc* and spoke about the project/schemes proposed, which he anticipated would create long-term improvements within the Borough. He commented favourably on a number of the Controlling Group's Budget alterations, but expressed concern about the Council Tax freeze and the use of skip days.

A brief adjournment was agreed to allow time for Members to discuss the Addendum information.

The amendments proposed at Addendum B were as summarised below:

Proposed Additions to the Revenue Budget 2026/2027	
1. Reduce Council Tax by 2.99%	£183,000.00 in 2026/2027 £192,250.00 in 2027/2028 Total £373,700.00
2. Additional Parks Officer	£39,000.00 in 2026/2027 £78,000.00 over 2 years
3. Additional Waste Enforcement Officer	£39,000.00 in 2026/2027 £78,000.00 over 2 years
4. Members Community Benefit Fund	£175,000.00
5. Increase in Parks and Environment Budgets	£250,000.00
Total Revenue Cost	£954,70.00

Proposed Additions to the Capital Programme 2026/2027	
1. Additional Allocation to reserves to Civic Budget Theatre Budget	£200,000.00
2. Economic Regeneration Fund	£250,000.00
3. Gateway to Hyndburn Fund	£350,000.00
Total Capital Cost	£800,000.00

The Opposition Group considered that the above schemes were deliverable and had highlighted suggested methods of funding. The costings of the schemes had been confirmed with the Executive Director (Resources) / S.151 Officer.

Upon recommencement of the meeting, the **AMENDMENTS** were then **SECONDED** by Councillor Danny Cassidy.

Councillor Alexander commented that these amendments were not sustainable and would put the Council at risk.

Councillor Eaves stated that the skip days had been a success, not a failure, but that a few of the events could have been better supported. He believed that in those instances poor communication and limited Councillor involvement had been a factor. Councillors Younis and Smithson indicated that they did not agree with the use of skip days and felt that an additional waste enforcement officer would be preferable.

Councillor Dad responded to the amendments and stated that he was not in favour of the proposals.

The **AMENDMENTS** were then put to **VOTE** *en bloc*.

For the Motion (11)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Danny Cassidy, Peter Edwards, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Steven Smithson, Tina Walker and Mohammed Younis.

Against the Motion (18)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth, Scott Brerton, Steven Button, Jodi Clements, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad, Bernard Dawson, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates.

Abstentions (0)

Nil

Accordingly, **AMENDMENT** was **LOST**.

The Substantive Motion

Councillor Khan expressed the view that the budget had been rushed, was not clear and had used reserves from underspends. The Conservative Group felt there had been unanswered questions at the recent Scrutiny meeting.

Councillor Aziz acknowledged the comments regarding the debate at Scrutiny, but asserted that he had been a firm but fair Chair of the Committee.

Councillor Gilbert commented that the Labour budget proposals were excellent and well measured. He highlighted the excellent work on the Dome and the Council Tax freeze which would assist with the cost of living crisis.

Councillors Pritchard and Brerton both referenced the support available to local businesses.

Councillor Whitehead emphasised how much of an asset Culture and Heritage projects were to the Borough, for example through the Dome exhibitions, supporting schools and festivals in the making.

*In accordance with Council Procedure Rule A7, a **VOTE** to extend the finish time of the meeting beyond 10pm was then taken and **CARRIED**.*

Councillor Booth spoke about the importance of history and fully embraced the Labour proposals especially the work and funding going into the Culture portfolio. The Mayor thanked Councillor Booth for his recent cry that he had written for the Great Harwood Town Crier, Rawden Kerr, delivered at the Oswaldtwistle Carnival.

Councillor Dad then summed up on the Motion and concluded that the budget built upon a year of delivery, ambition and community partnership. It continued a long-term mission to:

- Regenerate local towns;

- Improve housing and infrastructure;
- Support vulnerable residents;
- Protect local cultural and environmental assets;
- Promote business growth and jobs; and
- Strengthen local democracy.

The **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** was then put to the **VOTE**.

For the Motion (17)

Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth, Scott Brerton, Steven Button, Jodi Clements, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad, Bernard Dawson, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Clare Pritchard, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates.

Against the Motion (11)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Danny Cassidy, Peter Edwards, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Steven Smithson, Tina Walker and Mohammed Younis.

Abstentions (0)

Nil

Accordingly, the **MOTION** was **CARRIED** and it was:-

Resolved –That Council approves:

- (1) **The acceptance and adoption of the Cabinet’s recommendations on the Revenue and Capital Budgets (incorporating this Council’s alterations at Addendum A) and Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management Report for 2026/27 to 2028/29 made at the Cabinet meeting on 18th February 2026.**
- (2) **That Council Tax for Hyndburn Borough Council be frozen at charge of £276.46 for the year for a Band D property.**
- (3) **That the Council commits to continuing to strengthen its Reserves during the year and requires the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Resources to take appropriate action to protect the Council’s overall financial position and further strengthen its reserves during the forthcoming year.**
- (4) **That the Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive to take such action as they consider necessary to implement the measures contained in the Revenue Budget for 2026/27.**
- (5) **That it is noted that on 21st January 2026 Cabinet approved the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2026/27 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):**
 - **22,183 “D” Band equivalent units, being the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); and**

- **319 “D” Band equivalent units, being the Council Tax Base for dwellings in that part of the Council’s area to which a parish precept relates, being Altham Parish.**

(6) That Council agrees that the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purpose for 2026/27 (excluding Parish precepts) is £6,132,712.

(7) That Council agrees that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2026/27 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

a)	£59,491,800	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
b)	£53,344,947	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
c)	£6,146,853	Being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
d)	£277.10	Being the amount at 4(a) above less the amount at 4(b) above, divided by the amount at 2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31(B) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
e)	£14,141	Being the aggregate amounts of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
f)	£276.46	Being the amount at 2(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
g)	£320.79	For part of the Council’s area, Parish of Altham, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council’s area 4(e) above divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
h)		Being the amounts shown below that are given by multiplying the amounts at 4(f) and 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance

with 3 Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Parish of Altham	£213.86	£249.50	£285.14	£320.79	£392.08	£463.36	£534.65	£641.58
All other parts of the Borough	£184.31	£215.02	£245.74	£276.46	£337.90	£399.33	£460.77	£552.92

- i) That it be noted that for the year 2026-27 the Lancashire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the Categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
LCC Total	£1,201.17	£1,401.36	£1,601.56	£1,801.75	£2,202.14	£2,602.53	£3,002.92	£3,603.50

At the time of publication, the above rates have not been approved

- j) That it be noted that for the year 2026-27 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£194.93	£227.42	£259.91	£292.40	£357.38	£422.36	£487.33	£584.80

At the time of publication, the above rates have not been approved

- k) That it be noted that for the year 2026-27 the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	£63.15	£73.68	£84.20	£94.73	£115.78	£136.83	£157.88	£189.46

- l) That, being calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4.2(h) above and 4.2(i), (j) and (k) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts

as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2025-26 for each of the categories of dwellings show below:-

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Hyndburn Borough Council	£184.31	£215.02	£245.74	£276.46	£337.90	£399.33	£460.77	£552.92
Lancashire County Council	£1,201.17	£1,401.36	£1,601.56	£1,801.75	£2,202.14	£2,602.53	£3,002.92	£3,603.50
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£194.93	£227.42	£259.91	£292.40	£357.38	£422.36	£487.33	£584.80
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	£63.15	£73.68	£84.20	£94.73	£115.78	£136.83	£157.88	£189.46
Total Non Parished Area	£1,643.56	£1,917.48	£2,191.41	£2,465.34	£3,013.20	£3,561.05	£4,108.90	£4,930.68
Parish of Altham	£1,673.11	£1,951.96	£2,230.81	£2,509.67	£3,067.38	£3,625.08	£4,182.78	£5,019.34

- (8) That Council determines in accordance with Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 is not excessive in accordance with principles determined by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC. As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2026/27 is excessive and therefore the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (9) That the Executive Director (Resources), is given delegated authority to amend the budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) for technical reasons or to comply with legal requirements, such as the restructuring of cost centres, the re-apportionment and re-allocation of overheads etc., so long as these changes have an overall neutral impact on the budget.
- (10) That any continuing balances on Revenue or Capital previously earmarked for Area Councils continues to be set aside for use by these or their successor bodies.
- (11) That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority to use any unallocated surplus generated in 2026/27 should this occur to fund any future shortfall in income or additional expenditure, to support "Invest to Save" projects that will help reduce the Council's long term costs (including additional payments to the Pension Fund as outlined at (12) below), or support specific capital projects, or finance other commitments that he deems to be in the best long term interest of the Council or to transfer funds to Reserves as required and to allocate funds between Reserves should an overspend occur in 2026/27 to maintain the General Fund Reserve at that appropriate level as advised by the Executive Director (Resources).

- (12) That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority following consultation with the Leader to make a payment or payments to the Lancashire Pension Authority to help reduce any of the Council’s pension liabilities, if this is calculated to be an appropriate use of Council Funds.**
- (13) That the estimated amounts due in relation to Council Tax collection fund surplus/(deficit) 2025/26, as set out at Paragraph 3.9 of the Council Tax Resolution report, are noted.**
- (14) That the business rates tax base, reported in the NNDR1 submission to MHCLG, of £33,984,456 be noted and the estimated amounts due to each authority in relation to NNDR surplus/(deficit) collection fund for 2025/26, as set out at Paragraph 3.10 of the Council Tax Resolution report, are noted:**

The Mayor thanked all for their attendance and then closed the meeting.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed

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Agenda Item 5.

REPORT TO:	Council		
DATE:	26 March 2026		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Julian Joinson, Member Services Manager		
TITLE OF REPORT:	Question Time 1) Council Complaints Procedure 2) State of the Roads		
EXEMPT REPORT:	No		
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	n/a

Questions to Council

Questions for the Leader of the Council, a member of the Cabinet, or a Committee Chair may be submitted by councillors or by councillors on behalf of members of the public, under Council Procedure Rule 2.2(vi).

Procedural Note

- The questions will be read out by the Mayor/Deputy Mayor
- The Leader or other councillor, as appropriate, will give an oral answer.
- The questioner, if a councillor, may ask a supplementary question, if it is directly related to the original question

The following questions have been submitted:-

1) Council Complaints Procedure

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

The Council's complaints procedure is designed to refer a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman if it is rejected at stage two. This effectively creates a third stage to the process.

The Ombudsman will only deal with cases which directly affect an individual or a group of people. This prevents complaints relating to Council practices and procedures being referred to a third stage.

Will the Council modify the complaints procedure to provide a third stage independent review that doesn't need the Ombudsman to rule?

From: Councillor Scott Brerton

On behalf of: Mr Peter Shaw (address supplied)
Date of first receipt by Office: 12th January 2026 (08:51)

2) **State of the Roads**

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

What can the Leader of the Council do about the state of the roads in Great Harwood and Hyndburn as they are just deteriorating with my car requiring constant repair?

From: Councillor Noordad Aziz
On behalf of: Rubina Kauser (address supplied)
Date of first receipt by Office: 16th March 2026 (21:04)

Agenda Item 6.

REPORT TO:	Council		
DATE:	26 March 2026		
PORTFOLIO:	Councillor Vanessa Alexander - Resources and Council Operations		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Kirsten Burnett, Head of Policy and OD		
TITLE OF REPORT:	Draft Pay Policy 2026/27		
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 To present a draft Pay Policy for 2026/27.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 That the Pay Policy is agreed and published on the Council's website.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

3.1 The Localism Act 2011 (Chapter 8 - Pay Accountability) requires all local authorities to set out its position on a range of issues relating to the remuneration of its employees. The Policy must be approved by the Council in open forum, by the end of March each year and then be published on its website.

3.2 The Pay Policy sets out the existing approach to the remuneration of all posts within the Council. In particular it specifies certain mandatory requirements that must be detailed within the Policy, as follows:

- The pay structure of the Council and how it is set.
- Senior Management Remuneration, providing details of the pay grade for posts defined as Chief Officer and the accompanying allowances.
- The recruitment arrangements for a Chief Officer.
- The relationship between the salaries of Chief Officers and other employees.
- Details of the lowest paid posts within the Council.
- Employer's Pension Contribution details.
- Termination of employment payments.

- 3.3 The Council already publishes pay and remuneration details of its senior managers on its website, within the annual Statement of Accounts.
- 3.4 The purpose of the Pay Policy is to ensure there is transparency as to how pay and remuneration is set by the Council, for all of its employees and particularly for its most senior level posts.

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 N/a

5. Consultations

5.1 N/a

6. Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	The pay and remuneration detailed within the Pay Policy are all within the approved budget of the Council
Legal and human rights implications	The Pay Policy has been prepared to ensure the Council complies with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.
Assessment of risk	
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>	A CFA was completed before the policy was written in 2012. There have been no significant changes which require this to be repeated. All posts are subject to a recognised job evaluation and grading process designed to comply with equal pay principles. An annual Gender Pay Gap statement is published on the Council's website.

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

7.1 Localism Act 2011 – Chapter 8:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/part/1/chapter/8/enacted>

Supplementary Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/openness-and-accountability-in-local-pay-supplementary-guidance>

Hyndburn Borough Council

Pay Policy – 2026/27

1. Purpose of the Policy

- To maintain a transparent approach to the setting of the pay of the Council's employees.
- To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act, Section 38 – Pay Accountability.

1.1 The Policy details:

- The methods by which salaries of all employees are determined;
- The details of the remuneration of the Council's most senior employees, i.e. Chief Officers; and
- The relationship between the salary of the Council's Chief Officers and other employees.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 (Chapter 8 - Pay Accountability) requires every local authority to set out its position on a range of issues relating to the remuneration of its employees.
- 2.2 The policy will reflect, where appropriate, relevant aspects of existing Human Resources policies, such as the Council's agreements on job evaluation and the redundancy policy.
- 2.3 The policy must be approved by a meeting of full Council in open forum, by the end of March each year, and then be published on its website.

3. Legislation relevant to Pay and Remuneration

- 3.1 In determining the pay and remuneration of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation. This includes the Equality Act 2010 and the Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000. The Council will take reasonable steps to ensure that there is no pay discrimination within its pay structures and that pay differentials can be quantified through the application of its Job Evaluation Scheme.
- 3.2 The Council operates the GLPC (Greater London Provincial Council) job evaluation scheme, for its posts, up to and including Chief Officers, for whom there is a specific version of this scheme. The posts of Chief Executive and Executive Directors have been evaluated in consultation with North West Employers Organisation.

4. Pay Structure

- 4.1 The Council complies with the nationally negotiated spinal column points for all posts, with the exception being those senior level posts referred to within the policy. The salary grades that the Council applies are at [Appendix 1](#).
- 4.2 Salary increases are set nationally, through collective bargaining between the national employers and trade unions.

4.3 Pay and grading is based on the job evaluation exercise implemented in 2007. All newly created posts and posts that have varied are subject to evaluation against the job evaluation scheme.

5. Definitions

5.1 The Localism Act refers to the position of Chief Officer and states that this refers to: the Head of Paid Service; Statutory Chief Officers; non-statutory Chief Officer posts and their direct reports (Deputy Chief Officers). It should be noted that this definition is very broad, and takes account of Metropolitan and County Councils as well as District Councils.

5.2 It is considered that the posts that the term Chief Officer applies to at Hyndburn Borough Council, in relation to the Localism Act, are (at the time of writing):

- the Chief Executive;
- the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), who is the Council's Deputy CEO, Monitoring Officer, and Returning Officer;
- the Executive Director (Resources), who is the Section 151 Officer; and
- the Executive Director (Environment)

5.3 Our annual Statement of Accounts also includes senior officers with a salary over £50,000, within the threshold for disclosure under the Accounts and Audit requirements.

5.4 Remuneration is defined as the pay and rewards an individual receives. Details are produced in the audited Statement of Accounts on an annual basis. The latest published Statement of Accounts is on the Council's website¹.

6. Chief Executive / Director Remuneration

6.1 There are three director level posts reporting to the Chief Executive. The responsibilities of these senior officers are shown on the Council's organisational structure charts, which are published on the Council's website².

6.3 Details of remuneration are contained in the annual Statement of Accounts.

6.4 Salary packages and severance payments over £100,000 will be brought to a meeting of full Council to be voted on. Components of severance packages, where applicable, may include salary paid in lieu, redundancy compensation, pension entitlements, holiday pay and any bonuses, fees or allowances paid.

6.5 The other terms and conditions of service relating to the post of Chief Executive are in accordance with the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of Local Authorities.

7. Recruitment of Chief Executive and Chief Officers

7.1 Under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the "power to appoint officers on such reasonable terms and conditions as the authority thinks fit".

7.2 Where there is a requirement to recruit to the post of Chief Executive or Chief Officer, Section H of the Council's Constitution will apply.

¹ <https://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/download-package/statement-of-accounts/>

² <https://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/download-package/organisational-structure-chart/>

8. Salary upon Appointment

- 8.1 All new appointments to a post of Chief Executive or Chief Officer will be made within the minimum and maximum spinal column points of the grade.

9. Performance-related Pay

- 9.1 The Localism Act requires Councils to provide details of any performance-related pay for its Chief Officers. Hyndburn Borough Council does not have any such arrangements.

10. Relationship between Chief Executive Pay and other Employees

- 10.1 Based on pay rates in place at the time of publishing this Pay Policy, the relationship between the salaries of the Chief Executive and the median salary and the lowest paid salary are:

Post	Benchmark Salary	Ratio
Chief Executive salary	median salary	1:4.5
Chief Executive salary	lowest salary	1:5.6

11. Lowest Paid Employees

- 11.1 The Council complies with the National Joint Council – Pay and Conditions of Service. The minimum salary the Council pays is in accordance with the Foundation Living Wage, which at present is based on an hourly rate of £13.45 (see [Appendix 1](#)). The positions that this applies to are Cleaners, and some Apprentice posts.
- 11.2 Progression through grades occurs through the payment of an additional annual increment on 1 April each year.
- 11.3 Part-time posts are paid the same salary, but on a pro-rata basis.

12. Gender Pay Gap

- 12.1 Employers in Great Britain with more than 250 staff are required by the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 to publish the following:
- Gender pay gap (mean and median averages);
 - Gender bonus gap (mean and median averages);
 - Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses; and
 - Proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure.
- 12.2 The Council publishes this information on its website at <https://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/download-package/gender-pay-gap-statement/>.
- 12.3 We are committed to the principle of equal pay for all our employees, and our job evaluation system means we can be confident as reasonably possible that men and women are paid equally for doing equivalent jobs.

13. Termination Payments

- 13.1 The Council's Redundancy Policy applies equally to all permanent employees regardless of their grade. A redundancy payment will be paid to an employee when their post is made redundant and there are no suitable redeployment opportunities.
- 12.2 For all permanent employees where there is the option for early retirement, the Council's Policy on Discretionary Compensation will apply where appropriate.

13. Employer Pension Contribution

- 13.1 The Council contributes to the Local Government Pension Scheme, for all its employees equally, 0.00% of an employee's salary (from 1/4/26) This rate of contribution is set by Actuaries advising the Lancashire Pension Fund and is reviewed on a triennial basis.

14. Employee Pension Contribution

- 14.1 Employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme pay at present the annual contributions shown in the table below, based upon their salary.

Band	Actual pensionable pay	Employee contribution rate
1	Up to £17,800	5.5%
2	£17,801 to £28,000	5.8%
3	£27,801 to £45,600	6.5%
4	£45,601 to £57,700	6.8%
5	£57,701 to £81,000	8.5%
6	£81,001 to £114,800	9.9%
7	£114,801 to £135,300	10.5%
8	£135,301 to £203,000	11.4%
9	£203,001 or more	12.5%

15. Publication of the Policy

- 15.1 The Policy will be published on the Council's Website, by April 2026, following its approval by the Council.

16. Review of Pay Policy

- 16.1 The Policy will be subject to annual review and must be approved by the Council prior to 31 March each year. If there is a need to amend the Policy between reviews, then any such amendments will be considered by the Cabinet, prior to approval by the Council.

Appendix 1: Pay and Grading 1 April 2025 (2026 pay award not agreed at time of Policy)

NJC grades

Grade and salary range		SCP	Salary (£)	Hourly Rate (£)
		1	<i>Deleted wef 1/4/23</i>	
		2	<i>Deleted wef 1/4/26</i>	
Scale 1 (3-4)		3	24796	12.85
	Scale 2 (4-5)	4	25185	13.05
		5	25583	13.26
		<i>Living Wage</i>	25,950	13.45
Scale 3a (6)		6	25989	13.47
	Scale 3b (7)	7	26403	13.69
Scale 4 (8-12)		8	26824	13.90
		9	27254	14.13
		10	27694	14.35
		11	28142	14.59
		12	28598	14.82
Scale 5 (13-18)		13	29064	15.06
		14	29540	15.31
		15	30024	15.56
		16	30518	15.82
		17	31022	16.08
		18	31537	16.35
Scale 6 (19-23)		19	32061	16.62
		20	32597	16.90
		21	33143	17.18
		22	33699	17.47
		23	34434	17.85
Scale 7 (24-26)		24	35412	18.35
		25	36363	18.85
		26	37280	19.32
Scale 8 (27-29)		27	38220	19.81
	Scale 9 (28-31)	28	39152	20.29
		29	39862	20.66
		30	40777	21.14
		31	41771	21.65

Scale 10 (31-34)		32	42839	22.20
	Scale 11 (33-36)	33	44075	22.85
34		45091	23.37	
35		46142	23.92	
36		47181	24.46	
37		48226	25.00	
Scale 12 (37-40)		38	49282	25.54
		39	50269	26.06
		40	51356	26.62
	<i>Not used</i>	41	52413	27.17
	Service Manager 1 (42-45)	42	53460	27.71
		43	54495	28.25
		44	55557	28.80
		45	56619	29.35

JNC grades

CHIEF OFFICERS (1)	JNC16	66146
	JNC17	67721
	JNC18	69265
	JNC19	70830
	JNC20	72395
CHIEF OFFICERS (2)	JNC21	60748
	JNC22	62187
	JNC23	63602
	JNC24	65041
	JNC25	66480

CABINET

Wednesday, 21st January, 2026

Present: Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP (in the Chair), Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Scott Brerton, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Clare Pritchard and Kimberley Whitehead

In Attendance: Councillors Noordad Aziz and Zak Khan

Apologies: Councillor Ethan Rawcliffe

274 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Ethan Rawcliffe.

275 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations made on this occasion.

276 Minutes of Cabinet

The minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 19th November (Special Meeting) and 3rd December 2025 were submitted for approval as correct records.

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

277 Reports of Cabinet Members

Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport

Councillor Kimberley Whitehead reported on the following:

Woodlands Care Home, Clayton-le-Moors

An announcement had been made this morning by the Leadership of Lancashire County Council that the authority would not be closing any of their care homes or daycare facilities across the County. However, there were some concerns being voiced by trades unions and political parties that the message was ambiguous.

Information from the Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council had clarified that staff had not been notified of any decision and that no formal position had currently been adopted by the Council. Councillor Whitehead expressed concern that there was still the threat of privatisation of the facilities and that staff still required some assurance about their future employment. She noted that hundreds of people had turned up at a protest over the weekend, including representatives from all political parties, with the exception of the Reform party.

Councillor Munsif Dad responded that, overall, this was good news and a step in the right direction. The support of the public and cross-party political groups had certainly helped. He hoped that the leadership of Lancashire County Council would listen to the feedback and would keep these facilities open. Councillor Zak Khan added that a number of Conservative councillors had also attended the protests and that he was pleased to note the latest position.

UK Town of Culture 2028

Details of the submission process for the newly created UK Town of Culture for 2028 had been published by the Government last week. This could potentially bring investment into Hyndburn. The Borough already had a Culture and Heritage Team, a Panel and Strategy, so was well placed to submit a bid. At this stage, it was unclear whether the submission would be for Hyndburn as a whole or for one town within the Borough. Lessons could be learned from neighbouring Burnley, which had recently announced its Burnley 2027 Year of Culture initiative.

Expressions of interest were required by the end of March 2026. More information about this ambitious proposal would be provided in due course.

Portfolio Holder for Business, Growth and Sustainability

Councillor Scott Brerton reported on the following:

Economic Policy Forum for Hyndburn

A meeting of the Economic Policy Forum for Hyndburn had taken place last week and had been extremely positive, even more so than last year's event. The main concerns raised included the increase in the minimum wage and commercial landlords increasing rents. Against this background, some businesses had reported having their best December in recent years. The hospitality sector had noted that recruitment was improving. Accrington and Rossendale College representatives had welcomed the Government's Industrial Strategy, which would fit well with the NW Construction Technical Excellence College (CTEC), led by Wigan and Leigh College, along with formal partners Blackpool and The Fylde College and East Lancashire Learning Group (Accrington and Rossendale College's parent organisation). The initiative could deliver 40,000 skilled workers by 2029.

Councillor Zak Khan commented that Accrington and Rossendale College was a great asset to the Borough and noted that the Chief Executive of the Group had recently been awarded a CBE. He also asked if attendees at the Forum were predominantly from the public sector. Councillor Brerton responded that there was a good cross-section of attendees at the Forum with many from the business sector.

Hyndburn Job's Fair

Hyndburn Job's Fair would return on 9th February 2026. The event had attracted 2,000 visitors last year. The Council was working closely with Scott Dawson Advertising on this event. Councillor Brerton commented that he had attended many such events in the past and that useful information had been disseminated, but that actual job availability had been limited. Accordingly, the current event organisers had sought to ensure that more job vacancies were publicised at the event. There should also be some good workshops available.

Lancashire Skills Partnership

Some positive statistics had recently been published by the Lancashire Skills Partnership. Some communications would be available shortly. The headline messages included the following:

- Hyndburn's growth was gaining in strength;
- Business 'deaths' was one of the lowest figures in the area; and
- Hyndburn was outpacing Lancashire, the North West and UK in business 'birth' rates.

The Portfolio Holder thanked all those involved in driving forward these improvements and, in particular, Salma Chaudry, Economic Development Manager and Matthew Sheppard, Economic Development Officer in the Council's Housing and Regeneration Department.

Councillor Munsif Dad commented that it was good to hear of successful businesses and business growth. Hyndburn was doing well. The controlling administration had invested in economic development within the Borough.

Councillor Zak Khan indicated that he was pleased to see the improving statistics, as these initiatives had commenced under the Conservative administration in 2023/24. He sought further clarification about the end date for the figures provided, as in his experience different feedback was coming from the business sector. This might be due, in part, to the Chancellor's Budget in Autumn 2025. Councillor Brerton responded that he could look into the end date of the statistics, if necessary, but he understood that Councillor Khan already had access to that information. He was pleased that the Opposition had acknowledged the overall positive direction of travel.

Leader of the Council

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP reported on the following:

Local Elections 2026

An e-mail had been received today from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in connection with the postponement of the local elections in May 2025. Jane Ellis, Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), indicated that the Reform party was seeking a judicial review of the process of cancelling the local elections.

A hearing was due to take place on 19th to 20th February 2026, although it was unclear about when the decision would be made available. The Council's Elections Team would need a decision to be made soon, as planning for the elections would normally have started at this time, including booking rooms, staff and equipment and incurring the necessary costs. A meeting would be arranged with the Elections Manager to consider what matters could be deferred and what needed to be commenced before 20th February 2026. Ideally, the Council would aim to not incur any costs, but this might be unavoidable. Members would be kept informed as to any developments. Councillor Dad reiterated that local elections would automatically take place in Hyndburn, unless the Government decided otherwise.

The Cabinet considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, informing Members of the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2026/2027.

The Leader provided a brief introduction to the report, highlighting the figure for the Borough's Council Tax Base in 2026/2027 (22,183) and the figure for Altham Parish Council (319).

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

In accordance with Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council was required to formally determine the Council Tax Base for 2026/2027 prior to 31st January 2026. This allowed the Council to notify the major preceptors (Lancashire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire and Lancashire Combined Fire Authority) by the 31st January of the Council Tax Base.

The requisite calculation (Appendices A and B to the report) had to be carried out in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012. Once determined, the Council Tax Base could not be changed and had to be used when the Council set its Council Tax for the financial year 2026/2027.

The calculation of the Tax Base for Hyndburn and Altham for 2026/2027 was included as Appendix A to the report. It was proposed that the Tax Base for Hyndburn 2026/2027 should be 22,183. This was an increase from last year's Tax Base of 20 (22,163). The 2026/2027 Tax Base for Altham, as set out in Appendix B to the report, was 319, which was a decrease from last year's Tax Base of 320.

The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 specified formulae for calculating the Council Tax Base which had to be set between the 1st December 2025 and the 31st January 2026.

The Council Tax Base was the measure of the number of chargeable dwellings held on the valuation list as at the 10 September 2025 and then adjusted to take account of discounts, exemptions, re-bandings and Council Tax Support to arrive at the Authority's Council Tax Band D.

The Council Tax Base also took into account the Council's intention to apply a local exemption for Lancashire County Care Leavers, up to their 25th birthday from 1st April 2026.

The report had also included a copy of a Customer First Analysis as Appendix C.

There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons.

Resolved

(1) That Cabinet notes and approves the report.

(2) That Cabinet agrees:

(a) That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by the Council for its Council

Tax Base for the financial year 2026/2027 shall be 22,183.

(b) That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by the Council for the Council Tax Base for the parish of Altham for the financial year 2026/2027 shall be 319.

279 Prudential Indicators Monitoring and Treasury Management Strategy Update - Quarter 3 2025/26

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, providing an update on the Council's treasury management activities for the current financial year till Quarter 3 (Q3). The report outlined the performance of investments and borrowing, assessed compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, and highlighted any emerging risks or opportunities that might impact the Council's financial position. Overall, the report supported effective budget monitoring and ensured transparency and accountability in the management of public funds.

The Leader of the Council introduced this report on behalf of Councillor Alexander, due to her recent dental appointment. Councillor Dad outlined the background to the report, the level of short-term investments and interest rates secured, the Council's approach to risk, interest rate forecasts, additional interest anticipated and the impact of investment returns on the Council's overall budget.

Councillor Khan commented on Table 1 at Paragraph 4.2 and noted that the Total External Debt and Capital Finance Requirement at Q3 were broadly similar figures which offset each other.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

Local authorities were required to manage their borrowing, investments, and cash flows in a way that was affordable, prudent, and sustainable. This was governed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, which together set the framework for how councils planned and monitored their capital financing and treasury activities.

As part of this framework, councils had to set Prudential Indicators each year to support decision-making around capital investment and borrowing. These indicators helped demonstrate that the Council's plans were financially sound and that risks were being managed appropriately.

The Council also adopted a Treasury Management Strategy annually, which outlined how it would manage borrowing, investments, and cash balances throughout the year. Regular monitoring reports were required to track performance against the strategy and indicators, and to provide assurance that treasury activities remained aligned with the Council's financial objectives.

Borrowing Activities During The Period

Table 1 below showed the current borrowing position at Q3 2025/26 compared with the original estimate. The increase in finance leases relating to vehicle purchases had increased the liability and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) totals.

Table 1 – Comparison of latest position with the original estimate as at Q3 2025/26:

Borrowing Position – Q3 2025/26	Original Estimate 2025/26 £'000	Forecast at Q3 2025/26 £'000
External Debt		
Borrowing	9,595	9,595
Other Long-Term Liabilities	1,967	4,088
Total External Debt	11,562	13,683
Capital Financing Requirement	9,190	11,311
Under(Over) Borrowing	(2,372)	(2,372)

The Council continued to operate within the borrowing limits and targets set at the start of the financial year. A key measure in the Prudential Indicators was the relationship between the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and the Council's gross external debt.

The CFR represented the total amount the Council had needed to borrow over time to fund capital investment — such as buildings, infrastructure, and equipment. It reflected the underlying need to borrow, even if the Council chose to use internal resources (like reserves or cash balances) instead of taking out loans. The gross external debt of £13.683m was the actual amount the Council had borrowed from external sources, such as Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loans and finance leases.

In general, gross debt should not exceed the CFR. This was an important safeguard built into the Prudential Code, as it provided assurance that the Council was not borrowing more than it needed for capital purposes — and crucially, that it was not borrowing to fund day-to-day services, which was not permitted.

In 2025/26, the Council's gross debt was forecast to exceed the CFR by £2.372m, placing the authority in an over-borrowed position. This was not due to new borrowing, but was explained by:

- Historic loans that were structured with repayment at maturity (i.e. the full amount was repaid at the end of the loan term). These loans kept the gross debt figure high, while the CFR reduced each year through the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) — an annual charge that reflected repayment of capital.
- The implementation of International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 – Leases, which now required all lease liabilities (e.g. for vehicles and equipment) to be shown on the balance sheet as debt. This had increased the reported level of gross debt, even though it did not represent new borrowing.
- Timing differences between capital expenditure and financing, which could temporarily affect the CFR.

Despite this technical position, no new external borrowing had been undertaken, and the Council was not borrowing to support revenue spending. The position was therefore acceptable and well understood.

Investment Activities During the Period

The Council invested surplus cash balances on a short-term basis to ensure that funds were readily available when needed, while also generating a modest return. These balances arose from timing differences — for example, when grants were received before the related expenditure was incurred, or when capital projects were delayed.

Short-term investments were typically placed in secure, low-risk instruments such as money market funds, government-backed deposits, or other approved counterparties. This approach supported the Council's priorities of:

- **Security:** protecting public funds by minimising investment risk.
- **Liquidity:** ensuring cash was available to meet day-to-day spending needs.
- **Yield:** earning interest to support the revenue budget, where possible.

The strategy aligned with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code, which required councils to manage investments prudently, balancing risk and return.

Table 2 below provided a list of counterparties and the balances invested as at Q3 2025/26.

Table 2 – Invested balance by counterparty:

Investment Portfolio – Q3 2025/26	Balance at Q3 2025/26 £'000
Local Authorities	30,000
Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility	2,400
Money Market Funds	2,000
Bank Deposit Accounts	80
Total Short-Term Investments	34,480

A further table (Table 3) was included in the report, which gave more details of the investments the Council had in place at Q3 2025/26 with other local authorities.

The Council had one future dated loan agreed at the end of the quarter with Moray Council from 6th January 2026 to 5th January 2027 in the sum of £2m, at 4.6% interest.

To protect public funds, the Council's Finance team carried out thorough checks before agreeing to lend money to other local authorities. These checks helped ensure that any investments were secure and that the borrowing authority was financially stable.

Interest Rates

The Council had appointed MUFG (formerly Link Asset Services) as its treasury adviser. As part of their role, they provided guidance on expected movements in interest rates to support the Council's investment and borrowing decisions.

A graph was included in the report, which gave MUFG's latest available view of the expected future movement in interest rates. The latest forecast sets out a view that both short and long-dated interest rates would start to fall, as inflation had fallen closer to the Bank of England's target of 2.00%.

Interest rate risk was minimised as the Council’s borrowings were fixed until a trigger point, where the lender would seek better rates. Current interest rates would need to rise significantly for this to occur. With rates expected to fall in the short-term this was unlikely to occur, but this would be monitored closely.

Interest Receivable

The Council had invested surplus cash on a short-term, temporary basis. These investments had generated interest income above the budgeted expectations for the year. This was mainly due to:

- Higher levels of cash being held (e.g. from grants received in advance of spending);
- The Bank of England maintaining interest rates at higher levels than anticipated when the budget had been set.

As a result, the Council now expected to receive £0.737m in additional interest income by the end of March 2026. The investment strategy continued to prioritise security and liquidity, ensuring that funds were safe and available when needed.

The Council invested surplus cash in highly rated financial institutions, spreading deposits across multiple banks to reduce risk. This approach helped protect public funds in the event of an unexpected bank failure.

- Deposits were placed with banks where government guarantees were likely to apply;
- No more than £2 million was held with any single bank, except for the NatWest liquidity account, which had a limit of £3 million;
- The Council could place unlimited funds with the Government’s Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF), which offered low risk returns and flexibility.

This strategy continued to deliver a reasonable return while keeping risk to a minimum.

Interest Payable

The budget included an estimate for interest costs on potential new borrowing. However, as no new borrowing was expected to take place during the year, these interest costs would not be incurred.

Forecast Revenue Outturn – 2025/26 Q3

Table 4 below showed the forecast revenue outturn position on the Council’s Treasury Management activities as at 2025/26 Q3.

The interest forecast had increased since Q2 due to prevailing interest rates overperforming what had been expected.

Table 4 - Forecast Revenue Outturn – 2025/26 Q3

Portfolio Position	Working Budget 2025/26	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Forecast (Under)/Over Spend
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	£'000	£'000	£'000
INTEREST RECEIVABLE			
Interest Receivable on Temporary Lending	(700)	(1,437)	(737)
Other Interest Receivable	-	-	-
Total Interest Receivable	(700)	(1,437)	(737)
INTEREST PAYABLE			
Interest Payable on Long-Term Borrowings	440	440	-
Interest Payable on Finance Leases	41	253	212
Other Interest Payable	-	-	-
Total Interest Payable	481	693	212
Minimum Revenue Provision	1,085	1,127	42
Net (Income) / Expenditure from Treasury Activities	866	383	(483)

Performance Against Prudential Indicators

The *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* required councils to set Prudential Indicators annually for the forthcoming three years. These indicators demonstrated that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent, and sustainable.

Hyndburn Borough Council had adopted its Prudential Indicators for 2025/26 at its meeting in February 2025.

In addition to setting these indicators, the Prudential Code required the Council to monitor them on a quarterly basis, using a locally determined format. These indicators were intended for internal use and were not designed for comparison between authorities.

Should it become necessary to revise any of the indicators during the year, the Executive Director of Resources would report and advise the Council accordingly.

Appendix 1 of the report provided a full list of monitoring information for each of the prudential indicators and limits. These included:

- External Debt Overall Limits;
- Affordability (e.g. implications for Council Tax);
- Prudence and Sustainability (e.g. implications for external borrowing);
- Capital Expenditure; and
- Other indicators for Treasury Management.

Liability Benchmark

As part of the approved Treasury Management Strategy, the Council had set out a Liability Benchmark. This was a key tool that compared the Council's actual borrowing levels against a theoretical benchmark that represented the lowest risk level of borrowing, based on current capital and revenue plans.

The Liability Benchmark helped the Council understand whether it was likely to be a long-term borrower or a long-term investor. It did this by estimating the minimum level of external borrowing needed to:

- Fund planned capital expenditure;
- Repay existing debt; and
- Maintain only the minimum level of cash investments required for day-to-day operations.

This insight supported strategic decision-making around future borrowing and investment activity.

The inputs that determined the Liability Benchmark had been revised to include the increased capital expenditure relating to vehicle leasing and the increased draw down of useable reserves anticipated to support the revenue budget over the MTFS period.

Based on current forecasts, the Liability Benchmark suggested that the Council might need to undertake new borrowing around the year 2029. However, this was only a projection based on existing capital and revenue plans — it was not a confirmed borrowing requirement and might change as plans and funding sources evolved.

A chart illustrating the liability benchmark as at Q3 2025/26 was provided in the report, which reflected that presented in the approved Treasury Management Strategy.

There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons

Resolved - **That Cabinet notes the treasury management activities undertaken during the period and the performance against the approved strategy.**

280 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2025/2026 - Quarter 3 to end of December 2025

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, providing an update on the Council's financial performance up to the end of December 2025 for the 2025/26 financial year and outlining the projected impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy covering the period 2025/26 to 2027/28.

The Leader of the Council introduced this report on behalf of Councillor Alexander. Councillor Dad highlighted the forecast surplus for the year 2025/2026, the cost pressures faced throughout the year offset through treasury management income streams, significant variances, the provision made to deal with any potential liabilities and the level of and use of reserves. The Leader was pleased to note that the Council's finances were on track through close budget monitoring and good management.

Councillor Khan made the following observations and asked various questions as follows:

- Waste Services were predicting an £61k underspend. Could the saving be reallocated to enforcement activity?

- The announcement at Council on 15th January 2026 about progress on the Waste Disposal contract was welcomed, as this should mean the no large financial investment would be required.
- The overall forecast underspend of £0.594m was good news. Would the controlling group consider spending this in year?
- Would the controlling group consider reducing the level of unallocated reserves?
- Could the controlling group advise what the funding deficit would be following the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and the Government's subsequent provisional financial settlement for Hyndburn?

Councillor Dad responded that further information about the draft Budget would be available at the next Cabinet meeting. The Fair Funding Review outcome would still lead to a reduction in grant income from the Government, but the change was not as significant as had been first anticipated. The full implications would be considered during the Budget setting process in February. The Council would need to manage any shortfall and hence needed to be prudent in relation to expenditure within the last few months of 2025/26.

Councillor Eaves reported that a two-year waste disposal contract had been signed by Lancashire County Council with Envirofuel Ltd. From 1st April 2026, waste would be taken to their existing processing facility at Accrington Road, Hapton, in Burnley. Councillor Dad confirmed that there would be no additional cost to Hyndburn Borough Council for this service.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

At the Full Council meeting on 27th February 2025, Full Council had agreed the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2025/26. This had set a budget for the Council's total spend in 2025/26 of £17.313m, plus £0.121m use of reserves, in lieu of business rate receipts.

The current forecast spend to the end of the financial year in March 2026 was £17.106m, with forecast funding increasing to £17.700m. This brought the forecast underspend for the year against the budget to £0.594m. Further analysis of changes in forecast spend were shown in Section 4 of the report.

Table 1 below showed the working budget and forecast outturn by service area. During Quarter 3 2025/26 there had been a restructure of service responsibilities, however, to allow for consistency between monitoring reports all the tables in the report reflected the service structure at budget setting.

Table 1: Forecast Outturn Variance - Summary by Service Area

Service Area	Original Budget	In-Year Budget Changes	Working Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Environmental Health	941	-	941	975	34
Environmental Services	5,495	(14)	5,481	5,557	76
Legal and Democratic	1,896	-	1,896	1,933	37
Planning and Transportation	712	5	717	720	3
Regeneration and Housing	1,604	(34)	1,570	1,377	(193)
Resources	6,085	6	6,091	6,592	501
Net Cost of Services	16,733	(37)	16,696	17,154	458
Non-Service	865	5	870	(48)	(918)

Cabinet Approved Contributions	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Savings Target	(164)	-	(164)	-	164
Total Net Expenditure	17,434	(32)	17,402	17,106	(296)
Funding	(17,434)	32	(17,402)	(17,700)	(298)
(Under)/Overspend	-	-	-	(594)	(594)

Table 2 below showed the change in forecast by service area compared to the previous quarter.

Table 2: Change in Forecast Outturn – Summary by Service Area

Service Area	Quarter 2 Forecast Outturn	Changes in Forecast Outturn During Quarter	Forecast Outturn Quarter 3
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Environmental Health	963	12	975
Environmental Services	5,328	229	5,557
Legal and Democratic	1,939	(6)	1,933
Planning and Transportation	840	(120)	720
Regeneration and Housing	1,588	(211)	1,377
Resources	6,371	221	6,592
Net Cost of Services	17,029	125	17,154
Non-Service	397	(445)	(48)
Corporate Savings Target	-	-	-
Total Net Expenditure	17,426	(320)	17,106
Funding	(17,435)	(265)	17,700
(Under)/Overspend	(9)	(585)	(594)

Table 3, which was set out in the report, showed details of the most significant changes in the forecast variance. A commentary was also provided on the affected areas, as follows:

- Staffing Costs and Pay Pressures** - The forecasted savings on staffing costs had reduced by £0.177m since Quarter 2, from £0.115m underspend to a pressure of £0.062m. This change was largely attributable to an increased reliance on agency staff to maintain service delivery, which had offset the anticipated savings from vacant posts. In addition, a pay award of 3.2% had been agreed in-year, compared to the original budget assumption of 3% for 2025/26. This had created a pressure within staffing budgets of £0.025m.
- Utilities and Operational Savings** - The forecasted savings on utility costs had increased by £0.015m since Quarter 2, rising from £0.136m to £0.151m. This improvement was primarily attributed to the implementation of a new energy contract, which had helped to stabilise prices and reduce overall expenditure. The new contract had likely contributed to the additional savings now being forecast.
- Grant Income and Housing Benefit** - A favourable movement of £0.466m had been reported in relation to grant income, shifting from a forecasted pressure of £0.230m in Quarter 2 to surplus of £0.236m in the current forecast. This change followed notification of additional grant income in the quarter, including additional Homelessness Prevention Grant and additional Housing Benefit subsidy, in addition to the use of grant income to support general services.

- **ICT Costs** - ICT and software costs had increased by £0.060m since Quarter 1, bringing the total forecast pressure in this area to £0.169m. This increase was primarily due to additional licensing and support costs associated with the ongoing modernisation of the Council's ICT infrastructure and the growing reliance on cloud-based systems to support service delivery and secure remote working.
- **Council Tax Recovery Costs** - The forecast for Council Tax recovery costs had increased by £0.080m since Quarter 2. This reflected updated assumptions around collection activity and associated costs, including potential increases in enforcement or administrative overheads linked to recovery processes.
- **Fees and Charges Income** - Fees and charges income had improved by £0.074m compared to the previous quarter. This positive movement was primarily driven by increased income from commercial property rents, as well as higher-than-anticipated income from Building Control and Planning services. These uplifts suggested stronger market demand and improved performance in these service areas.
- **Non-Service Budgets** - There had been a significant increase of £0.151m in forecast investment income since Quarter 2, bringing the total to £0.737m. This improvement was primarily due to the continuation of favourable interest rates and higher-than-anticipated cash balances, which had been sustained in part by delays in capital expenditure. The Council had also received £0.181m as part of a reconciliation exercise following the upfront payment of its employer contributions to the Pension Fund.

As explained at Quarter 2 there were new cost pressures within financing budgets, with interest payable increasing by £0.073m and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) rising by £0.042m. These increases were largely attributable to a higher volume of vehicles being acquired through leasing arrangements, which had impacted borrowing costs and associated MRP charges. It was expected that these additional costs would be funded by earmarked reserve, therefore they would not adversely affect the forecast revenue outturn position.

Variance by Service Area

Section 4 of the report provided a breakdown of forecast outturn variances by service area set out in additional tables (Nos 4 to 11), as well as a supporting commentary. It highlighted the key changes since Quarter 2 and compared the current forecast against the approved working budget. For comparison purposes the various tables reflected the organisational structure prior to recent changes in service area responsibility. Figures would be amended at outturn, with budget movements shown.

The analysis aimed to provide greater transparency on the financial position of individual services and to support ongoing monitoring and management of budget pressures and savings.

Table 12 comprised the Forecast Movements in Reserves 2025/26 at Quarter 3, which showed that the Council was currently forecasting a total of £16.849m at the end of the financial year. It was anticipated that all of this amount, with the exception of £1.887m in

general reserve would be used to support the forecast shortfall in future years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the funding of the Capital Programme. It was recommended that the authority maintained a level of general reserve of around £1m to act as a financial cushion to cover any unknown future financial pressures.

Pressures and Risks

The forecast underspend at Quarter 3 was a surplus of £0.594m. Although this was positive position for the Council, there were some real pressures and risks that needed to be considered, which were not currently built into any financial forecasts.

The main pressures/risks to be considered were detailed below:

- **Waste Disposal Site/Transfer Station** – Negotiations were still underway with Lancashire County Council regarding their contract situation for the disposal of waste at the Whinney Hill site. This might require Hyndburn and the other East Lancashire districts to find alternative sites to dispose of their residual household waste. The assumption for any new arrangements was that any costs would be contained within the budgets set aside within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- **Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre** – The closure of the theatre and return of the lease to the Council had 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 Council had approved revenue costs for ensuring the site met all annual safety requirements and had set aside capital budgets to undertake works including a full roof replacement and other internal works that should prepare the theatre for reopening in the future.
- **Crematorium/Cremators** – There was a risk that there might 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 was expected that these changes might come into place in 2 to 3 years' time and there would be a significant capital cost for works to ensure compliance. The parks team were currently investigating this further and would inform Cabinet of the requirements as soon as the information was available. Cabinet had put £350,000 into reserves to date to be used for this purpose, and a further contribution of £150,000 was included in the budget for 2025/26.
- **Food Waste Collections** – From April 2026 the Council would have to provide a food waste collection for residents. A grant had been received from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to be used towards the capital costs of implementing the new collection (e.g. purchasing new vehicles, bins and food caddies) and procurement had been undertaken to provide the capital resources. The Council had received advice from Central Government indicating that there would be no separately identifiable new burdens funding to support the cost of providing the revenue costs of food waste collection. As such this would place additional pressure on the Council's revenue budget for 2026/27 of circa £300,000.

- **Hyndburn Leisure** – The Council had set aside funding within its Medium-Term financial strategy to provide financial assistance / subsidy to Hyndburn Leisure. This funding was part of an agreed process for reporting and monitoring and linked to an efficiency savings plan with the trust to reduce this subsidy in future financial years. The budget subsidy approved in the Medium-Term Financial strategy was £700,000 in 2025/2026, £500,000 in 2026/2027 and £350,000 in 2027/2028. Prior to payment of any subsidy the Council would first have to complete a Subsidy Compliance Assessment. This had been taken to Cabinet on 3rd December 2025, which had subsequently approved payment of £700,000 in 2025/26.
- **Housing Benefit Supported / Exempt Accommodation** – The Council continued to feel pressures from unrecoverable benefit payments although it was expected to be managed in 2025/2026 within the overall revenue budget. The Council had started to take action to try to reduce these costs through introducing planning restrictions and supporting housing regulation although this did not have an immediate effect and without additional support from the Government this would continue to be a pressure for most councils nationally.

These pressures/risks might need to be considered over the course of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy against the forecast underspend for the year

There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons

Resolved

- (1) **That the Cabinet notes the financial position of the Revenue Budget at Q3 of the 2025/26 financial year, as shown in Section 3 of the report.**
- (2) **That the Cabinet notes the financial pressures and risks facing the Council as at the end of December 2025, as shown in Section 5 of the report, and considers the potential longer-term impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26 to 2027/28.**

281 Capital Programme Monitoring 2025/26 - 3rd Quarter Update to 31st December 2025

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, providing an update on the delivery and financial performance of the capital programme as at Quarter 3 (Q3) of 2025/26, highlighting progress against budget, identifying any variances, risks or slippage, and forecasting the expected outturn. Overall, the report supported effective decision-making, ensured transparency and accountability, and informed any necessary adjustments to project timelines, funding allocations, or future financial planning.

The Leader of the Council introduced this report on behalf of Councillor Alexander. Councillor Dad highlighted the amounts of new additions to the programme at the start of the year, items carried forward from the previous year and new authorisations in year forming the final scheme approvals of £56.351m. He also outlined the slippage into future

years and forecast spend in-year as a percentage of the capital budget for 2025/26 (72.7%). In addition, he drew members attention to the sources of funding, as well as risks around the shortfall in capital receipts and from potential areas of spending not currently contained within the capital programme. The programme was central to the Council's need to maintain and develop its assets and its ambition to achieve key corporate objectives for the benefit of local residents.

Councillor Khan made the following observations and asked various questions as follows:

- Appendix 3 of the report set out slippage into future years, for example expenditure on Wilsons Playing Fields Drainage, Hyndburn Leisure Centre Efficiencies and the Market Hall development. Was this linked to a lack of staff capacity, expertise or delays affecting delivery of the project? The Conservative Group had proposed additional project staff during the last Budget process.
- In connection with Paragraph 5.2 of the report, on the Levelling Up Town Centre projects, what was the 'challenge referred to?

Councillor Dad responded that the Council's organisational review had sought to introduce more streamlined systems and structures. In general, all capital programmes gave rise to an element of slippage. However, the planned projects would all be completed in due course. The employment of additional staff would not provide a solution to slippage of the type identified. The controlling group would make additional staff available where this was necessary to support service delivery. Overall, he was confident that the programmed projects would be successfully delivered. Regarding the Levelling Up Town Centre projects, the finish date for the Market Hall would still be in 2026, but there had been a need to reconsider the facility's operator.

Councillor Pritchard added that a new operator for the Market Hall had now been identified. The initial preferred operator had parted company with the Council amicably, in part, due to insufficient funding being available to carry out the proposals as originally envisaged. Other delays had been caused by the discovery of further asbestos on site. The Council was currently seeking additional stall holders for the development and the majority of stall holders in the temporary cabins were expected to return to the Market Hall. She offered to arrange a site visit if Councillor Khan so wished. The project had been a 'challenge' and progress had been slower than the Council would have liked. However, the renovation of old buildings could often throw up unexpected complications.

Councillor Khan raised the following additional matters:

- Was an update available regarding project delivery and expenditure in Year 1 concerning the £20m Pride in Place Funding?
- He noted that, at Paragraph 5.9 of the report, the Huncoat Garden Village development was being supported by consultants. His understanding was that the controlling group had previously disapproved of the use of consultants for projects. He speculated as to whether the cost of using consultants had risen in recent years.

Councillor Dad responded that the Pride of Place Impact Fund referred to in the report was, in fact, the £1.5m offered to targeted councils across England, Scotland and Wales. This was a two year programme with £750k being allocated in each of the years 2025/26 and 2026/27. The schemes brought forward would complement those being developed by the Accrington Neighbourhoods Board from the £20m grant.

On the matter of consultants, Councillor Dad indicated that the controlling group was against engaging them unnecessarily, but inevitably there were times when the Council

needed a particular expertise which could not be provided in-house. He did not have any information to hand about whether the cost of using consultants had risen or fallen.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

2025/26 Capital Budget

The Capital Budget for 2025/26 was year one of the Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28. At the Council meeting on 27th February 2025, Members had approved a capital budget for 2025/26 of £2.726m.

A further £23.236m had been added to this budget from rephased capital projects carried forward from 2024/25. Of this, £19.370m related to major projects, such as the Levelling Up funded schemes for Accrington town centre and Leisure Estate Investment programme.

Ad hoc budget adjustments had reduced the Capital programme by £0.157m, of which, £0.178m had been removed from the Capital Programme relating to a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding adjustment. A further £0.021m of capital receipts funding had been added, which had been brought forward from 2024/25.

Approval had been received at Q1 to add a further £29.780m to the capital programme, of which, £29.187m was for the scheme at Huncoat Garden Village (HGV), which was fully funded from external grants. £0.500m related to the addition of solar panels at Market Hall, which was funded from reserves. £0.094m related to several smaller projects.

Approval had been received at Q2 to add a further £0.681m to the capital programme, of which, £0.128m was for the scheme at Wilsons Playing Fields, £0.250m related to the Market Development Works, £0.120m related to Mercer Hall Repurposing and £0.183m related to several smaller projects. These were funded from earmarked reserves.

This report requested a further £0.084m to be added to the Capital Programme at Q3. £0.111m related to further development work spend at the market which would be funded from earmarked reserves. There was also an offset (£0.027m) relating to lower spend on playground improvements.

Details of all in-year budget adjustments could be found in Appendix 1 of the report.

Several projects had been identified to be rephased into future years of the Capital Programme, which totalled £26.310m, of which, Huncoat Garden Village was £26.076m.

Therefore, the Capital Budget for 2025/26 now totalled £30.041m, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Capital Budget 2025/26 Reconciliation

Capital Budget 2025/26	Amounts
	£'000
Budget Approvals (Council Feb-25)	2,726
Slippage b/f from 2024-25	23,236
Budget Adjustments in Year	-157
Schemes Approved in Year (QTR1)	29,780
Schemes Approved in Year (QTR2)	681
Schemes Recommended for Approval (QTR3)	84
Proposed Capital Programme 2025-28	56,351
Less Approved Slippage into Future Years	-26,310
Proposed Capital Budget 2025-26	30,041

A more detailed set of tables showing movements by service area were provided at Appendix 2 of the report.

The proposed financing of the Capital Budget of £30,041m for 2025/26 was shown as a pie chart (Chart 1) in the report.

Following all budget adjustments, as detailed above, this had resulted in a proposed revised Capital Programme of £56.351m, which could be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Capital Programme Budgets by Service Area:

Programme Area - Budgets	Proposed Capital Budget 2025/26	Proposed Capital Budget 2026/27	Proposed Capital Budget 2027/28	Proposed Capital Programme
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Community Projects	728	0	0	728
Housing Improvement Programme	1,769	0	0	1,769
Huncoat Garden Village	3,110	22,261	3,815	29,186
IT Projects	527	0	0	527
Leisure Estate Investment	6,921	0	0	6,921
Levelling Up Town Centre	13,460	0	0	13,460
Operational Buildings	1,156	234	0	1,390
Parks & Open Spaces	1,216	0	0	1,216
Planned Asset Improvements	217	0	0	217
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	255	0	0	255
Vehicles & Equipment	683	0	0	683
Total Approved Capital Spend Budgets	30,041	22,495	3,815	56,351

As shown above, £22.495m had been rephased to 2026/27 and £3.815m to 2027/28, reflecting the forecasted expenditure in those years.

The proposed financing of the Capital Programme of £56.351m for 2025/26 – 2027/28 was shown as a pie chart (Chart 2) in the report.

2025/26 Capital Budget – Q3 Forecast Outturn

As of 31st December 2025, actual and committed expenditure totalled £18.995m, representing 63.23% of the rephased 2025/26 budget of £30.041m. Table 3 below showed the committed expenditure and forecasted outturn by service area.

Table 3 - 2025/26 Capital Budget – Q3 Forecast Outturn:

Programme Area - Budgets	Proposed Capital Budget 2025/26	Actuals & Commitments - Q3	Forecast Outturn - Q3	Forecast Variance - Q3
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Community Projects	728	325	630	98
Housing Improvement Programme	1,769	1,162	1,619	150
Huncoat Garden Village	3,110	2,836	3,006	105
IT Projects	527	438	524	3
Leisure Estate Investment	6,921	5,859	6,521	400
Levelling Up Town Centre	13,460	7,209	7,209	6,251
Operational Buildings	1,156	92	735	421
Parks & Open Spaces	1,216	614	993	222
Planned Asset Improvements	217	10	100	117
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	255	201	255	0
Vehicles & Equipment	683	251	270	413
Total Approved Capital Spend Budgets	30,041	18,995	21,861	8,180

Further forecast expenditure of £8.180m was anticipated before the end of the financial year, resulting in a total forecast outturn figure of £21.861m. This represented 72.77% of the allocated budget and an underspend of £8.180m against the 2025/26 proposed budget.

Of the £8.180m underspend on the 2025/26 budget, most was due to natural slippage of capital projects, or where projects had not commenced - mainly due to the absence of funding. Subject to Cabinet approval at year end, these projects would be rephased to subsequent years.

The largest area of slippage related to the LUF-funded Market Development Works due to complete July 2026, for which a more detailed cashflow was being developed by the contractor for the final works. While a more detailed cashflow was being developed by the contractor, initial estimates proposed that £6.251m of budget would be slipped into next year.

A further £0.192m of the £8.180m underspend on the 2025/26 budget related to delayed civic theatre refurbishment works and £0.153m slippage in fire safety improvements works.

The Leeds/Liverpool cycle path works £0.195m had slipped till next year. The food waste collection caddies should be received by the year end preventing an underspend.

The capital programme was closely monitored throughout the financial year to ensure spending stayed in line with forecasts and was accurately reflected in the Council's cash flow. Any significant variances would be reviewed, and their financial impact would be factored into future treasury management and budget planning.

A more detailed breakdown of the forecast outturn for 2025/26 was shown in Appendix 3 of the report.

Major Schemes

The Capital Programme included several major schemes that required robust and continuous monitoring to ensure they were delivered on time, within budget, and that all external funding was both secured and claimed promptly. The following had been identified as key major schemes currently requiring close oversight:

- **Levelling Up Town Centre** – The redevelopment of Market Hall, Market Chambers, and Burtons Chambers remained a challenge for the Council. However, enhanced monitoring and management arrangements had ensured that key milestones were being met, with the project progressing on time and within budget.

The programme had a remaining budget of £13.460m. This was funded by £10.617m from the Levelling Up Fund and other grants, the majority of which had already been claimed. The balance of £2.843m would be met from available capital receipts and revenue reserves, ensuring the Council had the necessary resources in place to deliver the scheme as planned.

At the time of writing, the contractor was working with the Council to finalise the spend profile. Nonetheless, the programme remained on track for completion at the end of Q2 of the 2026/27 financial year.

- **Leisure Estate Investment** – Comprised two key projects: the construction of the Cath Thom Leisure Centre and efficiency works at Hyndburn Leisure Centre. The overall programme budget was £6.921m, which included provision for future pitch drainage works.

Construction of the Cath Thom Leisure Centre was now complete, with final accounts and outstanding project costs currently being finalised, with any minor overspends covered by the £0.128m underspend reserve previously approved by Cabinet.

The Hyndburn Leisure Centre efficiency project of £0.767m was expected to underspend by approximately £0.100m which would be slipped into next year. This, along with the £0.300m budget allocated for Wilson Playing Fields pitch drainage works was expected to be slipped into the 2026/27 financial year.

- **Huncoat Garden Village** – Huncoat Garden Village remained a major strategic scheme for the Council, fully funded by a £29.187m grant from Homes England. Forecast expenditure was phased over three financial years, with £3.110m in 2025/26, £22.261m in 2026/27, and £3.816m in 2027/28.

Current activity was focused on progressing key preparatory work, including planning, legal, and land acquisition processes. Consultants were supporting the Council across several workstreams, including the residential relief road design, Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) documentation, landowner negotiations, and overall programme management. These activities were essential to enabling delivery of the scheme in line with the agreed programme.

Funding Risks

Capital Receipts

Capital Receipts and Funding Position - At Q3 2025/26, Grants represented £19.451m, Capital Receipts £4.249m, Reserves £6.291m, s106 and Revenue £0.500m to total £30.041m of capital funding for the programmes of works and projects. The total proposed

capital budget £30.041m was reduced due to proposed slippage of £7,766m into 2026/27. This reduced the need for the full capital receipts this year and brought it down to a need for £0.961m.

2025/26 Forecast - The proposed capital budgets for the next few years were 2025/26 £30.041m, 2026/27 £22.495m and 2027/28 £3.815m. Even though the capital receipt requirement had fallen this year as outlined above for future years the authority still needed £2.053m of new capital receipts to fund the proposed capital budgets.

Future Requirements and Risks - In 2026/27, further capital receipts were required to fund all approved projects. Funding for these future commitments had not yet been identified and excluded any new capital bids submitted for that year. Progress was being made on planned asset disposals to generate the necessary receipts, but delays might require temporary use of reserves or pausing elements of the programme.

Next Steps - Officers would continue to review the Council's operational asset base to identify further disposal opportunities. The funding strategy and associated risks would be monitored closely to ensure the programme remained deliverable and financially sustainable.

This was a high-level risk.

External Grants and Contributions

- **Levelling Up Project (LUF)** – this scheme was primarily funded through a government grant, supplemented by a contribution from Lancashire County Council. A total of £10.617m in grant funding was required to complete the scheme. To date, the Council had received £9.634m, with further claims being submitted on a quarterly basis to help manage cash flow effectively.

To support local authorities, the Government had prepaid certain elements of the grant, easing short-term cash flow pressures.

- **Huncoat Garden Village** – The Council had been awarded a Government grant of £29.187m to support this scheme. Grant claims were submitted monthly, following the incurrance of eligible expenditure, to help manage the Council's cash flow.

To date, the Council had received over £2.0m in grant funding. Homes England had structured the grant to allow for prepayment of certain elements, further supporting local authority cash flow management.

- **Disabled Facilities Grant** – The Council received grant funding from the Better Care Fund via Lancashire County Council, which included £1.360m of funding for 2025/26. All grant funding had been received.
- **Leisure Estate Investment Programme** – The Council had been successful in obtaining external funding of around £2.64m from Sport England. Most of this grant had already been received by the Council, with the final claim recently submitted.

- **Pride of Place Impact Fund** – The Council had been awarded £1.5m through the Pride in Place Impact Fund. As of December 2025, no decisions had been made regarding allocation. Schemes would be developed collaboratively with officers, Cabinet, the local MP, and the community to ensure the funding delivered maximum benefit across the Borough. All funds would have to be spent by 31st March 2027.

This was a low-level risk.

Conclusion

The Capital Programme had grown substantially over the past two financial years and now totalled £56.351m. While approximately 78% of this funding was secured through external grants and contributions, the increased scale and complexity of the programme were placing significant demands on the Council’s staffing and delivery capacity.

To ensure successful delivery within agreed timescales and budgets, it was essential that all projects were strategically planned, adequately resourced, and appropriately phased. Effective programme management and coordination would be critical to maintaining progress and achieving intended outcomes.

The Programme would continue to be carefully monitored, and it might require further revisions in its phasing in the future.

There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet notes the financial position of the Capital Budget at Q3 of the 2025/26 financial year, as shown in Section 4 of the report.**
- (2) That Cabinet approves the in-year addition to the Capital Programme of £0.084m of capital projects, as shown in Appendix 1 of the report.**

282 The Introduction of Food Waste Collections

Members considered a report of Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, updating Cabinet about progress made relating to the introduction of weekly food waste collections to all domestic properties in Hyndburn by 1st April 2026.

Councillor Eaves gave a brief introduction to the report and commented that the roll out of caddies was going well. He was looking forward to the commencement of the pilot scheme for councillors. Councillor Dad added that the Council would keep a close watch on how the new service was performing and any ‘teething problems’ would be addressed quickly.

Councillor Khan welcomed the new service and commented that many councils already collected food waste. He noted that this would be new to the people of Hyndburn and asked whether vulnerable groups such as the elderly would have wrap-around support. Councillor Eaves responded that support was available for those in need and added that the Council would be sensitive to the fact that the system was new to residents. However, most people should adapt quickly.

Councillor Brerton added that, although some sections of the public were against food waste collection, the feedback received locally on social media had been mostly positive. This comment was echoed by Councillor Khan. The Leader was pleased to note that the caddies were now being rolled out to all residents. Councillor Eaves summed up by stating that any negative feedback had been outweighed by the positive comments received and that, overall, the scheme was the right thing to do for the environment.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

Section 57 of the Environment Act 2021 had named food waste as a recyclable waste stream for the first time. It also stated that recyclable household waste which was food waste must be collected at least once per week.

Further guidance from the Government had stated that the provision of food waste collections had to be in place by 1st April 2026 for each local authority in England.

To help facilitate this the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) had provided some funding to help local authorities with the cost of introducing and continuing with food waste collections. There were three tranches of funding: capital funding for the procurement of vehicles and containers, transitional funding to roll out food waste containers and information about collections and revenue funding to pay for the future costs of food waste collections.

To date Defra had provided local authorities with the capital funding and the transitional funding. The revenue element had been included in the financial settlement for the financial years 2026/27 and beyond.

Lancashire County Council, as waste disposal authority, had informed district councils that they intended to process food waste via anaerobic digestion rather than in-vessel composting. As such, food waste could not be mixed with green waste and would have to be collected separately. This would mean each household would need a kitchen caddie for food waste collection and a kerb side caddie to facilitate the collection of food waste by Waste Services collection crews.

The Council (as collection authority) would provide a kitchen caddie and kerb side caddie to each household in the Borough. In addition, the Council would provide each household with a roll of food waste bags to line the kitchen caddie, as lining the kitchen caddie with a food waste bag made recycling food waste more convenient as well as more hygienic for the resident.

The Council would deliver a kitchen caddie, kerbside caddie, roll of food waste bags and a calendar/information leaflet to each household in the Borough during January and February 2026. Food waste collections would then start on 1st April 2026.

To facilitate the collection of food waste the Council had ordered some new collection vehicles. These new vehicles would allow the Council to collect food waste at the same time as collecting waste and recycling from residents. As food waste had to be collected each week, this meant food waste would be put out for collection at the same time and on the same day as residents' wheelie bin collection for that week (whether it be grey, brown or blue wheelie bin).

As stated in Paragraph 3.5 of the report, Lancashire County Council as disposal authority had advised that the disposal method for food waste was via anaerobic digestion (AD) units. For AD units to work properly part of the process required food waste bags to be removed before the food waste went into the AD plant. As such bio-degradable bags were not necessary and the Council had purchased recycled plastic food waste bags instead.

Alternative Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection

Not to introduce food waste collections on 1st April 2026. This had been rejected because it was a legal requirement set out in the Environment Act 2021 and on average 25% of grey bin waste was food waste, so recycling food waste reduced the amount of non-recyclable waste going to landfill or being incinerated.

Resolved - **That Cabinet notes the report on the introduction of food waste collections.**

283 Fixed Penalty Notice Charges

Members considered a report of Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, seeking approval to increase the fines for breaching section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (fly tipping on public land) and for breaching section 46(1), (3)(c), or (d), or (4) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (not using the correct waste receptacles when disposing of waste which was a section 46 requirement)

Councillor Eaves gave a brief introduction to the report noting that the proposals had taken some 12 months to finalise and outlining the increases to the fines for the different types of breaches indicated.

Councillor Munsif Dad welcomed the proposals. Councillor Pritchard spoke about the impacts of fly tipping on certain wards and noted that despite the best efforts of the Waste Services Team to clean up after these incidents, illegally dumped litter reappeared on almost a daily basis. Councillor Fisher also welcomed the new charges and enquired about how the changes were being communicated to the public. Councillor Eaves responded that he would work with the Council's Communications Manager to provide some appropriate publicity. Members noted that there had been a short feature on the BBC regional news yesterday, which had highlighted increased penalties in both Hyndburn and Sefton Councils.

Councillor Zak Khan confirmed his support for penalising offenders and for publicising the increased fines in order to deter potential offenders. However, he was concerned that criminals would find a way to circumvent these measures. Before issuing fixed penalty notices, first the Council would need to collect sufficient evidence. He agreed that the Waste Services Team did a good job, but asked if more support could be made available, for example:

- There were only 2 enforcement officers for the Borough. Should additional staffing be provided?
- Where did the fines income go and could this be used in a way which deterred further fly tipping?
- As noted at Minute 280 above, Waste Service currently had a £61k underspend. Hyndburn residents might prefer this to be spent. Could this be utilised to deter fly tipping?

Councillor Eaves responded that the controlling administration would continue to consider a wide range of options to deter fly tipping. He had already looked into the possible employment of another enforcement officer, but recruitment was likely to be problematic due to uncertainties around local government reorganisation. The Leader of the Council confirmed that any income received from fines would be invested back into the Waste Services Team.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

Hyndburn Borough Council had for many years had a proactive approach to the waste and recycling collection service provided to Borough residents.

Recycling was important because it conserved natural resources, saved energy, reduced pollution and reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill or incinerated.

The Council's Waste Services Team was the most efficient district Council in Lancashire for the collection of dry recyclate (glass, cans, plastic, paper and cardboard) having a 26% recycling rate for those items.

In addition to collecting glass, cans, plastic, paper and cardboard directly from residents, the Council also collected green waste, batteries and textiles. On 1st April 2026 the Council would start to collect food waste directly from residents adding another recycling stream.

Hyndburn also had a free bulky waste collection service whereby residents either rang the Council to book a collection or booked online. The Council would collect bulky waste items directly from residents' properties and collected items such as sofas, arm chairs, mattresses, fridges, freezers, electrical items, metal items and wooden items. They were collected because bulky waste items could be recycled to differing degrees.

During financial year 2024/25 Waste Services had handled 9,346 bulky waste jobs and collected 16,889 bulky waste items for free directly from residents' properties. However, despite the bulky waste service being available during the same period (i.e. from April 2024 to March 2025) there had been 2,631 reported incidents of fly tipping in Hyndburn. While this number had been a 10% reduction of incidents from the previous year, it was still too many.

The 2,631 incidents varied from single black bags to loads tipped off a vehicle. However, in general there were two main types of fly tipping in the Borough. Firstly, dumped items or black bags full of waste being left in back streets, and secondly fly tipped loads tipped off the back of vehicles.

Waste enforcement staff went out on a daily basis to deal with fly tipping and waste items being dumped in black bags. During the financial year 2024/25 waste enforcement staff had issued 1,159 advice notices, 512 targeted letters, 292 warning letters and issued 87 Fixed Penalty Notices. The current level of fixed penalty notice (FPN) issued in Hyndburn was £75 for a breach of a section 46 requirement of the EPA 1990 (typically leaving waste out in black bags as opposed to using the correct waste receptacles) and £400 for breach of section 33 (1)(a) of the EPA 1990 (larger fly tipping incidents).

However, despite each household having waste and recycling bins which were collected regularly and a free bulky waste collection service which would collect waste directly from

residents' properties there were still a significant number of fly tipping incidents in the Borough. It was believed that the level of FPN was inadequate to act as a deterrent to stop people from not adhering to the law.

The Council had some discretion as to what level the FPN was set at and since 1990 when the EPA was first introduced the upper level of fine had increased. It was therefore proposed that the Council increased its current level for FPNs as follows:

- (i) That for breaching a section 46 requirement of the EPA 1990 the FPN value be increased to £80 per incident (the maximum amount allowed);
- (ii) That for breaching section 33 (1)(a) of the EPA 1990 the FPN value be increased to £1,000 per incident (the maximum amount allowed)

Alternative Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection

To leave the FPN value at their current levels. This was not recommended as the current levels were not acting as a deterrent to stop people fly tipping or dumping waste in black bags.

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet notes the report.**
- (2) That Cabinet increases the fines for breaches of section 33(1)(a) and section 46 requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) as set out in Paragraph 3.10 of the report.**

284 Equality and Diversity Strategy 2026-30

Members considered a report of Councillor Ethan Rawcliffe, Portfolio Holder for People and Communities, seeking approval for the adoption of the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2026-2030.

In the absence of Councillor Rawcliffe, Councillor Kimberley Whitehead, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport, gave a brief introduction to the report. She noted that the strategy had last been reviewed in 2020 and that there was now an opportunity to update elements of the document, particularly in the light of data from the 2011 Census. The strategy provided a framework for decision making and would embed equality across the evaluation of major projects and day to day services. The strategy was not just about legal compliance, but was about the Council being fair and effective.

Members welcomed the strategy. Councillor Fisher spoke of her experience of a close family member with ADHD who was often labelled as 'naughty' during her childhood. Hyndburn's strategy would recognise such neurodivergence. Councillor Dad highlighted the Council's recognition and adoption of definitions for antisemitism and islamophobia, noted at Section 3.5 of the strategy.

Councillor Khan commented that the strategy was a core document, but had been in need of an update as Hyndburn's demography had changed over time. In particular, he noted the 5% increase in the ethnic minority population and the better understanding of disability leading to increasing numbers of residents and staff identifying themselves as having a disability. However, he did express some scepticism about impact of the strategy alone. The Actions set out at Section 9 of the strategy tended to focus on monitoring and training. He expressed a desire to understand what outcomes would be achieved, such as what the

document might mean in practice for someone who was disabled, or gay, or from the ethnic minority population and whether community cohesion be enhanced. Overall, he believed that the Borough was harmonious, as had been evident following the stabbings and deaths in Southport in July 2024.

Councillor Pritchard also noted the increasing numbers of residents with a disability and commented that disability covered a wide range of conditions. There were many disabled people in work. The Borough had a good record of cohesion and inclusivity, but sometimes it was difficult for neurodivergent individuals to feel included. She welcomed the revised strategy and the Council's track record on equality and diversity.

Councillor Whitehead added that the strategy was not a comprehensive list of all the work taking place around inclusivity. It was part of many other Council strategies and was embedded in other activities too. The wider outcomes were reported to overview and scrutiny. She agreed that no strategy should be produced just for the sake of it, but should lead to real outcomes.

The Leader of the Council summed up by noting that there would be challenges within the Borough from time to time. The incident in Southport had tested community cohesion nationally and locally. In Hyndburn, diverse groups had come together to maintain good relationships. The Council had a proactive approach to equality and diversity and Hyndburn was a cohesive community.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The Council's previous Equality and Diversity Strategy had covered the period 2020-2025. This new strategy updated the authority's approach for 2026-2030 and reflected significant changes in both the local context and the legislative landscape.

The strategy was underpinned by comprehensive 2021 Census data, which provided an up-to-date picture of Hyndburn's diverse communities. Key demographic changes since the 2011 Census included:

- Population growth to 82,234 residents;
- Increase in ethnic minority population from 12.3% to 17.3%;
- Significant increase in residents aged 65+ from 12,809 to 15,006;
- 20.8% of residents were disabled under the Equality Act.

The strategy incorporated recent legislative developments including the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, which had come into force in October 2024 and placed enhanced duties on employers to prevent sexual harassment, and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

New content in this strategy included recognition of neurodiversity and neurodivergence, reflecting growing understanding of conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia. The strategy also addressed contemporary challenges including digital exclusion, the ongoing impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on residents with protected characteristics, and the need to embed equality considerations in major regeneration projects.

The strategy maintained the Council's established approach of using Customer First Analyses (the authority's equality impact assessment process) to ensure equality

considerations were embedded in decision-making. It set out specific actions covering areas including workforce monitoring, training, accessibility, hate crime awareness, support for refugees and asylum seekers, and monitoring of service delivery.

The Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 required the Council to have due regard to eliminating prohibited conduct, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people who shared protected characteristics and those who did not. This strategy demonstrated how the Council would meet these duties across all its functions including employment, service delivery, budget setting, procurement and regulatory activities.

Alternative Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection

The Council could choose not to adopt a refreshed strategy and continue operating under the 2020-2025 strategy. This option was rejected as the previous strategy was now out of date. Failing to update the authority's strategy would not demonstrate its commitment to equality and diversity or support effective compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- Resolved**
- **That Cabinet approves the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2026-2030 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed

CABINET

Wednesday, 18th February, 2026

Present: Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP (in the Chair), Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Scott Brerton, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher and Clare Pritchard

In Attendance: Councillors Danny Cassidy, David Heap and Zak Khan

Apologies: Councillor Ethan Rawcliffe

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Munsif Dad, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that this was the first meeting of Cabinet since the passing of Councillor Marlene Haworth and reflected that she would be foremost in the thoughts and prayers of those present today. The Leader mentioned how she had made her mark on both the people and the work of the Council and that she would be sadly missed. She would be remembered by all and would be formally recognised by the Council shortly by the award of a suitable honour. On behalf of the Cabinet, he expressed condolences to Marlene's husband, family and friends and to members of the Conservative Group. He anticipated that many friends and councillor colleagues would wish to attend her funeral in the next week or so. He would speak further about Councillor Haworth's legacy at the next Council meeting.

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

Councillor Khan thanked the Leader for his kind words. He too intended to speak further at the Council meeting on 26th February 2026. He provided a brief update on the circumstances of Marlene's death. Her death would be registered shortly and both he and Councillor Cassidy were supporting her husband, Jim, throughout this difficult period and would be making the funeral arrangements soon. These were likely to be in the next week or two and should be at time that would enable the attendance of councillors and Council staff, if they so wished. He added that Jim had received lots of cards and love and was greatly appreciative. Councillor Khan also expressed his thanks to the wider Labour Group for their support.

Other members present indicated that they would speak at the next Council meeting.

300 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Ethan Rawcliffe.

301 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations made on this occasion.

302 Minutes of Cabinet

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st January 2026 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

In respect on Minutes 277 - Local Elections 2026, Councillor Khan noted that the Government had announced that it would no longer postpone local elections in those areas subject to Local Government Review as previously identified. He asked what additional costs there would be to the Council due to this decision. The Leader confirmed that no additional costs would fall to the Council beyond what had already been budgeted for to run elections. The due diligence of staff had ensured that preparation work for the local elections had continued without incurring unnecessary costs, so to the elections could go ahead if necessary. More details would be announced under Agenda Item 8. Councillor Khan expressed the view that £63m would be wasted by the Government following their announcement of new capacity funding across the affected local councils. The Leader responded that this money was not 'wasted' but would help those councils to best deliver Local Government Reorganisation. Hyndburn would receive its share of this funding and an announcement on this was due to be made under a later Agenda item.

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

303 Reports of Cabinet Members

Leader of the Council

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP reported on the following:

Lancashire County Council - Levelling Up Schemes

Some £50m of Levelling Up Funding had been announced by Lancashire County Council (LCC) last year. The Leader had met recently with LCC officers to discuss projects in Hyndburn. These would be focused on two themes:

- Safer, Greener and Healthier Streets (SGHS); and
- Public Transport Improvements.

The first theme would include projects in two areas, as follows:

- Woodnook;
- Countess Street, Accrington.

The Leader provided further details about the above projects

The second theme would deliver projects in relation to bus services Nos, 9, 464, M1 and X41, including the following:

- Real time passenger information;
- Upgraded traffic signal technology; and
- Accessibility improvements at bus stops.

East Lancashire Health Centres Renovation and Reconfiguration

Three health centres in East Lancashire would benefit from major investment projects during 2026. Funding from the Department of Health and Social Care, totalling around £8 million, was being utilised to improve and refurbish Barbara Castle Way Health Centre in

Blackburn, St Peter's Centre in Burnley and Acorn Primary Health Care Centre in Accrington.

The investment supported the ambitions of the Government's 10-year Plan for the NHS, to create health centres that would provide more services to meet the needs of their local communities.

In respect of the Acorn Primary Health Care Centre project, following the emergency closure of Accrington Victoria Hospital, there was an opportunity to improve and increase utilisation of the Acorn site.

The main entrance/atrium area on the upper ground floor would be reconfigured to accommodate a range of hospital services enabling greater integration with the current primary care services.

The funding would go towards the establishment of a 'Health Hub' which would include two new X-Ray rooms, a six-bay Minor Injuries Unit, a triage and plaster room, new reception and waiting areas, additional primary care rooms and more clinical spaces.

The project had already enabled two further GP practices to relocate into the Acorn building bringing the total number of GP practices operating from this site to four.

This phased reconfiguration and transfer was expected to be completed in 20 weeks.

Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre

Ross Lee Construction had been engaged to undertake roofing works at the Civic Theatre, in Oswaldtwistle, with effect from 27th February 2026. The work would take approximately 27 weeks and was scheduled to end on 16th October 2026.

The Council was continuing to explore the potential for community use of the building, to take effect as soon as possible. It might be possible to use the ground floor while works were ongoing to make the upper floor and roof structurally sound. The Council had already secured significant grant funding from Theatres in Trust for this facility and was committed to supporting the Theatre's long-term use.

Councillor Melissa Fisher added that the Council wanted the venue to have a vibrant future.

Religious Observance

Today was significant as it marked the first day of both Ramadan and Lent.

Ramadan was one of the holiest months of the year for Muslims. It comprised a month of prayer, fasting, reflection, spiritual growth, community spirit and commemoration of the Koran.

Lent was a period of 40 days (excluding Sundays) which was symbolic of Jesus fasting in the wilderness. It provided a time for reflection, fasting, prayer, and charity, observed by Christians in preparation for Easter.

Both religious observances were opportunities for communities to work together. Last year, Muslims had celebrated 4 large scale Iftar events (the breaking of the fast) at mosques and at Accrington Stanley Football Club. These types of events were well attended. The Leader expressed his hope of another successful year in bringing communities together.

Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration

Councillor Melissa Fisher reported on the following:

Hyndburn Leisure Trust and Huncoat Garden Village

Reports on both the Hyndburn Leisure Trust and Huncoat Garden Village were proposed to be taken to the meeting of Cabinet on 18th March 2026.

Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Councillor Stewart Eaves reported on the following:

Food Waste Collections

Some 35,000 food waste caddies had now been delivered to households across Hyndburn, with only sheltered accommodation, flats and farms yet to receive their vessels. Members were reminded that the collection service would commence on 1st April 2026 in line with the Government guidance and legislation.

Hyndburn Borough Council's Parks Team - 'Best of the Best' Award

Members were reminded that Hyndburn Borough Council's Parks Team had been named 'Best of the Best' at the annual Green Flag Awards. A local presentation to the Team had recently been arranged by the Council at the Coach House, in Rhyddings Park, Oswaldtwistle, to congratulate staff on their achievement.

Oak Hill Park Bowling Greens

Erection of the fence around Oak Hill Park Bowling Greens, Accrington, was now underway and this should be completed in time for the start of the bowling season. This would provide a safe and secure environment for the bowling club.

Mercer Park Bowling Greens

Consideration was now being given to fencing, similar to the above, being installed at the bowling green in Mercer Park, Clayton -le-Moors. The Leader commented that fencing was indeed required at this location. Councillor Fisher added that a representative of the bowling club had been calling for this work to be done for years. The sport helped to tackle mental health and social isolation issues in the community. This site had been subject to vandalism on numerous occasions and there had been fires set in the park only this week. The fencing news was welcomed by both the club and Councillor Fisher.

Gatty Park Play Area Refurbishment

The play area at Gatty Park, Church, was due to be fully refurbished. The site was well used and the injection of funding would ensure provision of a quality play area. The Leader noted that there had been some confusion previously about the extent of the improvements planned, which he had challenged at that time. He was pleased to note that a full refurbishment was being proposed.

Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport

Councillor Kimberley Whitehead reported on the following:

Lydia Becker, Botanist, Astronomer and Suffragist

The Council had secured some Government heritage funding to tell the story of Lydia Becker (1827–1890), who had spent her childhood at Moorside House, in Altham. Ms Becker was a notable scientist and suffragist. The Council had worked with local school children to tell her story and a competition had been arranged. The winning school, Altham St James CE Primary School had won a trip to London and a visit to the Pankhurst Museum, in Manchester. The other participants Huncoat Primary School would also visit the Pankhurst Museum and Mount Pleasant Primary School would be treated to a day out at a special Lydia Becker exhibition in the Dome, Accrington, as well as a visit to the Town Hall.

Workshops would be held at the Dome as part of the Lydia Becker exhibition due to run over a 6 week period from 20th February, every Friday and Saturday from 10am-2pm, until 28th March 2026. The exhibition would be free to attend.

Portfolio Holder for Business, Growth and Sustainability

Councillor Scott Brerton reported on the following:

Hyndburn Jobs Fair

The Hyndburn Jobs Fair had been held last week and had been a great success. Footfall had been high, although exact figures were not currently available, but would be provided soon. Councillor Brerton placed on record his thanks to all of the businesses that had attended and to the event organisers, as well as the Council's Economic Development Team. There were lots of positive messages to take from the event, which was also a celebration of locally based businesses. The number of job vacancies on offer and number of growing businesses were good indicators of the health of the local economy.

Councillor Khan made comments and/or asked questions, as summarised below:

- Regarding the LCC Levelling Up SGHS projects, he noted that these were concentrated on only two areas and asked if there were more borough-wide projects planned – *Response:* The Leader responded that the £50m allocated across east Lancashire would include £5m for Hyndburn. The projects had already been identified based on extensive consultations, so could not be reallocated. Further information was available on the LCC website. As a resident of the ward which would benefit most from the funding, the Leader confirmed that he was happy with the selection process and schemes identified. There were some projects which had not appeared in the final list of scheme selection and this matter had been raised with the County Council. It was hoped that a reply would be received in the next few weeks.
- The Hyndburn Jobs Fair was good news, but he would wish to see more detailed statistics about how many job seekers successfully gained employment as a result of event and what other outcomes had been achieved – *Response:* Councillor Brerton confirmed that the statistics would be available, although these would not necessarily track each individual attendee at the event. It was worth noting that not all attendees were unemployed job seekers – many were apprentices or people already in work looking for new opportunities. Overall, Hyndburn was outperforming

the rest of the UK in new business creation and was not in the highest quartile for business closures.

304 Biodiversity Duty Report

The Cabinet considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, on the Council's biodiversity duty.

The Leader provided a brief introduction to the report, highlighting The Environment Act 2021, which had introduced a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' requiring all public authorities in England to consider what they could do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Local authorities and local planning authorities were required to publish a biodiversity report which set out how they would comply with this duty and the actions they could take. Thereafter, authorities would have to publish an updated report within 5 years of the end date of the previous reporting period.

The Act had also introduced a mandatory requirement for a minimum of 10% 'Biodiversity Net Gain' (BNG) from major developments. The report included details of the authority's approach to the BNG.

Councillor Zak Khan considered that the work done so far was a good news story for the Council. He would be keen to see further publicity about how the Council was continuing to protect its green spaces and what positive impacts had been achieved in the light of the environmental duties now in place. The Leader responded that the updated Local Plan was expected to be adopted during the summer. It might be appropriate to ask the Head of Planning and Transportation for further details about Biodiversity at that time. Councillor Kimberley Whitehead commented that the proposed Budget for 2026/27 included funding for on-going improvements at the Brookside (Bury Meadows) Restoration Project and the Bullough Park Project. The Council was striving to secure investment for the future.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The Council had a statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats and species) as set by the Environment Act 2021 and the amended Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). This was known as 'the biodiversity duty'.

A key effect of the Environment Act was to amend s.40 of the NERC Act from a duty to 'conserve' to a requirement to both 'conserve' and 'enhance', with the aim to provide for the enhancement or improvement of biodiversity, not just its maintenance in its current state.

To comply with the Biodiversity Duty the Council as a public authority, had to

- Consider what it could do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on its consideration;
- Act to deliver its policies and achieve its objectives; and
- Report on its biodiversity duty actions.

Government guidance provided advice on complying with the duty and reporting on this compliance. The end date of the first reporting period was stated as 'no later than 1st January 2026'.

The Council had to publish a Biodiversity Duty Report within 12 weeks of the period's end to inform progress on actions taken. Therefore, for a reporting period ending 1st January 2026, the publication deadline was 26th March 2026.

The end date of subsequent reporting periods should be no later than 5 years after the end of the previous reporting period i.e. the next reporting window will close no later than 1st January 2031.

By law, the report had to include:

- a summary of the action the Council had taken to comply with the biodiversity duty;
- how the Council planned to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period; and
- any other information the Council considered appropriate.

Reports from local planning authorities also had to include the following biodiversity net gain (BNG) information:

- the actions the Council had taken to meet BNG obligations;
- details of BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans the Council had approved; and
- how the Council planned to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period.

The Biodiversity Duty Report, which was included in the report as Appendix 1, had followed advice provided by Defra to define its structure and content.

The Biodiversity Duty Report summarised the actions the Council had taken to comply with the biodiversity duty and demonstrated that the Council had existing policy, strategy and practices that met this duty.

Examples included:

- The Council's Corporate Strategy had prioritised making the Council's activities and operations Net Zero by 2030 and promoted making the most of the natural environment through enhancement of habitats, positive land management and partnership working.
- The Council's Development Plan, comprising the Hyndburn Core Strategy (2012), Development Management DPD (2018), Accrington Area Action Plan and emerging Local Plan 2040, contained policies that sought to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Undertaking of woodland planting initiatives on Council owned and privately owned land in the Borough.
- Positive management of existing nature reserves and woodlands (e.g. Brookside (Bury Meadows) and Bullough Park).
- Implementation of differential mowing regimes in the Council's parks, with areas left to rewild and work scheduled to remove dead, dying, diseased or otherwise dangerous trees and their replacement on Council owned land.

Separate to the Biodiversity Duty, The Environment Act had introduced a mandatory requirement for a minimum of 10% 'Biodiversity Net Gain' (BNG) from major development sites from 12th February 2024 and for small sites from 2nd April 2024 (amended from November 2023). This required new developments to leave the natural environment in a better state than beforehand. Developers had to deliver a minimum 10% increase in

biodiversity value compared to the pre-development habitat, aiming to enhance ecological connectivity and create habitats.

BNG was measured using Defra's biodiversity metric and was managed and secured through the planning process. Officers had worked and would continue to work constructively with developers to ensure that developments avoided the most harmful impacts, ensure that unavoidable harm was adequately mitigated, and that on-site biodiversity was integrated and enhanced as part of good design principles.

Aligned with the Biodiversity Duty and Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, the Council had completed Biodiversity Baseline Assessments for all sites allocated for development within the emerging Local Plan 2040 which would cover the period 2021 to 2040. The Local Plan allocated land for housing and employment development in the Borough to meet identified needs. In summary, the assessments identified that:

- Based on the loss of all existing habitats on each site, development of the six employment sites would result in a loss of 442.21 habitat units and 13.04 hedgerow units.
- Based on the loss of all existing habitats on each site, development of the five gypsy and traveller sites would result in a loss of 11.51 habitat units and 0.35 hedgerow units.
- Development of the nineteen housing sites would result in the loss of 782.81 habitat units and 19.82 hedgerow units.

This indicative habitat baseline provided an opportunity for the Council to predict the 'worst case' scenario loss of biodiversity due to development up to 2040. The Council was then able to estimate the amount of 'habitat gain sites' that might be required within the Borough to offset the estimated biodiversity net loss.

A habitat gain site (or Biodiversity Gain Site) was a designated area of land, registered with Natural England, specifically developed or enhanced to create a measurable increase in biodiversity value. These sites, often secured for at least 30 years via legal agreements (e.g. s106 or conservation covenants), provided "biodiversity units" to compensate for habitat loss elsewhere.

In the event that developments (or developers) were unable to achieve the required 10% Biodiversity Gain Site on-site (or off-site on their own land), landowners, including the Council, could register their land as 'habitat gain sites' where the resultant biodiversity units could be sold to developers or other entities needing to compensate for habitat loss on their development sites.

The Council had considered its own land assets, with a view to creating local habitat gain sites. The Council had assessed 29 Council-owned sites, and completed 29 Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans, one for each site.

In summary, the total number of baseline habitat units was 2,256.54 and 5.68 hedgerow units. Habitat creation and enhancement over a 30-year period could result in an increase of 718.62 habitat units and 9.32 hedgerow units.

Further work was ongoing to investigate the potential to register Council-owned habitat gain sites, although the mechanism to register sites was complex and the demand for biodiversity units had first to be established.

There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons.

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the Biodiversity Duty Report for publication in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Act 2021.**
- (2) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Planning and Transportation to make minor amendments to the Council's Biodiversity Duty Report in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.**

305 Market Trader Rent/Licence Fee Concessions

Members considered a report of Councillor Clare Pritchard, Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Town Centres, seeking approval to continuing the support for market traders decanted into the temporary cabins on the market square through licence fee concessions and continuing the support provided to the Official Accrington Stanley Supporters Trust (OASST).

Councillor Clare Pritchard provided a brief introduction to this report, highlighting that, while construction was still underway at the Market Hall and in the light of competition from on-line shopping, the Council would continue to provide financial support to the decanted market traders and OASST. Councillors Kimberley Whitehead, Scott Brerton, Melissa Fisher and Zak Khan all spoke in favour of this course of action.

Councillor Khan queried whether the revenue costs of delays to the Market Hall project were sufficiently transparent. The Leader considered that the Council had been very open about this matter, even in the face of some criticism. The Market Hall should be completed by the end of the year and the Council wanted the traders to be on a sound financial footing should they chose to return indoors. Councillor Pritchard commented that the traders were fully on board with the project. The financial issue for the Council was not about additional costs, but rather about the loss of rental/licence fee income. Councillor Whitehead added that these costs had been set out in reports published both last year and in the current year. Councillor Pritchard summarised by noting that although there was a perception of delays to the completion of the project, the end date had never been fixed, as there had always been an understanding that this was on old building and that complex issues (such as asbestos) could arise during the refurbishment works. Ultimately, the Council wanted to provide a quality facility, not a cheap fix. Traders and Council staff had been patient and supportive throughout the project and references to 'delays' were not helpful.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The Council had agreed to support those market traders temporarily relocated on the town square whilst the Market Hall redevelopment works were undertaken. A report presented in March 2025, had seen Cabinet give approval to provide rent and licence fees concessions for 12 months from 1st April 2025 or until the temporary cabins were removed whichever came first.

This 12-month agreement was coming to an end and the report proposed the Council maintained its zero-rent lease/fee charge for the temporary cabins with all other charges remaining as per the current concession levels. If approved by Cabinet, this would maintain the following charges until the cabins were removed from the town square for the Market Hall reopening:

- £0.00 (zero charge) per calendar month for market cabin rent/licence fee
- £9.00 per sqft per calendar month for service charges.
- £25 per calendar month for trader storage units located under the rear pavilion at the Market Hall (no services provided to these storage units).
- £120.00 per calendar month as a combined rent and service charge for the trader who had a dedicated cold room and prep room.

Continuing with these concessions would result in loss of income to the Council of circa £2,930 per month and assumed traders continued to pay the service charge and where applicable, storage unit rent, cold/prep room rent.

If approved, the extension would be given on the same terms as the 2024/25 concession through new leases, and traders would be required to continue to pay all service charges and, where applicable, storage unit rents and any other payments via direct debit.

The Council had also agreed to assist the OASST by meeting the cost of the monthly rent for their unit in the Arndale Centre, which was currently £275.41 (£3,301.68 in total for the financial year 2024/25). The approval for this arrangement was also coming to an end and the report proposed that the Council should agree to continue meeting the cost of OASST's rental payments. If approved this financial support would be in line with the other market traders in the temporary cabins on the town square and the support would continue until the cabins were removed from the town square for the Market Hall reopening. OASST had confirmed its lease with the Arndale was on a 'rolling' 3-month agreement.

State Aid/Subsidy Control

The Subsidy Control Act 2022 would apply, although the individual subsidies were likely to be exempt subsidies on the basis that they represented minimal financial assistance ("MFA") for the purpose of the Subsidy Control Act 2022. MFA subsidy could be given without the need to assess whether the subsidy complied with the subsidy control principles provided the amount of subsidy in the current financial year and the two preceding financial years did not exceed £315k per recipient. In this regard, the Council would be required to serve a pre-award notice on each of the traders before the leases/licences were completed to confirm the amount of the subsidy and seeking confirmation from the traders that the MFA threshold would not be exceeded. The leases/licences / rental subsidy could only be granted once the traders / OASST had responded and the Council would be required to serve a post award confirmation notice after completion to confirm the amount of subsidy provided by the Council, the date it had been given and that it was minimal financial assistance for the purpose of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

The Council could let the current rent/licence fee concessions expire and revert to the previous levels. This was not recommended because the Market Hall was anticipated to reopen for the Christmas light switch-on event in 2026 and whilst there was no guarantee all traders would wish to return, these traders could remain until the cabins were removed from the town square and decanted back into the Market Hall.

Resolved

- (1) That Cabinet approves the extension of the current 100% reduction of the rent and licence fees payable by market traders in the temporary market cabins on the town square until the cabins are removed from**

the town square for the Market Hall reopening, as detailed in Paragraph 3.2 of the report.

- (2) That Cabinet approves the extension to the current storage unit rents and service charges for the temporary storage units until the cabins are removed from the town square for the Market Hall reopening, as detailed in Paragraph 3.2 of the report.**
- (3) That Cabinet notes that the proposed rent and service charge concessions will reduce income levels for the market budget in the next financial year by circa £2,930 per month and it was unlikely any efficiency or other cost savings within the market service budget would offset this.**
- (4) That Cabinet approves the extension of financial support to the Official Accrington Stanley Supporters Trust, (OASST) as detailed in Paragraph 3.4 of the report, in respect of their temporary unit within the Arndal Centre, to continue until the Market Hall reopening.**

306 Code of Corporate Governance

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, seeking approval for a new code of corporate governance.

Councillor Alexander introduced this report, outlining that it would be good practice to adopt the code and that the principles it sought to embed would assist in the build up to Local Government Reorganisation and at the commencement of the new unitary authority.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) had recommended that all local authorities should document their governance arrangements to demonstrate compliance with the “seven core principles of good governance”, which CIPFA and SOLACE had jointly developed. Hyndburn’s neighbouring authorities already had such codes in place and it had been suggested that the codes might be useful starting points or points of reference for the work to develop governance arrangements both for the Local Government Reorganisation process and for the emerging successor authorities.

The seven core principles were as follows:

- i. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- ii. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- iii. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

- iv. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- v. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- vi. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- vii. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

The Council was committed to having an effective governance framework and, using the CIPFA / SOLACE principles, had developed a Code of Corporate Governance which identified the arrangements the Council had in place to support good governance. The code also identified activity planned for the next 12 months to further strengthen the Council's governance arrangements.

The Council's governance framework would be reviewed annually to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

The Council could decide not to adopt a code of corporate governance. This was not recommended as it would be contrary to CIPFA guidance and recognised good practice.

Resolved - **That Cabinet approves the draft Code of Corporate Governance appended to the report**

307 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/2027 - 2028-2029

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, informing the Cabinet of the 3-year projections of income and expenditure for the Council ahead of formulating its 2026/2027 to 2028/2029 Revenue and Capital Budgets.

Councillor Alexander introduced this report, highlighting some of the key financial information included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the 3 year duration of the projections, the purpose of the document, the Government's three-year financial settlement and future challenges. The Council anticipated a loss of grant of almost £6.35m over the MTFS period. This would be partially offset by significant pensions savings and other identified budget savings, but would still give rise to a total funding gap of £5.062m by 2028/29. This gap would need to be met by reserves. Overall, the Council would have sufficient reserves to sustain itself until Local Government Reorganisation and the use of reserves in this way had been approved by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Through good financial management the Council could still meet its commitments, including its Capital Programme and staffing costs. The Council would be cautious about future expenditure unless any surpluses were identified or additional grant funding received.

The Leader indicated that the Government had announced that the local elections in 2026 would not now be postponed. To assist those councils affected the Government would make £63m grant funding available nationally. Hyndburn would receive a share of that allocation. As the Council's budget had already included provision for an election, the grant would free up this resource. Accordingly, the Council was now in a position to freeze the

Council Tax, at a cost of £185k compared to a 2.99% increase. Further details would be included in the final Budget papers due to be submitted to the Council on 26th February 2026.

Councillor Khan made comments and asked a number of questions as shown below, to which responses were provided, as follows:

- Could the Cabinet confirm that around 5% of the Council's baseline funding had been lost over a 3 year period, amounting to some £6.35m? - *Response:* This was correct.
- Would this Council receive a share of the £63m grant announce by the Government? - *Response:* The Council would receive an allocation from that grant.
- Would the above grant offset the whole of the financial settlement reduction, given that there were 315 councils in England, or would the use of reserves still be required? - *Response:* The grant was only for the 30 councils affected by the reinstatement of the elections. However, the use of this Council reserves would still be necessary.
- Hyndburn was the 16th most deprived local authority area in the country, but was doing well in growing businesses. However, it was being penalised by the Government. For 2026/27, what was the loss in the financial settlement that needed to be filled? - *Response:* There was no funding gap for the forthcoming year. The Leader and MP had worked hard to challenge the initial settlement proposals and had been successful in improving the Council's position. The Government was focusing on supporting top tier authorities during years 2 and 3 of the settlement period. However, Hyndburn had received £1.5m Pride in Place additional capital funding, freeing up revenue that would otherwise have been allocated to those schemes. The future Revenue Budget funding gaps for Hyndburn were as follows: 2026/27 £0m, 2027/28 £2.2m, 2028/29 £2.8m.
- The Portfolio Holder had given a commitment not to borrow to fund capital projects. Was there a list of assets for disposal available? Would the Council be willing to borrow if suitable opportunities cropped up? - *Response:* The assets list was still being worked on. There was no intention to borrow more money, but the Council would keep a close eye on any opportunities emerging.
- Was the forecast underspend in 2025/26 around £6k? - *Response:* That was correct.
- Reduced employer's contributions to the Pension Fund had provided a large saving in future years. Officers had previously made some sound financial decisions in relation to this liability and should be congratulated. This approach had been implemented under an earlier Conservative administration. - *Response:* Various successive administrations had also supported this approach.
- Where would the funding come from to offset losses from the freeze in Council Tax? - *Response:* This would come from the £63m grant distributed across all affected local authorities. For budgetary purposes the amount of this grant received would be aggregated, rather than aligned to specific budget headings.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The Council required an update on its medium-term financial outlook ahead of setting the Budget for 2026/27 and determining the level of Council Tax for the new financial year.

In summary, during 2025/26, the Council's work and finances had largely been focused on delivering major capital projects, including the Levelling Up/Town Centre regeneration, the new Cath Thom Leisure Centre at Wilson Playing Fields, and progress on the Huncoat Garden Village project, which would provide 1,800 new homes. These efforts had been delivered alongside the Council's day-to-day services and other key strategic priorities.

It was expected that these key events and their impact on the Council's finances, would continue over the next few financial years, with the potential for the effects to continue beyond the MTFS period.

The Council would operate a roll forward Budget for 2026/27 based on the 2025/26 Budget with adjustments for changes to salary and wages, energy and other cost pressures. This would provide Service Managers with a degree of stability for 2026/27. Overall expenditure would need to be contained at around £17.608m in 2026/27 to set a balanced budget.

The Council, if necessary, might have to use some of its reserves to help balance the Budget. This was likely given the reductions made to Government funding across Business Rates and grants as part of the Fair Funding Review. Additionally, it might be necessary to use reserves if it was believed that, in the current economic climate, it would be inappropriate to raise Council Tax.

The Council would face significant financial challenges over the next three years as it sought to overcome the consequences of both national and global issues. It would also face the challenges of Government funding reforms and increased pressures on spending over this period.

The 2026/27 local government finance settlement (LGFS) introduced the major reforms consulted on as part of the Fair Funding Review, including a multi-year funding approach (the first in 10 years) and changes to grant funding and business rates. While national Core Spending Power (CSP) was projected to grow steadily, Hyndburn Council itself faced real-terms reductions due to formula changes and limited tax-raising capacity.

The Government had issued its Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation paper in June 2025, which proposed fundamental changes to local government finance. The proposals included:

- A revised funding formula with a stronger link to deprivation levels and population size.
- A full reset of the baseline for retained business rates in 2026/27.
- Ending the New Homes Bonus and reallocating the funding to the core settlement.
- Simplifying and merging multiple grant streams, including those for homelessness prevention, rough sleeping, and temporary accommodation.
- Introducing transitional funding, including a minimum funding floor, to protect councils from the full impact of the changes.

Although most councils would receive cash-flat protection against their 2025/26 baseline, Hyndburn had been identified early in the consultation as being among the authorities furthest from their assessed funding level. As a result, the Council would lose 5% of its 2025/26 baseline funding by 2028/29.

Despite an anticipated loss of almost £6.35m over the MTFS period, the multi-year settlement offered a level of certainty that enabled the Council to prepare for future

challenges. The Council had addressed the £6.35m reduction through, savings and use of resources.

It was recognised that the 2027 spending round (and those in future years) might bring about alterations, however these were likely to be minor in terms of quantum and would likely only be upwards with the announced 3-year settlement, representing a minimum level of funding. The certainty that the 3-year settlement had provided around Government funding had resulted in a relatively stable outlook across all scenarios, pessimistic, standard and optimistic. Any variances would occur due to diverging assumptions over service income and expenditure with the most severe of the scenarios assuming no or low growth in income but an above inflationary rise in expenditure. The pessimistic model assumed a modest increase in Council Tax below the Local Plan and Government targets. The standard model assumed growth in the Council Tax base in line with the Local Plan.

A third scenario, the optimistic model, was also presented which showed the Council's potential position if it was able to boost its own tax revenue due to a buoyant tax base, and expenditure inflation being low. This optimistic model was considered to have a much lower probability of occurring compared to the other two models but was provided to illustrate the wide range of potential outcomes.

In the circumstances, it was prudent for the Council to look to increase its reserves and revenue streams such as Council Tax and Business Rates whenever it could and to avoid committing to any new revenue expenditure while continuing to concentrate on its work to reduce internal costs.

The main MTFS document, provided as an Appendix to the report, included the following detailed sections:

- Hyndburn in a Snapshot;
- Corporate Strategy;
- Summary;
- Elements of the MTFS;
- Background;
- Resources (including Government Grant, Council Tax, Business Rates);
- Changes in Costs;
- Budget Pressures;
- Capital Costs;
- Growth;
- Reserves;
- Other Assumptions;
- Equality Impact Assessment;
- Scenarios (including Breakdown of Pessimistic, Standard and Optimistic Models and a Suggested Course of Action);
- Robustness of the Forecast;
- Overall Net Position;
- Statutory Obligations of the Responsible Financial Officer (s151 Officer);
- Meeting Future Funding Gaps; and
- Appendices showing details of the Pessimistic, Standard and Optimistic Models.

There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons

Resolved

- **The Cabinet approves the report and the accompanying Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).**

**308 Prudential Indicators, Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies
2026/27 - 2028/29**

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, setting out the proposals for the Council's policy and objectives with respect to treasury management, and explaining how it would achieve its objectives and manage its activities; and agreement to an investment strategy for 2026/27.

Councillor Alexander provided a brief introduction to this report, outlining the four key documents provided.

Councillor Khan noted that there might be a veto to borrowing more money in the build up to transferring to a new unitary authority. He asked if there would be any opportunity to borrow more money. The Leader referred to earlier responses on the question of borrowing. The Council would set a balanced Budget and would only borrow if there was a significant project that needed to be undertaken. The £1.5m Pride in Place funding and other grants had helped to remove the need for additional borrowing. Councillor Alexander reiterated that the situation would be kept under review and that consideration would be given to anything suitable that arose.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The proposed Treasury Management Strategy and associated appendices, comprising the following documents, were attached to the report:

- Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2026/27;
- Treasury Management Policy Statement 2026/27; and
- Treasury Management Practices 2026/27.

Treasury management was defined as:

"The management of the Council's investment and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions;

The effective control of the risks associated with these activities; and

The pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

The Council was required to operate a balanced budget which meant that cash raised during the year would meet cash expenditure. Part of treasury management was to ensure the cash flow was properly planned with cash available when needed. Surplus monies were invested in line with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of treasury management was funding the Council's capital plans. The plans gave a guide to the future borrowing need of the Council. The management of this longer-term cash flow might involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer term cash flow surpluses. Occasionally, outstanding debt might be restructured to reduce Council risk or meet cost objectives.

The report had been prepared in line with the Treasury Management Code and Guidance (2021) written by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA). In the case of local authorities in England and Wales, the Code was significant under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003. This required local authorities 'to have regard (a) to such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue, and (b) to such other guidance as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify'. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 in Paragraph 24 required local authorities to have regard to this guidance. Acceptance of the report fulfilled those obligations.

CIPFA had published revised codes on 20th December 2021 and the Council now adopted the liability benchmark treasury indicator to support the risk management of the capital financing requirement.

Appendix 1 of the covering report comprised the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27-2028/29 document, which included the following detailed sections:

- Background;
- Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators;
- Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing Requirement;
- International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 - Leasing;
- Minimum Revenue Provision;
- Affordability Prudential Indicators;
- Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 – 2028/29;
- Current Treasury Position;
- Expected Movement in Interest Rates;
- External Debt Overall Limits;
- External v Internal Borrowing;
- Liability Benchmark;
- Limits on Activity;
- Debt Rescheduling;
- Investment Strategy;
- Environmental Social and Governance (ESG);
- Treasury Management Practices (TMP);
- Policy on the use of External Service Providers; and
- Treasury Management Strategy In-Year and Year End Reporting.

Appendix 2 of the report comprised the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement 2026/27.

Appendix 3 set out the detail of the authority's Treasury Management Practices 2026/27, comprising the 12 identified TMP areas, as follows:

- | | |
|------|--|
| TMP1 | Risk Management; |
| TMP2 | Performance Management; |
| TMP3 | Decision-Making and Analysis; |
| TMP4 | Approved Instruments, Methods and Techniques; |
| TMP5 | Organisation, Clarity, Segregation of Responsibilities and Dealing Arrangements; |
| TMP6 | Reporting Requirements and Management; |
| TMP7 | Budgeting, Accounting and Audit Arrangements; |
| TMP8 | Cash and Cash Flow Management; |
| TMP9 | Money Laundering; |

- TMP10 Training and Qualifications;
- TMP11 Use of External Service Providers;
- TMP12 Corporate Governance.

Appendix 4 provided the Capital Strategy 2026/27, which included information on the following:

- Overview and Scope;
- Capital Expenditure;
- Capital v Treasury Management;
- Service and Commercial Investments;
- Council Objectives;
- Capital Budget Setting Process;
- Monitoring of the Capital Programme Expenditure;
- Multi-Year Schemes;
- Funding Strategy and Capital Policies;
- Procurement and Value for Money;
- Partnerships and Relationships with Other Organisations;
- Management Framework;
- Performance Management;
- Risk Management; and
- Other Considerations

There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons

Resolved

- **That Cabinet agrees to recommend Council to:**

- (1) **Adopt the prudential indicators and limits detailed in the report.**
- (2) **Approve the Treasury Management Strategy, and associated indicators, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (3) **Approve the Investment Strategy as set out in Section 13 of Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (4) **Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for the year 2026/27, as set out in Section 5 of Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (5) **Approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2026/27, as set out at Appendix 2 of the report.**
- (6) **Approve the Treasury Management Practices Statement 2026/27 as set out at Appendix 3 of the report.**
- (7) **Approve the Capital Strategy 2026/27 as set out at Appendix 4 of the report.**

309 General Fund Revenue Budget 2026/27

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, introducing the proposals contained within the Revenue Budget Report 2026-2027, which was provided as Appendix A. The covering report also provided an overview of key issues arising from the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The decision to set the Budget was a core decision of the Council. The role of the Cabinet was to recommend a proposed Budget to Council.

Councillor Alexander introduced this report, highlighting key figures from the report. She reiterated that the Council would set a balanced Budget for 2026/27 without the use of reserves or cuts to services or staff. She reminded all that there had been some loss of Government funding for the forthcoming year. The Council's net expenditure for 2026/27 would be around £17.608m. She also outlined the sources of funding and amounts proposed, including savings targets. The Portfolio Holder also confirmed the proposal announced earlier in the meeting, not to increase Hyndburn's element of the Council Tax, which would now remain at £276.46 for a Band D property. She added that the Budget report would be revised as necessary in advance of the Council meeting on 26th February 2026. This would also include the final Council Tax figures from the various precepting authorities.

Headline proposals included:

- Free car parking;
- A freeze on the green waste collection charge;
- Support available from the Cabinet Action Fund; and
- A freeze in Hyndburn's element of the Council Tax.

Councillor Khan noted that £300k had been allocated for the operation of the Market Hall following the departure of the original contractor. Councillor Pritchard clarified that the original contractor and Council had parted company by mutual agreement and the £300k was the estimate of the running costs of an in-house offer.

Councillor Khan also asked about the total amount being transferred to reserves in 2026/27.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The report set out the Council's Revenue Budget for 2026/27. This would require net expenditure of £17,607,700.

Initially it had been proposed that Council Tax for Hyndburn residents would incur a rise in charge for Hyndburn Council provided services and the charge for a Band D property would increase from £276.46 in 2025/2026 to £284.73. However, this proposal had been revised in the light of the Government's announcement on grant funding due to the reinstatement of the local elections in May 2026. Accordingly, the current proposal was for a Council Tax freeze.

A number of national and global issues had undoubtedly had an impact on the Council's budgets and this along with the impact of higher inflation and forecast pay settlements had

contributed to the Council initially seeking to raise its element of the Council Tax by the maximum 2.99%, an increase of £8.27 annually on a Band D property. However, this was no longer being proposed.

Lancashire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority had not yet formally taken their decisions on Council Tax Levels for 2026/27. The County Council had proposed a Council Tax increase of 3.8%, as opposed to the maximum of 4.99% that would be possible without referendum. The Police and Crime Commissioner had proposed an increase to the Band D Property charge of £15.00 (5.41%) and that the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority had proposed a £5.00 (5.57%) increase.

Altham Parish Council had set a separate precept for its activities. This year the Parish Council had decided not to increase the Band D charge. Accordingly, the charge for Altham Parish Council would remain at £44.33 for 2026/27. The Parish Council would precept the Collection Fund for £14,141 for 2026/27. Details of the proposed position on other Bandings for properties in Altham were shown in Appendix 6 of the report.

In setting the Budget for 2026/27, the Council faced continued volatility around some of the most significant items within its Budget. Major reforms of local government finance had transferred the risk of business rate revenues and Council Tax benefits to the Council. The certainty on which the Council could budget and manage its finances had therefore decreased since 2013 and it would be important going forward to plot any deviations away from the expected figures and take appropriate action if these should start to emerge. This might result in the need to reduce spending during the year, if revenue monitoring started to indicate the amounts of funds received would fall short of the target or if the authority faced an upsurge in spending.

The Cabinet intended to continue the good financial stewardship of the Council's affairs by continuing its successful policies to manage costs effectively and promote appropriate service investment. This Budget would therefore deliver:

- A continuation of the Council's established approach of limiting enhancements on early retirement, continuing its rigorous approach to absence management and committing to minimising borrowing costs. These actions had already stemmed the build-up of unproductive costs within the organisation. In each of these cases the authority had put a stop to the costly and financially damaging policies of the past and created a healthier and more financially stable culture within the Council.
- The Capital Programme for 2026/27 would continue to deliver key investment in council and public facilities adding another £7.86m to the £56.51m that the Council currently had approved.
- A large proportion of the capital programme would be phased over the next few financial years, and this included the continued delivery of £29m investment in the Huncoat Garden Village Project, with all the funding coming from Homes England, and finalising the Levelling Up works in Accrington Town Centre along with other complementing Town centre regeneration.
- The additions to the programme in 2026/2027 of £7.86m included:
 - a) £689,000 of investment into Parks and Play areas of which the Council expected to be able to utilise £630,000 of external grant funding to contribute to the improvements.

- b) £1,359,906 to provide Disabled Facility Grants this year which was fully funded from the Better Care Fund.
 - c) £2,161,135 to maintain and invest in its operational assets and vehicle fleet.
 - d) £165,000 to improve and develop new ICT and technical equipment to deliver services in a more efficient way.
 - e) £435,000 on Community projects that involved War Memorial restoration, Christmas decoration replacement and Maden Street Clock Towner lighting.
 - f) £2,600,000 towards the future development of the Market Chambers building linked to a bid for additional grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to re-imagine the interior and exterior of the building into a Heritage and Arts venue.
 - g) £450,000 for the continuing repurposing of Mercer Hall Leisure Centre and the contribution towards Accrington Stanley Community Trust's capital investment in sports initiatives.
- The Capital Programme for 2026/2027 was partly funded from the Government's grants to deliver a Pride in Place Impact Fund. Hyndburn would receive £1.5m to be committed to projects that would deliver visible improvements to community spaces; public spaces and high street and town centre revitalisation. Despite costs of around £90,000 to provide car parking in Hyndburn for residents and visitors and particularly for shoppers, the authority would continue to provide this facility free of charge and not introduce charges for parking in Hyndburn. The Council believed this action would help bolster its town centres through these difficult economic times and provide an incentive for people to shop locally rather than drive and pay to shop elsewhere across the North-West. The Council had once again prioritised affordability for residents and cleanliness across the borough by freezing green waste charges at £35 per annum and offering bulky household waste collections free of charge. This service currently cost the Council approximately £169,000 each year.
 - Further reductions in the Council's accommodation costs, building on the success over the last 15 years including further rationalising the authority's accommodation and looking at more ways of using its accommodation more effectively. The Council would also continue its actions to reduce its carbon emissions and energy costs and continue contributing to the improvements of its own environmental footprint by positive action.

The Council intended to continue to deliver all the above and remained committed to a radical agenda of improvement while managing within its available resources. This would be more difficult in the years to come, given the authority's reduced resources from the Government. However, there remained a firm commitment and absolute determination amongst Members and Officers of the Council to control the finances of the Council, drive forward on the efficiency agenda and continue to improve service delivery. The Council wished to continue to push forward on the drive for delivering value for money as a key priority.

The rewards of strong financial control remained clearly evident. The Council had built itself back up from experiencing major difficulties in controlling expenditure and a position of negative reserves in 2003/04 to a situation by March 2026, in which general reserve balances were expected to be just under £1.9m. The Council had been able to operate within its existing financial resources over the last four years, through good financial management and would continue to deliver strong financial performance in the years to come.

Within the Budget for 2026/27 there were a number of areas which were subject to the Council's best estimation. There were, therefore, a number of risks around the Budget, should these estimated costs or revenue amounts vary during the year.

After the introduction of the Government reforms to Business Rates Funding of Local Government, the Council now carried a significant risk around the level of monies available, fluctuating substantially from this source. In addition, as the calculation of how much funds would be available was dependent on a number of factors including debt collection rates, the size of appeals against business rates assessment and the success of those appeals, new rules around levies, safety nets and pooling, the introduction of new multipliers on rates for retail, hospitality and leisure premises, as well as predicted levels of growth or decline in business activities and the estimation of a number of figures which would only truly emerge after the end of the financial year, the imprecision in these estimates was regarded as high and could be subject to variations of hundreds of thousands of pounds. The volatility around these forecasts had increased due to the impact that recent national and global issues had had on the Business Community.

The detailed Revenue Budget Report 2026-2027, as set out at Appendix A of the report, included the following information:

- Background;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Continuation Budget;
- Growth and Inflation Pressures;
- Available Resources;
- Resources Summary;
- Budget Proposal;
- Budget Saving Proposals;
- Reserves;
- Risks and Management;
- Consultation;
- Conclusion; and
- Appendices Nos. 1 – 6 (comprising the detailed Budget figures for the Council and the proposed or estimated levels of Council Tax by property band for both Hyndburn Borough Council and all precepting authorities)

Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

There had been a wide number of individual proposals put forward to produce a Balanced Budget. Options had been rejected on a variety of grounds including policy objectives, practicalities and the potential for additional costs to be incurred. Further options might be presented at the Council meeting.

NOTE: An alteration was proposed and agreed to the wording of the recommendation at Paragraph 2.1 of the report to take account of the proposed freeze in Council Tax. This is incorporated within Resolution (1) below.

Resolved

(1) That Cabinet recommends the proposal that the Council Tax for 2026/27 not be increased, thus the charge for a Band D property will remain at £276.46.

(2) The Budget for 2026/27 will therefore be £17,607,700 as detailed in Appendices 1 to 3 of the

Revenue Budget 2026-2027 report attached at Appendix A of the report.

- (3) That Cabinet recommends approval of the changes in budget requirement through including inflation, growth and savings as identified in Appendix 3 of the Revenue Budget 2026-2027 report, to ensure the Council can set and approve a balanced budget.**
- (4) That Cabinet notes the significant improvement made in relation to budget monitoring and cost reduction within the Authority over the past 20 years and confirms its commitment to continuing this approach in the year ahead.**
- (5) That Cabinet recommends during the financial year 2026/27, the Executive Director (Resources) be delegated responsibility to amend the Budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) for technical reasons, such as the restructuring of cost centres, the re-apportionment and re-allocation of overheads etc., provided such amendments have an overall neutral impact on the Budget.**
- (6) That Cabinet recommends during the financial year 2026/27, the Executive Director (Resources) be delegated responsibility to amend the Budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) should the estimate of Business Rates not be sufficiently accurate, by drawing on reserves if needed or paying over additional contributions to reserves.**
- (7) That, to aid future financial management planning, any surpluses generated during 2026/27 are set aside to help the Council reduce its cost base over the next three years, to support its long-term capital programme or to strengthen its overall reserve position.**
- (8) That Cabinet recommends that any additional funds from Government that are not ring-fenced funding, as well as any other surplus funds, can be used, if required, to support capital expenditure as determined by the Executive Director (Resources) in the overall financing of capital expenditure or be transferred to reserves.**

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, setting out the proposed capital programme for 2026/27 – 2028/29.

Councillor Alexander introduced this report, highlighting key figures for new additions to the programme, slippage from previous years and the total cost of the Capital Programme in 2026/27 of £38.5m. She also outlined some key projects including the following:

- War Memorial Restoration;
- Maden Street Clock Tower Lighting;
- Christmas Decorations;
- Huncoat Garden Village Scheme;
- ICT Projects;
- Levelling Up Projects;
- Sport Facilities;
- Operational Buildings;
- Parks and Play Areas; and
- Pride in Place Projects

Councillor Clare Pritchard spoke about the importance of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) projects and gave an example of a recent case in which she had been involved where a resident's quality of life had been enhanced. She placed on record her thanks to Sarah Whittaker, Regeneration Manager, for her assistance. Councillor Fisher was also pleased to see this grant being utilised, but noted that, unfortunately, adaptations did take some time to implement.

Councillor Zak Khan made some comments and asked a number of questions, as follows:

- He was pleased to note that a large number of Pride in Place schemes had been proposed. He asked what consultations had taken place about the schemes to be supported and what schemes had been rejected.
- Who had determined the Community Projects and Neighbourhood Projects identified?
- Did the IT Projects identified include provision for livestreaming meetings?
Response: As reported previously, this scheme had not been agreed on the grounds of value for money. However, it was understood that one councillor had offered to undertake livestreaming using their own portable equipment.
- The support for Mercer Hall and Accrington Stanley Community Trust (ASCT) was noted. He asked if there would be a formal agreement with ASCT about the schemes to be funded. - *Response:* ASCT were due to make an announcement on this subject shortly.
- He was pleased to note the investment in the Brookside Restoration Project. In respect of investment in Parks and Open Spaces. Would the funding be spread across many parks, or focused on a small number of schemes? - *Response:* Support for parks and open spaces was a priority and the intention was to spread the funding evenly across the Borough, in so far as this was possible. One park in Accrington and one park in Rishton were due to be refurbished.
- Who determined allocations from the Cabinet Action Fund?

Councillor Dad responded that for programmed schemes all Cabinet members were involved in the decisions. Discussions had taken place with stakeholders, including the Neighbourhoods Board. Ward councillors had also spoken to individuals representing local communities. Councillor Whitehead added that for some Neighbourhood Improvement

Projects the funding had not yet been allocated. There would be some small areas that required capital investment to make a difference, but no monies had yet been earmarked for specific schemes

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The report set out the Council's Capital Programme for 2026/27, including forecast slippage on schemes from 2025/26 and the additions of new schemes to the Council's Capital Programme for 2026/27.

The significant level of investment in previous years had only been possible by the Council obtaining external financial support, as well as the Council's own effective financial management over recent years, which had allowed it to have the funds necessary to finance these major projects when other funding had become available.

The new additions to the capital programme for 2026/27 had increased to £7.860m (including £1.020 leasing costs), compared to £2.476m in 2025/26. External funding of £3.20m had been confirmed towards the cost of these new capital schemes (Disabled Facilities Grant, Extended Producer Responsibility Grant (EPR) and Pride In Place Impact Grant) with a further £0.03m funding to be secured.

The additions to the programme in 2026/27 would bring the total approved capital programme to £38.565m, including forecast slippage of the unspent programme from 2025/26 of £30.706m, which could be seen in Appendix 1 of the detailed report at Appendix A. The forecast slippage from the 2025/26 programme included £22.366m (£3.815m slippage to 2027/28) for Huncoat Garden Village, £0.40m for the Leisure Estate Investment Programme and £6.251m for the Levelling Up Programme. The capital budgets for the Levelling Up Programme were based on the latest forecast of costs however as these were not tendered figures, they were still subject to change and should there be any changes to the current forecast, these would be reported during the year.

It was important to note that the Council funding of the 2026/27 Capital Programme was based on using Council reserves and potential capital receipts. There would be a continued emphasis relating to the realisation of additional capital receipts during the year. The programme assumes £3.010m of expenditure would be funded from capital reserves, and £0.6m from unfunded receipts. Any new receipts received would replace the funding required from these reserves.

The small number of expected new schemes for 2027/28 and 2028/29 (totalling £1.910m) were detailed in Appendix 3 of the report. This was for information only, as funding would need to be identified for these schemes before they were put forward for approval into the programme in future years, alongside any Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) consequences.

The Council intended to continue its strong policies of financial management and look only to borrow what it needed to fund major investment projects. The Council would continue to rely on securing external sources of funding, using capital receipts, making revenue contributions to capital projects and would use unspent monies to fund its programme. It would also apply a rigorous approach to selecting projects by examining all proposals against its corporate objectives and only selecting the most pressing and deserving projects to fund. This was in accordance with Council policy.

The Revenue implications to finance the Capital Programme continued to be a key element in the affordability issues on the Revenue Budget this year. The programme contained a limited amount of risk this year. The level of risk remained increased compared to previous years due to the size of the overall programme. However, to further reduce the risk the Council had supplemented its own project management and cost control capacity by the appointment of experienced professionals in both disciplines for its two largest projects. The Council's overall resources and management systems were believed to be sufficiently robust to effectively monitor these risks and ensure appropriate action was taken if they should materialise.

The Council would continue with its strategy to reduce its level of debt wherever possible by restricting borrowing and repaying debt and would continue to work extensively with external funders to bring forward realistic plans for capital investment in the area.

A detailed report on the Capital Programme was provided as Appendix A to the covering report, which set out information on the following:

- Summary of the Major Additions to the Capital Programme;
- Improving the Management of Capital Investments;
- Conclusion;
- Appendix 1 - Capital Programme 2026/27 (Summary);
- Appendix 2 - Capital Programme 2026/27 (Detailed);
- Appendix 3 - Capital Programme 2026/27 (New Additions); and
- Appendix 4 – Capital Programme 226/27 – Pride in Place

Alternative Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection

A wider programme of funding/borrowing had not been considered due to the Council's policy commitment to limiting capital expenditure to affordable levels and seeking to repay debt.

Resolved

- That Cabinet recommends the Council:

- (1) To approve the Capital Programme for 2026/27 including new scheme additions of £7,860,041 with a net cost to the Council of £3,609,970 as set out in Appendix 3 of Appendix A to the report.**
- (2) To approve the funding of the programme by the use of newly awarded direct external grants totalling £3,229,909, lease vehicle borrowing costs £1,020,165 and the remaining funding of £3,609,970 to come from the Council's resources.**
- (3) To note the expected new scheme additions for 2027/28 onwards set out in Appendix 1 of Appendix A to the report.**
- (4) To give delegated authority to the Executive Director (Resources), following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and**

Council Operations to flex the programme in accordance with the available funding, provided this does not require any additional borrowing.

- (5) To agree that the individual projects within the Capital Programme will require the written authorisation of the Executive Director (Resources) following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations before commencing and incurring expenditure and that Service Managers must provide the Executive Director (Resources) with written details of estimated project costs and a full justification of the need for and benefits from undertaking the capital expenditure before such approval is provided; and that the ability to approve commencement of capital projects is delegated to the Executive Director (Resources); in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations and that the Executive Director (Resources) is given delegated authority to release capital funding in stages if deemed appropriate to ensure effective financial control and risk management.**

- (6) To agree that in-year underspends will not be made available to fund new projects during the year.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed

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SPECIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 18th November, 2025

Present:	Councillors Mike Booth (Vice Chair), Zak Khan and Clare Yates Co-optees: Shaheed Mahmood
In Attendance:	Mark Hoyle – Head of Regeneration and Housing Councillor Melissa Fisher – Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing & Regeneration Lyndsey Sims – Chief Executive of Hyndburn Leisure Trust
Apologies	Councillors Josh Allen, Heather Anderson, Clare McKenna, Kate Walsh and Mohammed Younis

217 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Councillor Booth (Vice-Chair of the Committee) took the Chair in the absence of Councillor Walsh (Chair of the Committee).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors McKenna and Walsh.

There were no substitute representatives.

218 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations declared at the meeting.

219 Minutes of the last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 14th October 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

220 Leisure Transformation Update

Lyndsey Sims, Chief Executive of Hyndburn Leisure Trust, gave a presentation on the progress of the Leisure Transformation project. The Committee was provided with information about the Wilson's Project, Wilson's/Cath Thom Leisure Centre, Hyndburn Leisure (Energy Efficiency Works) and Mercer Hall Repurposing.

She gave details on:

- The long-term vision for Hyndburn's Leisure Estate
- Sport England Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (outcomes, insight, interventions and commitment)
- Project Aims

- Developing the facility proposals (cost, existing facility condition and the potential impact on people's lives)
- 2025/26 Priorities
- The Cath Thom Leisure Centre
- Hyndburn Leisure Centre
- Mercer Hall
- Bank Mill House
- Clayton Community Centre

Committee Members referred to the following issues:

- What plans were in place to encourage use of the facilities by the asian community;
- when there would be additional opening events?
- what strategies were being used to promote events?
- a suggestion for ladies only events
- if renovations planned for Mercer Hall were on schedule?
- Would swimming lessons be available for schools and, if so, would use by local schools be encouraged rather than pupils being bused in from other areas, causing additional traffic in the area?

Responses were:

- Open events had been held on 11th & 12th October and been well attended. More open events would be held.
- A pre-opening membership campaign had been held and, consequently, the opening events had been attended by thousands of people.
- suggestions for events were noted.
- Renovations to Mercer Hall were on time and estimated to be completed by the end of the year/beginning of 2026.
- schools would be transported to Hyndburn Leisure Centre or the Cath Thom Centre by coach for swimming lessons.

Resolved - **That the Chief Executive of Hyndburn Leisure Trust be thanked for the presentation and that the report be noted.**

221 Huncoat Garden Village Progress Report

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing & Regeneration presented a report to provide the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Huncoat Garden Village (HGV) project.

The Head of Regeneration and Housing reported that the HGV project formed a key part of the Council's growth plans and gave details of the housing development it formed. The HGV Masterplan and Framework and Delivery Strategy had been approved by Cabinet in October 2021 and set out a framework for the new Housing development and expanded settlement of Huncoat which would be a high-quality residential development and environment. The new development would deliver 1,816 new homes of mixed tenure over a 15-year period as well as a new local centre, primary school, open space, new woodland, networked open space and a new residential relief road.

Homes England has awarded the Council a £29,897,722 grant for the HGV project towards key infrastructure costs. Key partners included Homes England, Lancashire County Council, National Highways and local landowners.

The Committee was informed that good progress had been made including the selection of Eric Wright Civil Engineering Limited as the preferred contractor to construct the proposed relief road and the Council being in discussion with Homes England to extend the grant availability period from March 2028 to March 2029.

Advance Questions were submitted prior to the meeting and responses were provided by the Head of Housing and Regeneration as follows:

1. With reference to Cabinet giving consent to start the process toward a compulsory purchase order (CPO) for the proposed new Relief Road, should an agreement with the landowner fail, what financial impact and delay would there be if an agreement could not be met?

Response – Compulsory purchase orders do not require consent from a landowner for projects that would have a public benefit. Landowners are entitled to fair compensation based on market value. Details of how CPOs work was provided. Landowner compensation has been provided within the Homes England grant award for the project. Any additional costs would sit with the Council. The timetable for the new road is based on the CPO timetable.

2. The Huncoat Garden Village development will result in increased numbers of families and older people who will have healthcare requirements. Will the Council include consultation with healthcare authorities as part of the planning process and are there any known plans to increase healthcare facilities in the area such as more GPs and NHS healthcare facilities.

Response – The Committee was assured that the implications of the development in respect of the provision of health care services was being considered by the appropriate health authorities. There were plans to increase services with the preferred facility to be located at the former Accrington Victoria Hospital site.

3. Has consideration been given to the Local Government Re-Organisation and possible impacts on the Huncoat Garden Village project, as this project will be taking place over a 15 year period during which it is very likely that Councils will be merged to form new unitary authorities.

Response – the Huncoat Garden Village project is well established and therefore local government re-organisation is not expected to have any impact on it.

Members submitted further questions relating to the following issues:

- Could the compulsory purchase order (CPO) process be delayed if the landowner does not agree to a financial settlement?
- How long will the development take to be completed?
- Can the Council guarantee that the land would be used appropriately and that the Council was working with Lancashire County Council on any relevant changes.
- Has the Local Government Review been considered in relation to ensuring that investment would continue after the termination of Hyndburn Borough Council.

- Some Councillors had received feedback that representatives on the Huncoat Forum were not representative of the majority of voices in Huncoat and requested that multiple Forums were created to represent people.
- Concern that LGR would lose investment if the project was not started before it was implemented.
- A request for clarification on community spaces provided by the development and enough essential services for residents.

Responses:

- The compulsory purchase order process does not stop the landowner seeking inflated value but any dispute over a value would be determined by the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) to ensure fair compensation, however, the Council does have the powers to take possession of land if it is deemed for the public good.
- The Huncoat Garden Village development was a 15 year project.
- Lancashire County Council, Highways was a statutory consultee and therefore, as soon as the developer was ready to begin, would be included as part of the project.
- Significant S106 funding had been made available and would enhance investment for the development which should be seen as an opportunity for the wider Huncoat area. Section 106 funding was also being provided to enhance sporting facilities and communal spaces and play areas. He pointed out that this allocation had been made in principle but had been firmed up as part of a planning application.
- The Committee was informed that the Huncoat Forum was the main area of engagement for the project and although numbers attending peaked and troughed, the usual representatives of the main Forum Group and ward Councillors were regular attendees. He indicated that interest would increase as the project commenced.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed

COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 1st December, 2025

Present: Councillor Stephen Button (in the Chair),
Councillors Jodi Clements (Vice Chair), Clare Yates, Clare McKenna,
Mike Booth, Tina Walker and Judith Addison
Co-optees Sandie Dent and Shaw

In Attendance: Councillor M. Fisher – Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Care
Sarah Whittaker – Regeneration Manager
Justine Williams – Chief Executive of Citizens Advice East Lancashire
Nick Pilling – Vice Chair of Citizens Advice East Lancashire
Justine Williams – Chief Executive Citizens Advice East Lancashire
Pick Pilling – Vice Chair Citizens Advice East Lancashire

Apologies: Councillors David Heap, Loraine Cox, Rawstron and Jean Battle

229 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Heap, L. Cox, Jean Battle and Jackie Rawstrone.

Councillor Addison acted as substitute representative for Councillor Heap.

230 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Fisher and Matthew Shaw (Co-optee) declared a personal interest in item 4 – Disabled Facilities Grants, due to both being employees of Lancashire County Council who allocate funding to Hyndburn Borough Council. Both remained in the meeting and took part in debate.

231 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the meeting held 13th October 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

232 Disabled Facilities Grants

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration, Councillor Melissa Fisher, and the Regeneration Manager, Sarah Whittaker, submitted a report to update the Committee on Disabled Facilities Grants, the process, the funding received and what is delivered with the funding. The report also updated the Committee on the current programme and waiting list times.

The Regeneration Manager explained that Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) were:

- Mandatory grants and delivered under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- The Act gave local authorities a legal duty to award grants where the criteria had been met and allowed for a maximum amount to be set by the regulations.
- The current maximum grant had been set at £30,000 which had been in force since 2008 and no longer covered the full cost of an extension.
- The aim of providing grants was to enable a disabled person to remain in their own home.
- Applicants had the choice of the Council managing works on their behalf or for self-management.
- Funding for the DFG programme became part of the Better Care Fund (BCF) in 2015/16 meaning that funding was no longer paid directly to the Local Authorities but was paid to Lancashire County Council before being distributed to individual Local Authorities.
- The allocation of funding to Hyndburn in 2025/26 was £1,359,906. Hyndburn Council carried forward £357,069 from 2024/25 and had a total of £1,716,975 for 2025/26.
- Hyndburn Council had the authority to produce its own grant policies and introduced several types of grants including Discretionary DFGs, which had removed the need for a means test for any items under £7,500 and introduced an additional £20,000 top up if people were on a low income or had low savings. Several other grant types were also introduced to enable and encourage more people to apply for grants.
- The policy had been reviewed again in April 2025 when the upper limit for some grants had been changed, taking the amount before means testing, from £7,500 to £10,000.
- Fees for non-agency grants had also been introduced (7.5% + VAT) giving the Council greater opportunity to offer more support to those carrying out works themselves.
- 218 projects were in operation and all were bespoke.
- Occupational Therapists and Trusted Assessors were able to prescribe works.
- The number of applications had increased as there was now greater awareness of the grants.

The Regeneration Manager referred to appendix 1 of the report – ‘Better Care Fund Allocations and Performance to end October 2025, DFG Current Performance to end October 2025 and Performance in previous years’ and explained that it was incorrect and that a new appendix would be circulated to Members after the meeting.

Advanced Questions

Questions were submitted in advance of the meeting. A summary of the responses was provided as follows:

1. Does the grant funding need to be paid back if the owner dies or moves? Is the equipment recycled or reused?

The DFG is a Grant for equipment, to that particular person, and belongs to them. If they move the equipment could be taken with them.

If a grant is awarded to fund an extension on an owner/occupied property, a charge of £10,000 will be recorded against the property on the Land Registry. The Council may

ask the owner to repay some or all of this if they move within 10 years of the grant being approved. However, discretion is exercised.

2. Could you provide details of where the main demand for Disabled Facility Grants comes from. Why is there a waiting list?

Almost all, of our DFG referrals come from either Lancashire County Council's (LCC) Social Services, or the Integrated Therapy Team within the NHS, and occasionally from private Occupational Therapist's. Requests for disabled facility grants cannot be processed without a referral from a medical professional. A DFG is a 2-part process, the OT states what is necessary and appropriate for the disabled person, then the Technical Officer has to assess what is reasonable and practicable within the property.

There is a waiting list because we do not have the staff capacity to process the grants any faster.

3. Appendix 1 refers to performance and spend in previous years to date. Members understand that several years ago there had been an underspend of grant funding and this was carried forward but are confused about the financial data provided. Could you clarify how much has been carried forward each year and the amount spent to give the difference between spend and allocation please?

Please see revised Appendix 1 with the allocations, outturn and slippage. Hopefully this will explain the situation more clearly now.

4. The Affordable Warmth grant was underspent last year. Could you explain why?

For clarification, all of the grants mentioned are funded through the Better Care Funding pot. All of these can have the amounts allocated to them altered to meet the demands of the programme, and spend is maximized over the whole programme. DFGs are the mandatory grants that we have to provide, the other grants are not mandatory and we can remove money from them to divert to the DFGs. There is also an affordable warmth grant which is funded via LCC, this falls outside of this funding as it is the CHIL scheme and a Lancashire wide scheme. We have received an additional £30,000 this year from underspends in the Lancashire wide scheme which I need to add into the funding pot, the figures here do not currently reflect that money.

5. How long does it take, on average, from the submission of an application to the completion of works? What is the time scale on an installation or alteration?

This varies depending upon the type of works but from the date that we receive a completed application form, the typical time scales for starting the work are:

<i>Stairlifts</i>	<i>4 – 8 weeks</i>
<i>Step lifts</i>	<i>8 – 12 weeks</i>
<i>Vertical lifts</i>	<i>8 – 12 weeks</i>
<i>Showers and baths</i>	<i>4 – 18 weeks</i>
<i>Specialist baths</i>	<i>3 - 4 months</i>
<i>Extensions</i>	<i>6 – 12 months.</i>

Some can be quicker than this, and some can be slower, this all depends upon if people end up in hospital, or contractors get private work.

The installation times vary but as a guide some typical time scales for the work are:

*Stairlifts ½ day, although preliminary works may be needed.
Step lifts 5 – 10 working days, but additional works may be required
Vertical lifts 5 working days, but additional works may be required
Showers 5 to 7 working days
Extensions 3 months construction.*

6. There are several grant types, if funding allocated to one grant is more popular than another, could the funding be transferred to another grant?

Yes - see answer to Q2. However, the allocation to the LCC Respite Centre Great Harwood is a one-off payment that needs to be made and the amount will not change.

7. Committee Members are concerned that grants are not reaching those who require them. What action does the Council take to ensure grants are advertised?

Disabled Facilities Grants do not need to be advertised as there is a large waiting list.

8. Are there many grant applications that require the maximum amount of £30k and does the maximum amount need to be increased?

Last year we completed 9 DFGs over £30,000. These grants invariably take the longest to complete because we also have to assist the applicants in finding the rest of the funding for their adaptations to go ahead. We are now working on the basis of getting preliminary approval from LCC prior to us getting the actual prices for the work because if they will not fund it then we need to look at funding from elsewhere.

The maximum DFG of £30,000 is not sufficient now to carry out complex adaptations, however, should this amount increase it would also mean that the funding for DFGs would need to increase or we would not be able to do as many DFGs. Currently anything over £30,000 (or £50,000 if people are eligible for the Discretionary £20,000) other means have to be found to pay for it and it does not come from the DFG pot. This is a national problem.

9. Is there an assessment of future needs by an OT before there is approval of an installation or works?

Yes. The OT, if carrying out an assessment for a child will look at the needs of that child up to age 18 based on the medical conditions that they have and the prognosis for future needs. When the assessment is done for adults it takes into account any potential recovery that may be made following rehabilitation based on current prognosis, and also the possible deterioration of someone.

10. Who does a person contact to discuss needs prior to the work to be undertaken?

Lancashire County Council can be contacted on 0300 123 6720 and they will carry out an OT assessment which will inform HBC of the needs of the disabled person. Or they can carry out a needs assessment by completing an on line form at [Lancashire and South Cumbria - AskSARA](#).

Christine Brown is the Council's Adaptations Officer and can be contacted to discuss the whole DFG process. She can be contacted on 01254 380153 or Christine.brown@hyndburnbc.gov.uk

11. What sort of work is most likely to have been completed by HBC in the past? (We see handrails and ramps in our wards, stair lifts were mentioned and wet rooms).

The DFG is given for any adaptation that facilitates access to the home, makes the dwelling safe, improves heating, gives access to essential amenities including the garden for the disabled occupant. The adaptations can be anything from handrails, to an extension for a downstairs bedroom and bathroom, and anything in between. We now also get referrals for autism or pika (where people eat masonry, plaster, wiring), which involves creating safe spaces, or spaces where the walls or fittings cannot be eaten by the disabled person. Below is a list of the type of grants and numbers of items fitted in 2024/25 via the DFG programme. This is much more extensive now and more complex than just the traditional stairlifts, ramps and level access showers.

<u>Type of installation</u>	-	<u>Number</u>
Rails		2
Access to Garden		7
Through Floor Lift		4
Level Access Shower		69
Wash dry toilet		7
Extension		3
Stairlift		35
Steplift		5
Automatic Doors		2
Hoists		10
Wash pod		1
Bath		1
Ramp		18
Padding		2
Door widening		8
Total number of the different types of installations		174

Members raised several comments and questions regarding Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs):

Members submitted comments and questions as follows:

- Demand for adaptations was increasing whilst funding was reducing.
- The Committee was advised that Homewise was able to supply disabled facility equipment such as walking frames and also able to provide the services of Trusted Assessors.
- Matthew Shaw gave details of the process for minor adaptations (dealt with by Social Services) and pointed out that small changes often made a big difference. He also advised that the process of adaptation was more straightforward if the person had been in hospital.

Sarah Whittaker explained that they had to act quickly once quotes for works were received, as they did not last long, so they worked with Lancashire County Council to obtain an agreement in principle so that planned works could be progressed. She reported that a further issue was that the maximum disabled facility grant was £30k and this no longer covered the cost of building an extension, so home-owners/landlords, were not always able to continue with the adaptation due to the total cost not being covered through contributions.

She referred to the different types of grants that could be applied for, including small grants. She reminded the Committee that grants over £30k were means-tested and that adaptations may also require planning permission but that the Council was flexible and would work with families to ensure the best outcome.

The Regeneration Manager was thanked for her hard work.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

233 Citizens Advice

Justine Williams (CEO) and Nick Pilling (Vice-Chair of Citizens Advice East Lancashire) were in attendance at the meeting to give a presentation on the services they provided in Hyndburn and East Lancashire.

Justine Williams delivered an update on the services of Citizens Advice, including in the Hyndburn area:

- **Organisation overview:**
 - Citizens Advice is a network of 280 local charities operating across 1,600 locations in England and Wales.
 - Each local office is responsible for securing its own funding.
- **Service delivery channels:**
 - Phone, email, webchat and face-to-face appointments.
- **Citizens Advice East Lancashire:**
 - A merged organisation covering Rossendale, Ribble Valley, Hyndburn, Burnley and Pendle.
 - Staff team includes **45 paid staff** and **40 volunteers**, including Trustee Board members.
- **Hyndburn services:**
 - Drop-in sessions, including at the New Era Centre.
 - Adviceline telephone service and digital advice options.
 - Team includes **6 volunteers** and **8 paid staff**.
 - Monthly community drop-ins at Rhyddings Family Hub.
- **Project delivery in Hyndburn includes:**
 - British Gas Energy drop-ins
 - Macmillan advice service for cancer patients
 - Specialist debt advice (by appointment)
 - HMRC service support (drop-in and by appointment)
- **Accessibility:**
 - Hyndburn residents can use any Citizens Advice East Lancashire office or community drop-in location.
- **Partnership work:**
 - Collaboration with Hyndburn Borough Council to deliver the Household Support Fund.
- **Volunteer training:**
 - The organisation is part of a national pilot introducing a new streamlined learning pathway to improve volunteer capacity.

Impact in Hyndburn (April–September 2025)

- **573** clients supported **face to face**
- **850** clients supported via **phone or WhatsApp**
- **250** clients and partners used the **online contact form**
- **£620,000** generated in benefit gains, grants and budgeting-related savings
- **£360,000** of debt written off
- A Hyndburn case study was presented (details noted).
- For every **£1** of the **£25,000** core contribution from Hyndburn Council, residents received **£39** in value.

Members submitted the following comments and queries:

- Concern that working people were also finding the cost of living difficult and were, increasingly, facing mounting debt. The Committee noted that these people would benefit from being able to receive professional advice from Citizens Advice but would only be able to attend services in the evening or at weekends.
- Request for further details about how Whatsapp worked.
- Where Citizens Advice received their funding from.
- There was increasing debt mounting problems and financial pressure on households.

Responses to the above issues were as follows:

- Citizens Advice East Lancashire already had plans to extend services to rural areas. Additional provision of out of hour services would depend on funding in relation to the cost and provision of staff.
- The Committee would be provided with more information on the use of Whatsapp within service provision.
- Citizens Advice thanked the Council for their annual contributions and referred to the importance of this in keeping services available to residents in Hyndburn. She reported that most of the organisation's funding came from project funding and from local contributions from local authorities.

Resolved - **That the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommend that Cabinet agree to provide a minimum grant in line with previous years (£25,000) to Citizens Advice East Lancashire, in its 2026/27 Budget Proposals and that it further considers an increase on this amount to £30,000, due to the rise in costs and the Committee proposing the provision of out of hour services.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed

RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 10th December, 2025

- Present:** Councillor Noordad Aziz (in the Chair),
Councillors Paul Cox (Vice Chair), Andrew Clegg, Mike Booth,
David Heap, Judith Addison and Steven Smithson
Co-optees: Tim O’Kane and Richard Downie
- In Attendance:** Councillor Munsif Dad
Martin Dyson – Executive Director, Resources
Tom Birtwistle – Environmental Health Manager (Housing Standards)
Adam Birkett – Head of Planning and Transportation
- Apologies:** Councillors Heather Anderson and Christine Heys (Co-optee)
-

251 Apologies for absence, Substitutions, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Anderson and Christine Heys (Co-optee).

Councillor Dawson acted as substitute representative for Councillor Anderson.

Councillor Dawson and Councillor Aziz declared non-pecuniary interests in item 7 – ‘Outcomes and Resources of Planning Enforcement’ in relation to supporting Accrington Stanley football team and, in the case of Councillor Dawson, holding a season ticket. Both remained in the room and took part in the debate.

252 Minutes of Last Meeting - 11th November 2025

The Minutes of the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 11th November 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

253 Chair's Update

The Chair provided updates to the Committee in relation to the following items:

a) Local Government Re-organisation

Members had requested details of a breakdown of the consultation carried out in September 2025, in respect of the numbers by postcode, who had responded. Members were informed that this information was available from the Overview & Scrutiny Officer on request.

b) Co-optee Vacancy

Members were reminded that a report seeking approval of the Committee’s recommendation to approve an application for a Co-optee position on the

Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee would go to Full Council on 15th January.

254 Budget Monitoring

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Vanessa Alexander and the Executive Director of Resources, Martin Dyson, provided an overview of the Council's financial position. The Committee were provided with details of the following reports:

- a) Capital Programme Monitoring 2025/26 – 2027/28 – Quarter 2 Update to 30th September 2025.
- b) Revenue Budget Monitoring 2025/26 – Quarter 2 to end of September 2025.
- c) Prudential Indicators Monitoring and Treasury Management Strategy Update – Quarter 2 2025/26.

The Capital Programme Monitoring report provided an update on the delivery and financial performance of the capital programme as at Quarter 2 of 2025/26, highlighting progress against budget, identifying any variances, risks or slippage and forecasting the expected outturn. It supported effective decision-making, ensured transparency and accountability and informed any necessary adjustments to project timelines, funding allocations, or future financial planning. Members were requested to note the financial position of the Capital Budget at Q2 of the 2025/26 financial year (as shown in Section 4 of the report). The Committee were also requested to approve the in-year addition to the Capital Programme of £0.681 of capital projects (as shown in Appendix 1 of the report).

The Revenue Budget Monitoring report updated the Committee on the Council's financial performance up to the end of September 2025 for the 2025/26 financial year and outlined the projected impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy covering the period 2025-26 to 2027/28. Members were asked to note the financial position and financial pressures and risks facing the Council as at the end of September 2025 (as shown in Sections 3 and Section 5 of the report).

The purpose of the final report, the Prudential Indicators Monitoring and Treasury Management Strategy update, was to provide Members with details about the Council's treasury management activities for the current financial year. It outlined the performance of investments and borrowing, assesses compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and highlighted emerging risks or opportunities that may impact the Council's financial position. The report supported the effective budget monitoring and ensured transparency and accountability in the management of public funds. Members of the Committee were requested to note the treasury management activities undertaken during the period and the performance against the approved strategy.

The Executive Director of Resources reported on the difficulties of managing budget constraints in relation to recruitment and Housing Benefit payments but explained how the Council intended to manage this.

He reported that the Council's capital programme was £56 million with projects including Levelling Up Funding, Leisure Centres and Huncoat Garden Village. Building and ICT structures were also being financed. He referred to the risks of delivering a capital programme of this size. He also indicated that asset sales had slowed and that they were trying to expedite some of these sales.

In respect of the Treasury Management report, he explained that a lot of money had been invested and referred to the control of the Council's finances. The forecast outturn for

2025/26 was £1,287k. He informed the Committee that the Council was in a good financial position.

A further update on the Council's financial position would be given at the Cabinet meeting held in January 2026.

Advanced Questions and Responses

Pride of Place Impact Fund – People seem to be disillusioned about the lack of grant funding or financial assistance for their own towns. There were complaints about a lack of traditional shops, lack of facilities for children, most of the grant money being focused on Accrington town centre and a need for signposting to volunteer opportunities, e.g. with Prospects.

Is it intended to give any money to Rishton from the “Pride of Place Impact Fund”?

Response –two Government schemes in place:

- a) Plan for Neighbourhoods - £20m over 10 years to regenerate communities, strengthen social infrastructure, and empower local decision-making. Reference was made to how the scheme operated, who was responsible for decision making, the allocation of funding to initiatives and consultation with the community.
- b) Pride of Place Impact Fund - A £150m Government fund pot available for all Councils for immediate improvements anywhere in the borough. £1.5 m for each Council to be spent within this and the next financial year. This could be used for match funding but would also be used to drive initiatives in areas other than Accrington town centre.

Councillor Dad pointed out that the funding allocated under the Pride of Place Impact Fund was for initiatives right across the borough.

Members queried and commented on the following issues:

- Requested assurance that there would be a distinction between house building and community retention e.g. elderly people wanted to retire in areas close to their families. Housing provision was required for elderly people.
- Members were encouraged to hear that funding was being provided for areas outside of Accrington town centre and alluded to the need to keep the borough's townships from falling into disrepair.
- A request for information in relation to works done to Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre and in Rhyddings Park.
- A request for an explanation for the process of the sale of the Council's assets.

The Executive Director of Resources reported that the Council had no plans to sell Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre and that works had been planned and budgeted for the building. He explained that specific legislation was required for the sale of public assets and indicated that he would provide a full response to Councillor Addison.

Resolved - **That the reports and the Council's financial position be noted.**

255 To Review the Number of Empty Homes in the Borough

The Environmental Health Manager (Housing Standards), Tom Birtwistle, presented a report to provide the Committee with an overview of the number of empty residential and

commercial properties within the borough, he outlined the current service demands which related to these premises and the challenges in returning properties to use, including the limitations of the Councils legislative powers and work in default options.

The following information was provided to Committee providing data in relation to empty properties and the challenges in bringing them back into use:

- The number of empty properties in the borough was reducing
- The number of complaints with regards to empty properties was increasing.
- The number of empty commercial properties was static, with problems mainly in the town centres.
- There were limitations in the enforcement actions that could be used.
- Issues with the number of empty commercial properties: large industrial sites were often contaminated and not easy to bring back into use; some commercial properties were owned by limited companies, not always UK based.
- Properties in probate (some disclaimed by the Duchy due to the low value of the properties and the cost of bringing them back into use).
- Private owners
- Enforcement action was a lengthy process and if Council undertook works in default, costs could not always be recovered.

Advanced Questions and Responses

1) How many empty properties have been turned into HMOs?

Data in relation to HMO conversions from long term empty properties was not held by the Housing Standards Team. A request was made to the Council Tax department to establish if this data could be extracted from their existing records. The following response was provided:

“There are 191 properties that are classed as owner liable due to being in multi-occupation on the Revenues system. Of those 191 properties, 9 remain empty and 22 have been occupied since the 31.12.24.”

This data would indicate that 22 properties are now HMO's which were previously un-occupied. Councillor Clegg requested clarification.

2) Have you requested an increased budget for works in default?

A request in 2022 was made by the Head of Environmental Health in relation to the existing work in default budgets. At the time, no budget was available and it was expected that expenditure would be offset by the charge applied to properties and subsequently repaid by property owners. However, property charges are difficult to recover and the process can take years to complete. Therefore, the decision was made that works in default should only be considered as a last resort and where there is a public health or safety concern.

3) Vacant Commercial Properties – These are increasingly sold using online Auctions and only scant reference is made to the fact that Planning Permission may be needed for any Change of Use. This also applies to HBC Assets. This can lead to (1) Unauthorised Use, adding to the workload of our Planning Enforcement Team and (2) The property continuing to stand empty because the new owner can't get Planning Permission for the usage they had in mind. If HBC

is the seller, could they draw attention to the fact that Planning Permission might be needed for Change of Use?

The sale of Council owned assets was not within the remit of Housing Standards, however, contact had been made with the Regeneration and Property Manager. The reply was as below:

“When selling or leasing assets the Property Team includes in the particulars the need for the purchaser or lessee to attain their own permissions (could be planning and or building control). In some negotiations the sale is conditional on the purchaser getting planning approval for their intended use and on occasion the sale has fallen through because planning was not attainable.”

4) Can Councils apply any pressure for HM Land Registry records to be brought up-to-date? Despite increasing their Search Fees they have a backlog of over a year, meaning that if it's known that a property or piece of land has changed hands, it isn't possible to find out the new owner's identity.

Contact and requests for assistance between government organisations would normally fall within the remit of the Member of Parliament for Hyndburn.

Councillor Addison referred to the importance of records being kept up to date.

Members submitted queries and comments on the following issues:

- Funding problems limited any action the Council could take.
- Rough sleepers were occupying the empty property in the Barnfield area – what could be done about this?
- A proposal to list empty properties on the Council's website, detailing current works on the properties as well as listing commercial properties to rent. The Council could work with the owner to help to sell/lease properties.
- Was there a pattern in who owned problematic/empty properties. Did the same owners/landlords names keep arising? Would licensing help with these issues?
- What would happen to empty properties on site of heritage protection. Reference was made to Mercer House and loopholes in regulation.

The Environmental Health Officer (Housing Standards) reported that empty properties were the responsibility of private owners although the Police did have powers to intervene if permission was granted by the owner. He indicated that he would look to see if anything was actionable such as property access being open.

In respect of the proposal to list empty properties on the Council's website, he indicated that he would have to seek legal advice on GDPR in relation to this. He also reminded the Committee that the Council was limited in its resources (both staffing and finance) to manage the various schemes suggested but that he would take the ideas back for further consideration.

He reported that there were more 'problematic' empty properties and many were long term empties. He explained that ownership was a 'mixed bag' as some were owned by individuals and some were owned by limited companies. Many owners were difficult to trace. Empty properties were also targeted so could become a neighbourhood issue.

Commercial properties were often held as assets and even when sold would not be brought back into use.

He indicated that he would investigate further the issue raised around Clayton Clinic, Church Street, Clayton Le Moors.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

256 An Update on the Impact of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the Borough

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor Munsif Dad, and Head of Planning and Transportation, Adam Birkett, submitted a report to provide the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on the impact of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the Borough and progress on the implementation of the Article 4 Direction, scheduled to take effect in March 2026 (the 'March 2026 Article 4 Direction'). This Direction removes permitted development rights for small HMOs in specified areas of the Borough. The report also sets out further recommendations regarding the investigation of extending Article 4 Direction coverage to those electoral wards not currently included.

Councillor Dad referred to the content of the report which may lead to an extension to the Article 4 Direction. In addition, other Boroughs had been monitored, and this information would be used to decipher any further action by the Council.

The Head of Planning and Transportation provided details of the implementation of the Article 4 Direction due to come into force in March 2026. He explained that this would remove permitted rights, giving the Council full control of how planning permission was determined for 9 wards. The remaining 7 wards would not have this coverage and, therefore, may feel the effect of displacement and overspill into their wards. He pointed out that they were aware of Chorley and Rossendale beginning borough wide Article 4 Directions. The Committee was informed that this did come with risks, in respect of possible compensation claims, and this was being taken into consideration. He did note that Chorley had 31 HMOs borough wide and Hyndburn had 185 HMOs.

Advanced Questions and Responses:

- 1) There had been disappointment that other wards had not been included in Article 4 Direction. Could you explain the timescales for potentially including more wards/the whole Borough in the Article 4 Direction?

The Head of Planning and Transportation explained that the current Article 4 Direction could be modified to include the remaining wards but this would mean withdrawing the Article 4 Direction first. He, therefore, proposed that an application for an additional Article 4 Direction which, if approved, would take effect in 12 months' time. The aim would be to align an additional Article 4 Direction with the current one, due to come in force on 15th March 2026, should relevant approval be given. However, he also pointed out that work on an additional Article 4 Direction would require additional resources, in the form of staffing and finances.

- 2) Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has included the whole Borough in their Article 4 Direction. Are you using their experience to provide more information about the possible challenges of including the whole borough in the Article 4 Direction.

He referred to how the Council had monitored the use of Article 4 Direction coverage of the whole of a borough by other authorities and was aware of the

challenges of proceeding to apply for a further Article 4 Direction. He explained how evidence would be collated to submit a good case.

Members submitted the following comments and queries:

- Other authorities had used Article 4 Direction to cover the whole of their boroughs.
- Would a further Article 4 Direction, covering the whole of the borough, overlap with the licensing of landlords?
- Did the number of HMOs in a ward contribute to the need for a ward to be covered by an Article 4 Direction?
- The current coverage of the Article 4 Direction split areas and did not make sense as the demographic was almost the same.
- Reference was made to 3.16 of the report and showed that there had been 'no evidence' to indicate that HMO numbers had increased in wards not included in the March 2026 Article 4 Direction, which is consistent with the fact that the Direction has not yet taken effect.'
- Did the Planning Department have enough resources to deal with the extra work required to implement an additional Article 4 Direction?
- What was the definition of an HMO?

Councillor Dad indicated that it was the Council's intent to proceed with an Article 4 Direction covering the whole of the borough, as soon as possible. He indicated that a report would be submitted to Full Council in the New Year providing further details of a plan.

The Head of Planning and Transportation explained that an Article 4 Direction did not impact the licensing of landlords as this was two separate regimes. He informed the Committee that there was no threshold for HMOs in a ward to justify the implementation of an Article 4 Direction. He explained that resources in the Planning Department were limited and that some work may be outsourced but Officers would also, be required to pick up work.

The definition of a house of multiple occupancy (HMO) was a property occupied by two or more households with shared facilities. He explained that properties such as bedsits occupied by 3 to 6 people, forming more than one household with shared facilities would be considered a HMO.

The Environmental Health Officer (Housing Standards) explained that there were multiple definitions for HMOs in legislation, including in relation to planning, licensing and smaller HMOs which were outside of the scope for licensing.

The Head of Planning and Transportation clarified that the implementation of an Article 4 Direction did not mean that planning applications would be refused but explained that it would make sure that planning permission was sought and give Councils more control.

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

257 Planning Enforcement

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor Munsif Dad, and the Head of Planning and Transportation, Adam Birkett, submitted a report to provide the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on the resources, performance and current workload of the Council's planning enforcement service.

Councillor Dad provided an overview of the report and pointed out that the Council had over 400 live cases but that the backlog of cases had been mainly caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Head of Planning and Transportation referred Members to Table 1 of the report, which showed outstanding live cases by year since 2025 to the present. He explained that there had been an increase in the number of complaints submitted and that the service, typically, received approximately 250 complaints per year. Since April 2025 Officers had closed 151 cases but receive 154 new cases during the same period. The demand for the service remained high. Resources to reduce the backlog had been put into place, including the appointment of an extra Officer. He pointed out that a draft Planning Enforcement Plan had been presented to Cabinet on 3rd December with a recommendation for adoption and implementation early in the New Year. The Plan aimed to manage disputes and offences. In addition, the Planning Department had also upgraded its software system, to manage planning application records and associated documents. Despite the extra resources, he informed Members that the Planning Department still needed to make difficult decisions when determining how to deal with the volume of their workloads.

Advanced Questions and Responses:

- 1) Accrington Stanley have breached planning enforcement rules for over four years. Could you explain how they been able to breach the rules to a point that nothing can now be done?

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor Dad, informed the Committee that a report was due to be submitted to the Planning Committee on 17th December at which this item would be discussed in more detail. The Head of Planning and Transportation explained how they dealt with the complaints they received and how they always aimed to keep complainants informed.

Councillor Addison expressed concern about the increasing number of people who did not think they should apply for planning permission and consequently, more were breaching regulations.

Councillor Smithson asked if there was a breakdown of data, per ward, showing where planning breaches were. The Head of Planning and Transportation reported that these figures were not held. He did indicate, however, that there was an intention to report the number of Planning Enforcements to future Planning Committees and to carry out further monitoring to build a baseline of information. This, he pointed out, would form a pool of data members could tap into.

Councillor Clegg suggested a shared system with Planning so that Members could share back with residents and therefore, reduce workloads on Officers. The Head of Planning and Transportation indicated that there may be GDPR issues with this.

- 2) There are 130 outstanding live cases listed for 2025:
 - a) What action is the Council taking to deal with these outstanding cases; and
 - b) Table 1 in the report shows an increasing number of outstanding cases year upon year. Could you explain why.

Councillor Dad reported that there were 130 outstanding cases but there was an increasing number of complaints which meant that the number of live cases remain similar.

The Head of Planning and Transportation explained that the backlog of enforcement complaints had increased because of the Covid-19 pandemic but, in 2022, the Council had appointed a second Enforcement Officer to deal with the backlog and have, also, upgraded

its software system with the aim of maximizing efficiency. He aimed to maintain the integrity of the Planning system.

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

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed

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PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 11th February, 2026

Present: Councillor Dave Parkins (in the Chair), Councillors Bernard Dawson MBE (Vice Chair), Mike Booth, Loraine Cox, Clare Pritchard, Kath Pratt, Judith Addison, Noordad Aziz, Stewart Eaves and Munsif Dad BEM JP

Apologies: Councillors Joyce Plummer, Scott Brerton, Stephen Button and Josh Allen

285 Apologies for Absence, Substitutions, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Apologies for Absence were given by Councillors Scott Brerton, Stephen Button, Joyce Plummer and Josh Allen.

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP substituted for Councillor Brerton.

286 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last Planning Committee held on the 17th of December 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved – That the minutes be received as a correct record.

287 Town and Country Planning Act 1990- Planning Applications for Determination

288 11/25/0485 - The Plough Pub & Restaurant, Broadfield, Oswaldtwistle, BB5 3RY

Mr Joshua Parkinson, Planning Manager (Development Manager), presented the application to the committee, informing of the proposed change of use from a restaurant and bar to an adult's day centre.

No external changes were proposed to the building, the application retained the existing access points, including the ramped access available via the car park and pedestrian access point at the front elevation.

The application proposed operating times from 8am to 6pm 7 days a week.

No objections were received from Lancashire County Councils Highways team subject to a planning condition securing the existing parking provision at the site.

1 Letter of objection and 1 letter of support were received and are detailed on page 6 of the agenda.

1 Additional letter was received highlighting concerns with high-speed vehicles on the road after the agenda was made public.

Mr Parkinson highlighted that the public house has been marketed for sale since 2019 with only 2 offers being made for the property. One relating to this application and the other to use the site for retail use on the ground floor and residential space on the 1st floor. This offer was refused due to the offered price being lower than the accepted offer.

Mr Parkinson advised the committee that officers were satisfied that Policy DM8 (1(a)) had been sufficiently addressed.

Mr Parkinson also pointed out that there were 2 other public houses identified within 10 minutes walking distance of the site. Complying with Policy DM8 (1(b)).

The Application was recommended for Approval with the conditions listed on page 13 of the agenda.

Members discussed the application, mentioning their sadness at the loss of a popular local venue but considered the alternative use of the property more beneficial than the building remaining empty.

Members found the application to be acceptable but highlighted the change by the applicant to prevent wheelchair access mentioned at page 6 of the agenda due to highway concerns. Members discussed adding this as a condition to the applications approval to prevent this being used in the future.

Resolved – The application was approved with authority delegated to the Chief Planning and Transportation Officer to draft an additional condition to those listed in the report, including restrictions of the ramp access to the property.

289 11/25/0504 - 58 Station Road, Rishton, BB1 4HF

Miss Rosie Maguire, Graduate Planning Officer, presented the application to the committee. Miss Maguire informed the committee that the application proposed the erection of a 2.3 meter extension to the 1st floor, coterminous with the length of the ground floor (excluding the attached garage). The existing garage and conservatory would be converted into a united garage, increasing the height from 2.4 meters to 3 meters.

No Objections were received from Sports England or Hyndburn Council's Environmental Health Team.

10 Objections were received from residents, highlighted on page 17 of the agenda.

An additional 2 Objections were received after the agenda was published for similar reasons to those stated on the previously mentioned page 17 of the agenda.

Miss Maguire highlighted the applications scale and the encroachment on the neighboring property when assessed against the 45-degree guideline. Miss Maguire informed the committee that while the property already intersects the neighboring dwellings outlook, this does not justify further encroachment which would be materially worsened by the proposed application.

The application was recommended for refusal.

Members discussed the application and the impact on the neighboring residents, highlighting the loss of light to the neighboring property and its impact on the resident's enjoyment of their property.

Resolved – The application was refused as per the officer's recommendations.

290 11/25/0431 - 4 James Avenue, Great Harwood, Lancashire, BB6 7ND

Mr Adam Birkett Chief Planning and Transportation Officer presented the report to the committee, highlighting the properties features as a semi-detached dwelling with 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, living room, kitchen/diner and parking for 2 vehicles.

M Birkett informed the committee the application is in reference to a care home for 1 child with 2 carers present on a rolling basis.

1 Objection was received from a resident detailed on page 23 and 24 of the agenda. Lancashire County Councils Children's Services also submitted an objection, detailed on page 24 and 25 of the agenda. Lancashire County Council's Highways Team submitted no Objections.

Mr Birkett advised the committee that the Planning Inspectorate had granted the appeal of 2 similar applications in which the planning committee had refused the applications which have subsequently been overturned.

Mr Birkett advised the committee that while the Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to Children's Care Homes is useful and some weight should be given to this, any conflict with the policy should be weighed in the planning balance.

Similarly, Mr Birkett informed that while the proposal removes a market dwelling at a time where the council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing supply the harm is not considered sufficient enough to warrant refusal of the application.

The application was recommended for approval with the conditions listed on pages 31 and 32 of the agenda.

Members discussed the number of applications for similar proposals which had been through the planning committee recently and questioned how closely the model mimics that of a family home. Members commented on the increased number of children being placed in these homes from outside the area and the impact this must have on vulnerable children.

Resolved – Members voted to go against the officer decision and refuse the application on the following grounds:

- Conflict with Policy 1 of the SPG
- Removing a market dwelling at a time when the council cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing.

291 11/25/0400 - 4 Sefton Close, Clayton-le-Moors, Lancashire BB5 5WS

Mr Adam Birkett Chief Planning and Transportation Officer detailed the report to the committee. Advising that the application related to a detached property with gated access to private parking for up to 6 cars. The property has 4 bedrooms with a 5th bedroom visible on the floor plans from a converted garage.

The application proposes to care for 3 vulnerable children between the ages of 8 and 17 who present emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

111 Objections to the application were received and detailed on pages 34 to 36 of the agenda.

No Objections were given by Lancashire County Councils Highway Team.

Mr Birkett advised the committee that while there was some conflict with Policies 1 and 2 of the Children's Home Supplementary Planning Guidance there is no evidence to suggest this would result in undue harm to the residential character of the area. Similarly, while the application would remove a market dwelling at a time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing supply, the harm would not be significant enough to warrant refusal of the application.

The application was recommended for approval.

Members discussed the application and highlighted the applications comments regarding the children's emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Members queried if this would impact the neighbouring resident's amenity more so than the type of children's home application that have been brought before the committee recently. Mr Birkett advised that there was insufficient evidence to suggest this would be the case and the planning system is unable to control the behaviour of individuals. Members also emphasised that any refusal to the application would need to be based on material planning reasons only.

Resolved – The application was approved as per the officer's recommendation with the conditions noted in the agenda.

292 Update Sheet

The update sheet was noted.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Monday, 16th February, 2026

Present: Councillor Bernard Dawson MBE (in the Chair), Councillors Peter Edwards and Danny Cassidy

293 Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest, Dispensations and Substitutions

No Apologies for Absence or Declarations of Interest were given.

294 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last Audit Committee held on the 8th of December 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved – That the minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

295 Internal Audit Plan Progress Update

Mr Mark Beard, Head of Audit and Investigations, presented the report to the committee. Informing that the update was regarding reports issued between the period of December 2025 and January 2026.

The target in place is to complete 98% of the Audit Plan by the end of the financial year. The current projected out turn position for 2025/2026 is 96.63%. Mr Beard informed that the position as of the end of January 2026 was 80.53%.

The following Audits were carried out for the December 2025 to January 2026 period:

Leasing Arrangements – Substantial Assurance

1 Recommendation was made as per page 10 of the agenda.

Facilities Team – Substantial Assurance

1 Recommendation was made as detailed on page 10 of the agenda.

Mr Beard informed the committee that since the agenda's publication this recommendation has been implemented.

Accrington and Great Harwood Town Centre Greening – Substantial Assurance

2 Recommendations were made as detailed on pages 10 and 11 of the agenda.

Mr Beard advised the committee that the UKSPF grant funding agreement has been signed.

ICT Security Policy – Comprehensive Assurance

No issues reported.

Resolved – The committee noted the information.

296 Follow Ups Update

Mr Mark Beard, Head of Audit and Investigations, presented an update to the committee of the previously agreed action plans for completed audit reports for the period of December 2025 to January 2026.

The areas reviewed were:

Network Controls – 2 actions.
1 Action Partially Implemented.
1 Action Implemented.

ICT Assets – 1 action.
1 Action Partially Implemented.

GDPR & Document Retention Policy – 1 action.
1 Action Implemented.

Risk Management & Policy Framework – 2 actions.
1 Action Partially Implemented.
1 Action Implemented.

Payroll – 9 actions.
5 Actions Partially Implemented.
4 Actions Implemented.

Pages 16 to 18 of the agenda highlighted the areas which were reviewed and their corresponding actions.

Resolved – The committee noted the report for information.

297 Internal Audit Plan 2026/27

Mr Mark Beard, Head of Audit & Investigations, informed the committee of the Internal Audit Plan for the financial year 2026/27. The Internal Audit Plan forms the work plan of the Internal Audit Team for the financial year. It is risk based and set annually.

The 2026/27 Internal Audit Plan has had some alterations which reflect changes occurring within the Council as well as changes designed to streamline the Audit Plan.

Page 20 of the agenda highlights the amendments and areas added to the 2026/2027 plan. In total 2 areas have been added to Ad-hoc and form part of the work planned for 2026/27. There are 5 areas that have remained in Ad-Hoc & Investigations section of the 2026/27 Internal Audit Plan. Of the 5 areas, two are carried forward from the 2025/26 Audit Plan.

The Audit Plan risk assessment highlighted 13 audit areas as high risk, a decrease of 8 on 2025/26. The 2026/27 Audit Plan includes all 13 of these high risk areas.

There are 98 medium risk areas, an increase of 9 on 2025/26 and 17 are included in the Audit Plan. The remaining 81 medium risk areas will remain on a reserve list and will be included if other time allocations such as contingency days are not utilised.

There are 36 low risk areas, a decrease of 1 on 2025/26. None of the low risk areas are likely to be covered in 2026/27 Audit Plan unless the level of risk significantly increases or a specific issue is identified during the financial year.

Resolved – The Audit Committee voted to approve the Internal Audit Plan for the 2026/2027 financial year.

298 External Audit Update

Mr Daniel Watson, Partner at Forvis Mazars, advised the committee of the Audit Strategy and Completion Report for the year end 31st of March 2025.

Due to the backlog in financial reporting in recent years legislation was passed in 2024 to address the backlog by introducing 'backstop dates' for the publication of financial statements, even if the audits had not been completed. This was intended to enable the sector to focus on the current financial position rather than historic information. As a result of these measures, the Council successfully published the 2024/25 statement of Accounts in June 2025, meeting the statutory deadline.

Disclaimed Opinions were issued for 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 financial years. Due to this the external auditors do not have assurance over the opening balances in the 2024/2025 financial statements.

Mr Watson advised that they will be issuing a disclaimed opinion to allow the Council to publish its financial statements by the backstop date of 27 February 2026 as required by the relevant legislation.

Mr Watson explained the Value for Money Arrangements, highlighting the removal of a significant weakness which has been carried over from 2020/2021's financial accounts. Mr Watson informed that the council have implemented the recommendations made in previous years and no material disclosures were omitted in the accounts for 2024/2025. The accounts production process is now operating effectively and in compliance with national requirements.

Mr Watson concluded that the previously reported significant weakness in financial reporting has been addressed.

Resolved – The Committee noted the report.

299 Statement of Accounts 2024/2025

The following matter was submitted as urgent business with the Chair's agreement in accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the reason being to enable the authority to comply with the provisions of Regulation 9A(3) of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended) to provide for its accountability statements for the financial year beginning 2024 to be published on or before 27th February 2026.

The Committee was invited to consider approving the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2024/25, so that they could be published by the statutory backstop deadline of 27th February 2026 and to provide delegated authority to the Executive Director (Resources) to provide the necessary Letter of Representation for 2024/25 to the External Auditors (Forvis Mazars) before they issued their audit report.

The Executive Director (Resources) referred Members to the draft Statement of Accounts for 2024/25, which had been approved by the Committee on 22 September 2025, a copy of which was available at Appendix A to Item 5 of the Agenda for that meeting using the following link:

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/documents/g3036/Public%20reports%20pack%2022nd-Sep-2025%2016.00%20Audit%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

The unaudited accounts had previously been made available for public inspection on 30th June 2025, meeting the statutory deadline. The inspection period had then run for 30 days, concluding on 6th August 2025, with no public representations received.

In accordance with Regulation 9(3) of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 the Executive Director (Resources) re-confirmed on behalf of the authority that he was satisfied that the Statement of Accounts presented a true and fair view of:

- (a) the financial position of the authority at the end of the financial year 2024/25; and
- (b) the authority's income and expenditure for that financial year,

Resolved – The Audit Committee voted by unanimous decision:

1) That the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 be agreed and that the Chair of the Committee (being the person who presided at this meeting) be authorised to sign and date the Statement of Accounts.

2) That authority to approve and submit the Letter of Representation for 2024/25 to the External Auditors be delegated to the Executive Director (Resources), in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 11th March, 2026

Present: Councillors Bernard Dawson (In the Chair), Mike Booth, Joyce Plummer, Clare Pritchard, Judith Addison, Scott Brerton, Noordad Aziz, Stewart Eaves, Josh Allen, Munsif Dad BEM JP and David Heap

Apologies: Councillors Dave Parkins, Loraine Cox, Kath Pratt and Stephen Button

338 Apologies for Absence, Substitutions, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Apologies for Absence were given by Councillors Dave Parkins, Lorraine Cox, Kath Pratt, Stephen Button.

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP substituted for Councillor Parkins
Councillor David Heap substituted for Councillor Cox

339 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last Planning Committee held on the 11th of February 2026 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved – That the minutes be received as a correct record.

340 Town and Country Planning Act 1990- Planning Applications for Determination

341 11/24/0506 - Land off Blackburn Road, Oswaldtwistle, BB5 4NA

Mr Joshua Parkinson, Planning Manager (Development Manager), presented the application to the committee. Informing that the application related to the erection of 85 two-storey dwellings, comprising of a mixture of house types, accessed via the existing access which would be altered with a new estate road running northwards before splitting east and west.

There would be two attenuation basins to the northeast, along with notable landscaping buffers to the north and west.

The amended Planning Layout also notes areas of green space positioned to the west of the site.

The application site does not have a continuous, clearly defined boundary along its northern and eastern edges where it forms part of a wider network of fields that falls towards the Leeds and Liverpool Canal around 75m northeast.

It is bordered by other urban fringe land and Springfield Garage to the south with the latter occupied by Moving PEOPLE bus company. It is bounded to the west by Church and Oswaldtwistle Cricket Club with trees between. Further afield, Accrington Golf Club lies around 115m north.

A total of 164 objections were received and are noted in the agenda on pages 11 to 14.

Consultations were undertaken with the following organisations and the responses noted on pages 8 to 11 of the agenda: Cadent Gas, Electricity North West, Growth Lancashire (Heritage), Hyndburn Borough Council (HBC) Ecology, HBC Environmental Protection, HBC Housing, HBC Leisure Services (Parks), HBC Policy, HBC Waste Services, Lancashire Constabulary, LCC Highways, LCC Historic Environment, LCC Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), LCC School Planning Team, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, Sport England and United Utilities.

Mr Parkinson informed the committee that the proposal conflicts with the existing development strategy set out in Policy BD1 of the Hyndburn Core Strategy. However, the application would likely accord with the main modifications to the latest version of the Emerging Local Plan, including the emerging development strategy set out in Policy SP1 of the Emerging Local Plan.

Moreover, the application site predominantly related to safeguarded land, which was always intended for residential development.

Whilst it was previously intended for longer-term development needs, the Local Planning Authority cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. Taking all this together, Mr Parkinson advised that the location is suitable for the proposal.

Mr Parkinson advised that the proposal does not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and that it does not conflict with paragraph 153 of the Framework.

Mr Parkinson concluded that while the proposal conflicts with the existing development strategy and therefore the development plan taken as a whole. For the reasons given in the agenda, this attracts limited weight against the proposal. The tilted balance is engaged and weighs significantly in favour of granting planning permission. Therefore, the Framework as an important material consideration indicated a decision otherwise than in accordance with the plan and it is recommended that planning permission be approved.

The officer recommendation was to grant the Head of Planning and Transportation delegated powers to grant planning permission subject to conditions listed in the update sheet.

Members discussed the complexity of the application in relation to the busy road which the application gains access from and the need for good quality housing. While members were generally in favour of more housing the location of the site brought forth concerns regarding the wildlife and the loss of greenspace.

Members agreed that Blackburn Road suffers from regular accidents and frequent speeding, even with some speed control measures in place such as the recently installed speed camera.

Resolved – Members voted to go against the officer decision and refuse the application on the following grounds:

- **The proposed development would result in unacceptable harm to highway safety and would therefore conflict with Policy DM32 of the Hyndburn Development Management DPD and paragraph 116 of the NPPF.**

N.B – 1. Vinette Davitt – Spoke against the application.

- Conflicts with Policy BD1 of the Hyndburn Core Strategy.
- Only Limited Weight can be given to the emerging local plan as it is still under consultation with the Inspectorate.
- Fails to meet the NPPF test 104 and local policies DM11 and SP8.
- The development will result in a loss of Biodiversity on site.

- Parking will significantly worsen with the addition of 85 new homes, most of which will likely have more than 1 car per household.
 - History of collisions, speeding and highway safety concerns on Blackburn Road.
 - Part of the proposed development lies within designated Green Belt Land which must be given substantial weight when considering the harm which will result from the proposal.
 - Pressures on an aging sewer system which has caused flooding previously.
 - Available Brownfield sites should be prioritised rather than valuable green space.
 - Previous Supreme Court Rulings have demonstrated a tilted balance does not outweigh the primacy of the development plan.
2. Councillor Zak Khan – Spoke against the application.
- Site not suitable for the increase in cars on the road as a result of the development.
 - Biodiversity on the site reduced because of the proposal.
 - Greenspaces should be protected.
 - Report does not identify several Red and Amber listed species on the proposed site.
 - Ecological structure cannot simply be re-created elsewhere once the original habitat is destroyed, there is no guarantee the wildlife will stay on site.
 - Multiple collisions on Blackburn Road over the years and significant speeding. Over 34,000 cars per year are reported to travel above the speed limit.
 - 2 other brownfield sites in Oswaldtwistle already have planning permission but remain undeveloped.
3. Megan Scarisbrick - Spoke in Support of the application.
- Representative of Gleeson Homes
 - Specialise in providing entry level homes aimed at low to middle earners. All developments incorporate homes which are affordable to couples in full time employment earning minimum wage.
 - Land is part of a former area of special restraint, intended for long term development needs.
 - In the emerging local plan, the land will be part of the urban boundary with all the proposed dwellings inside of this.
 - The council cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing; this development will contribute to this.
 - Mixture of 1–4-bedroom dwellings; semi-detached, detached and maisonettes.
 - Areas of green space, pocket parks and 5m landscape buffer incorporated into the plans.
 - No objections from statutory consultees.
 - Upgrades to the zebra crossing likely to cost in the region on £120,000.00

342 11/25/0124 - Land between Burnley Road and Altham Lane, Huncoat

Mr Joshua Parkinson, Planning Manager (Development Manager), informed the committee of the application. Noting that the proposed development comprises the construction of a residential relief road known as Huncoat Lane / Relief Road with associated works. The proposed development is intended to serve Huncoat Garden Village, which is an emerging strategic location for housing that would deliver around 1,500 to 1,600 homes.

The application site is a linear area measuring 10.6 hectares (ha) located east of the village of Huncoat and wholly within the Hyndburn Borough Council (HBC) and Lancashire County

Council (LCC) administrative areas. It extends from Altham Lane in the north to a roundabout on Burnley Road (A679) to the south and is located west of the Accrington Bypass (A56). The roundabout has four arms, two for Burnley Road and two slip roads for Accrington Bypass. The middle of the site crosses Burnley Lane.

Mr Parkinson advised that the proposal would contribute to the overall aim of Policy A9 of the Hyndburn Core Strategy as the first phase of a link road between Altham Lane and Burnley Road. Adding that there is overwhelming support for the proposal in the Emerging Local Plan, Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan and Huncoat Design Code, which weighs significantly in favour of granting planning permission.

Mr Parkinson explained that the proposal would involve a degree of conflict with policies BD1 and A9 of the Hyndburn Core Strategy, it would contribute to the overall aim of the latter as the first phase of a link road between Altham Lane and Burnley Road. The proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, including landscape and visual effects, and adverse effects relating to the splitting and severance of agricultural holdings.

There would also be some less than substantial harm to the setting of some nearby listed buildings and limited harm to some non-designated heritage assets. However, such adverse effects are to be expected with a scheme of this nature and scale.

The committee were informed that the Local Planning Authority had commissioned independent landscape and visual impact advice from a Chartered Landscape Architect. While they raised some points for clarification, they state that the proposal generally shows a well-considered scheme that works with the undulating topography to achieve a sensitive alignment with the minimum of cut and fill.

Mr Parkinson advised that the Planning officers consider that the proposal accords with the development plan taken as a whole. The proposal draws support from the Emerging Local Plan, Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan and Huncoat Design Code, which would be a material consideration of sufficient weight to outweigh any conflict and would also result in further benefits including a substantial biodiversity net gain above and beyond the mandatory BNG requirement.

The recommendation was to give the Head of Planning and Transportation delegated powers to grant planning permission subject to conditions to their satisfaction.

Members highlighted the importance of the application in reference to the larger Huncoat Garden Village Project. Noting that the road should remove some traffic from Huncoat.

Resolved – Members voted to approve the officer recommendation and delegated powers to the Head of Planning and Transportation to grant planning permission subject to conditions to their satisfaction.

N.B. 1. – Nick Whittaker – Spoke against the application

- 30 million pounds of public funding committed to the Huncoat Garden Village with 6.7 million to the relief road.
- Question posed on if improvements to the Griffins Head Junction will rely on public funds or future developers?
- Question posed on if an independent traffic assessment will be undertaken?

2. Miles Parkinson – Spoke in support of the application

- Noted that the application was a key part of Huncoat Garden Village.

- Asked the committee to keep Huncoat residents involved in future consultations and to keep an open line of communication surrounding the project.
 - Hyndburn Council will likely cease to exist in its current form in the next few years due to Local Government Reorganisation. Noted that Huncoat Garden Village will be Hyndburn Councils legacy.
3. Madaline Davis – Spoke in support of the application
- The application aims to improve travel links and relieve pressure on the local network.
 - Improvements made to cycleways, walkways and bus stops proposed.
 - The road is essential to support Hyndburn's Largest Housing Project.
 - Over 10% biodiversity net gain included in the proposal.
 - High quality design which will set the tone for Huncoat Garden Village.
 - Future enhancements to key locations such as Burnley Lane can be implemented as needed through safeguarded land.

343 11/26/0055 - Land off Crown Street, Accrington, Lancashire

Mr Adam Birkett Chief Planning and Transportation Officer advised the committee that permission had been sought for the construction of a car park at land bound by Crown Street, Ranger Street and Brown Street in Accrington.

Mr Birkett informed that the site spans 0.17 hectares and is situated within the urban boundary of Accrington, located just outside the town centre. The surrounding area includes a mix of uses including large employment/ industrial units, garages, offices and dwellings. The application site consists of a rectangular piece of land primarily comprising hardstanding/ tarmacked surfacing, perimeter fencing, a small brick shed and a large concrete storage bay (located centrally).

It is understood the application site has historically been used as a scrap yard/ storage yard for vehicles and a road gritting salt compound; however, it has remained vacant since 2020.

The proposed plan detailed 69 parking spaces (including 3no. disabled parking bays). The existing perimeter fencing is to be replaced on a like for like basis (2.1m high galvanised steel fence) as will the lighting columns. Access to the site would be taken via the existing access point off Crown Street – a 6m wide automated vehicle barrier will also be installed.

No objections were received by Lancashire County Council Highways or United Utilities.

Mr Birkett advised that while in technical conflict with CS Policy E2 and DMDPD Policy DM1 regarding the retention of "good quality" employment land, is considered to accord with the development plan as a whole and is acceptable in this instance. The proposal aligns with NPPF objectives for utilizing under-utilised brownfield land, and as it only affects a portion of the site and supports local council office infrastructure, it does not prejudice the overall industrial estate.

Members discussed how the site had been used previously as a scrap yard and that the proposed car park would be a visual improvement. Members also commented that they were happy to see brownfield sites being utilised rather than remaining vacant.

Resolved – Members voted to approve the officer recommendation and grant planning permission subject to the conditions noted in the report.

344 Update Sheet

The update sheet was noted.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed