
CABINET

Wednesday, 10th September, 2025

- 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 Judith Addison, David Heap, Zak Khan, Kath Pratt and Steven Smithson
- Apologies:** Councillor Ethan Rawcliffe
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143 Apologies for Absence

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

144 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

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

145 Minutes of Cabinet

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 30th July 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

146 Reports of Cabinet Members

Leader of the Council

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP reported on the following:

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government had set a timeline for Lancashire councils to produce a preferred option for local government reorganisation (LGR) by 28th November 2025. LGR was the process of moving from the current two-tier system of a county council, two smaller unitary councils and 12 district councils in Lancashire, to a simpler model of fewer unitary councils.

The Government aims with LGR were to improve efficiency savings, service delivery, provide stronger local leadership, economic growth, community identity and foster effective local partnerships while not hindering the ability to deliver sustainable and high quality services for residents.

Guidance stated that most new authorities should serve at least 500,000 people. Exceptions might be made to ensure the system worked well for each area.

Councils in Lancashire were working together and discussing possible options for reorganisation. The Council would continue to represent Hyndburn in these discussions in order to raise any concerns that might impact local issues or services.

Currently there were five proposals based on following models:

- Model 1 consisted of Lancashire being split into 2 large unitary councils with a North / South divide;
- Model 2 consisted of 3 unitary councils (North / East / West);
- Models 3 and 4 were 2 different configurations of 4 unitary councils; and
- Model 5 consisted of 5 smaller unitary councils.

A survey had gone live consulting the public on their view – this was available on the Council's website to complete calling on residents, businesses and community organisations to have their say on shaping the future of local government in the county.

The results of the survey, along with data from business cases compiled by consultants for each type of model, would be collated and made available for councils to help make the final decisions.

The Council would discuss these varying models and business cases at Scrutiny on the 5th November and Full Council on 13th November before Cabinet on 19th November was due to take a final decision on Hyndburn's preferred option in time for the Government's deadline of 28th November.

Once final reorganisation was submitted, the Government would determine which proposals were more suitable to take forward for further consideration before a decision was made.

Statutory consultation with residents and stakeholders was expected to take place on these proposals in the New Year, after which sometime over the summer the minister would make a decision on the reorganisation model in Lancashire.

In 2027, the new unitary councils would be established and would initially operate in shadow form to ensure a smooth transition from existing local government status to the new one. Elections to the shadow authority were expected to take place in May 2027.

In April 2028, the new unitary authorities would officially go live assuming legal powers and representatives and all 15 original Lancashire local authorities would be abolished.

Lancashire County Council Funding Contributions

Hyndburn was one of the four districts to benefit from the Levelling Up East Lancashire programme and would benefit from two connected projects as part of the programme:

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

Detailed information was now available about the two Safer, Greener, Healthier Streets projects in Hyndburn in the following locations:

- Woodnook; and
- Countess Street

The Public Transport Improvements would facilitate better travel between homes, jobs and services.

Further updates on these projects would be provided in the future.

Corporate Peer Challenge Review Visit

The Council recently welcomed back the Corporate Peer Challenge team, led by the Local Government Association, for a review visit. The council was very grateful to them for returning to assess progress and for the constructive feedback they had provided.

The team's written report was still awaited, which would set out their full assessment of progress since the main visit last year. However, the Leader was pleased to report that the verbal feedback received on the day was overwhelmingly positive.

The team had highlighted excellent progress on the Council's key strategic projects and noted how well these align with the new Corporate Strategy. They recognised that the structures in place, and the relationships between elected members, officers and the management team, were effective and provided the right space for discussion and debate to support strong decision-making.

They gave particular credit to the work the Council had undertaken on staff engagement this year, which was already delivering positive outcomes. Early results from the latest staff survey, which would be published shortly, suggested that staff really valued the changes that had been made.

They also recognised the Council's work on community cohesion, its communications with staff around local government reorganisation, and the progress being made on climate change and decarbonisation. The authority's transformation and digital work had also been highlighted as leading to real improvements in ways of working and in the Council's ability to deliver good services.

The team acknowledged that there was still more to do. Indeed, the Council's cross-party working group had driven an action plan, which set out a number of further steps, some of which were scheduled for later this year. The Council fully recognised this and was continuing to press ahead.

It was encouraging to hear that the team regarded the Council's direction of travel as positive, and that the work being undertaken was making a real difference for staff, members and communities.

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

Councillor Melissa Fisher reported on the following:

Local Elections

In response to questions raised on social media, Councillor Fisher indicated that Hyndburn's Labour Party did not have any power to cancel the planned local elections next year. The controlling group was not aware of any such proposals, but if this was to be proposed the decision would come from the Government.

Wilson Sports Hub

The Cath Thom Leisure Centre, at the Wilson Sports Hub, was due to open in approximately one month's time. A time-limited membership offer of £29.99 (with the price locked in for a lifetime) for the first 200 applicants had been a complete sell-out. The offer had been designed to quickly build up a strong customer base. It was anticipated that the centre would be really successful and councillors were looking forward to its grand opening.

Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Councillor Stewart Eaves reported on the following:

King George V Playing Fields

Delivery of the project at King George V Playing Fields remained on target. Officers would be in touch with the contactors next week to finalise the date for the commencement of work on the building.

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

Councillor Kimberley Whitehead reported on the following:

Heritage Open Days

The national Heritage Open Days campaign would provide an opportunity to explore some of Hyndburn's most iconic heritage sites between 12th September and the National Manufacturing Day on 25th September 2025. Sites would include:

- Haworth Art Gallery;
- Accrington Stanley Football Club;
- Accrington Town Hall (Mayor's tour);
- and many others.

Councillors were invited to support these Open Days where they could.

Portfolio Holder for Business, Growth and Sustainability

Councillor Scott Brerton reported on the following:

Grants to Support Local Businesses

The grants scheme for businesses for a range of activities, including education and start up programmes, was going well.

Accrington Futures Event

The Accrington Futures Event was due to be held again on 3rd October 2025 at Accrington Stanley's Wham Stadium. Over one thousand students were expected to attend to speak directly with over 50 employers, training providers, colleges, certain industry experts, the Army and Police, to help them to make informed decisions about their future.

Hyndburn Jobs Fair

The successful Jobs Fair run in March 2025 would go ahead once again. The last event, run by the Council, had helped support 45 local businesses with their recruitment and had attracted over 2,000 visitors.

Business Workshops

The business workshops series had proved to be hugely successful and thanks were due to all those involved in their organisation.

Further workshops were planned over the coming months.

Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Town Centres

Councillor Clare Pritchard reported on the following:

Public Spaces Protection Order

The Council was currently consulting upon a proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) covering Accrington town centre. The Order, if implemented, would allow the Council and Police to tackle anti-social behaviour and improve the quality of life for those who lived, worked, and visited Accrington. A survey was now live on the Council's website.

Levelling Up Projects

A preferred contractor had now been identified for the second phases (internal fit-out) of the levelling up projects at the Market Hall and at Burtons Chambers. A competitive procurement process had been undertaken to deliver the Phase 2 work and had resulted in the preferred contractor, Krol Corlett, based in Liverpool, Manchester and Preston, who had a strong track-record of refurbishment works. The Council would now work alongside Krol Corlett to conclude final matters before signing contracts, with works due to start later this month.

Leader of the Council

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP made a further announcement as follows:

Accrington Neighbourhoods Board

The Council was carrying out a recruitment exercise for a new Chair for the Accrington Neighbourhoods Board. An advertisement had been posted around six weeks ago initially for a period of three weeks, which had subsequently been extended. Six applications had now been received. The Leader of the Council and the local MP, Sarah Smith, would consider the applications and make a suitable appointment as soon as possible.

Councillor Whitehead clarified that she served on the Neighbourhood Board in her capacity as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire, not as a borough councillor. She reminded councillors that the Chair of the Board was responsible for making the wider appointments to the Board, not the Leader of the Council. Councillor Dad added that the core membership of the Board comprised the following 5 representatives:

- a local councillor (Councillor Munsif Dad)
- the local MP (Sarah Smith MP)
- Police and Crime Commissioner (Deputy PCC - Kimberley Whitehead)
- a county councillor from Lancashire (CC Ashley Joynes)
- the independent Chair (currently being recruited)

The Board's membership was not dissimilar from that of the previous Town Centre Partnership Board, which had included then Conservative Leader of the Council and Conservative MP.

Councillor Zak Khan, Leader of the Opposition, commented on the announcements above, asked the following questions and received the responses as summarised below:

- **Local Government Reorganisation** – The questionnaire by the consultants was now live. What input did the Leader of the Council have into the survey and would the results be broken down into statistics showing the views of residents in each district council area?
Response: Councillor Dad indicated that all district leaders continued to meet to discuss reorganisation. The specifics of the survey had been delegated to the Lancashire Chief Executives Group to develop via the consultants. The consultants report would be available to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Council, but it was not yet known how the results would be presented. David Welsby, Chief Executive, added that the Chief Executives Group was due to meet tomorrow and the latter point would be raised with them.
- **Corporate Peer Challenge Review Visit** – The overall process had been useful and Councillor Khan had himself provided some feedback to the peers. He had appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the Member Working Group for the review. Would the Peer Challenge feedback be shared widely and would the Member Working Group continue?
Response: Councillor Dad indicated that the Peer Review final report was expected soon and would be shared. It was unclear yet whether the Member Working Group would continue, as this largely depended on what was highlighted in the report. There should be no new recommendations.
- **Wilson Sports Hub** – The imminent opening of the Leisure Centre and uptake of membership was good news. What level of membership was required to make the venture viable and was the 200+ take up enough?
Response: Councillor Fisher replied that there were some wider targets set around performance. She undertook to reply directly to Councillor Khan with further details. The Leader of the Council added that Hyndburn Leisure had been selected to operate the centre because of its good track-record of service delivery. The centre should be viable, given that its first target of 200 members had already been met.
- **Business Grants** – It was encouraging to note that take up of business grants was good. What metrics were used to evaluate success and when would the detail be reported?
Response: Councillor Brerton indicated that this was an on-going process, but that initial findings were positive. Ultimately, the Council could look at the number of jobs created and how much inward investment from other sources had been received. It was anticipated that the first progress report would be available soon.
- **Accrington Futures Event** – The involvement of schools in this event was welcomed.
Response: Noted.
- **Public Spaces Protection Order** – When would the PSPO go live and what evidence was there that this would help?
Response: This type of measure had been used previously by the Council and did work. The implementation date had not yet been determined, as the consultation would not expire until 30th September 2025.
- **Accrington Neighbourhoods Board** – Councillor Khan noted that the population of Hyndburn was around 80,000 and expressed a view that the recruitment process

had not been transparent. Would the selection of the independent Chair be determined by the Leader and MP alone?

Response: The Leader of the Council indicated that the application process had been open to all, but only six people had replied. He and the MP would carry out any interviews and select the best candidate for appointment to the role of Chair.

147 Process for the Development of the Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2026/2027

Members considered a report of Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, providing an update on the development of the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets for 2026/27 and outlining how current risks and assumptions were affecting the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2026/27 to 2028/29.

Councillor Alexander provided a brief introduction to the report, highlighting the purpose of the report, the main risks and pressures within the MTFS, the timetable for setting the Budget and the three financial models included in the MTFS.

Councillor Zak Khan expressed a view that the Fair Funding Review would have a devastating effect on the Council's finances and could reduce available resources by some £5m. He acknowledged that this was not a situation caused by the controlling group, but asked how they intended to deal with the consequences of any loss of funding. This was important because Hyndburn was the 16th most deprived district in England. He asked if this would mean an increase in Council Tax, the sale of assets and changes to business rates. He also offered to work with the controlling group to help to identify possible solutions.

The Leader of the Council indicated that the authority had responded to the Government's consultation on 15th August 2025 and had engaged with the MP to lobby on the Council's behalf. He considered that the figure of £5m quoted was incorrect and that any assumption that Council Tax would need to be raised beyond the referendum threshold was flawed. Notwithstanding the engagement undertaken with the Minister and MP, Cabinet members were already working to consider how best to produce a viable budget.

Councillor Alexander expressed the view that comments such as 'devastating' were not helpful, when communicating the current position to staff and the public, as the final financial implications were not yet known. The Government's provisional funding announcement would be made in November/December 2025. Councillor Pritchard and Whitehead also spoke about the importance of not sensationalising the situation and of their personal commitment to work to ensure the best financial situation possible for the residents of Hyndburn. Councillor Alexander summarised by stating that she had experience of dealing with funding reductions when necessary and that, in any event, there might be some transitional arrangements introduced to minimise the impacts.

Councillor Dad gave an undertaking to meet with Councillor Khan about this matter and reaffirmed that Cabinet members had already been considering potential solutions for the last few weeks.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The Council had approved its annual Revenue Budget for 2025/26 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2025/26 to 2027/28 at the Full Council meeting on 27th February 2025.

Since the budget had been approved, the Government had launched the Fair Funding Reform 2.0 consultation and had signalled a multi-year settlement from 2026/27. Early analysis suggested Hyndburn Council might be disproportionately affected.

Therefore, to ensure a credible and robust budget could be delivered for the forthcoming year, the Council had begun early work to develop its financial plans for 2026/27. This early start would allow sufficient time for Officers and Members to shape a budget that aligned with the Council's corporate priorities, explored a range of options, and responded to emerging risks and pressures.

The budget was a key financial planning tool that supported delivery of the Corporate Plan. It had to demonstrate value for money, be subject to robust scrutiny, and stand up to external audit. The Council's approach to budget development was a core component of the External Auditor's assessment of its Value for Money (VfM) arrangements.

A sustainable budget over the life of the MTFS was essential. Where savings were required, the Council must have a credible and deliverable plan in place. Achieving a balanced and sustainable financial position not only supported service delivery but also provided assurance to External Auditors and helped to avoid adverse commentary in the VfM report.

Key Risks and Pressures in the Medium-Term Finance Strategy

The main risks/pressures to be considered were as listed below, with a more detailed description as set out in the report:

- Fair Funding Review;
- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR);
- Capital Programme – Funding Risk;
- Crematorium/Cremators;
- Waste Disposal Site/Transfer Station;
- Hyndburn Leisure;
- Huncoat Garden Village;
- Future Revenue Costs for Levelling Up Fund Projects;
- Supported Housing - Housing Benefit Claims; and
- Posts Funded from Reserves or External Grants.

Assumptions for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for Hyndburn Borough Council presented three scenarios:

- **Standard** – the most likely outcome for the year.
- **Pessimistic** – a “worst case” scenario.
- **Optimistic** – a “best case” scenario.

Given how early it was in the budget setting process and the unknowns at this point, (e.g. there were no indications of changes in Government funding yet) these scenarios could differ significantly at this stage.

There were several assumptions which were used as part of producing the budget. The estimates to be used in the construction of the budget were set out below:

Pay Award

The agreed pay award for 2025/26 was 3.2% for Hyndburn Borough Council, which was 0.2% over the budget and resulted in additional costs of c.£27k p/a. For financial modelling purposes, a 2.5% increase would be assumed in the standard scenario, with 4.0% used in the pessimistic case and 1.0% in the optimistic case.

Inflation

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 3.6% in the 12 months to June 2025. As inflation varied across cost types, utility cost forecasts would be calculated separately and were addressed below. For general inflation modelling, a rate of 3.0% would be used in the standard scenario, with 5.0% in the pessimistic case and 2.0% in the optimistic case.

Utilities

The Council had entered a new energy contract in October 2025, which ran until September 2027. While this provided short-term price stability, future costs remained uncertain due to potential market volatility and unpredictable usage patterns. To reflect this, inflation for gas and electricity would also be modelled at 3.0% in the standard scenario, 5.0% in the pessimistic case and 2.0% in the optimistic case.

Sales, Fees and Charges

The Council charged customers for a range of services, and the cost of delivering these was expected to rise due to inflation and pay awards. To help offset these pressures, it was considered prudent to increase fees accordingly. In the standard scenario, a 3.0% increase in fees and charges would be assumed, consistent with general inflation. In the pessimistic scenario, a lower increase of 1.0% would be assumed, reflecting potential constraints on the Council's ability to raise charges. In the optimistic scenario, a 4.0% increase would be assumed, reflecting greater flexibility and demand.

Following the recent Corporate Peer Challenge, the Council was reviewing its Sales, Fees and Charges income targets and developing a strategy for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This might include increasing existing charges or introducing new ones, subject to the outcome of the Fair Funding Reform consultation.

Government Grant Income

As previously mentioned, the Fair Funding Review (FFR 2.0) was expected to significantly impact Hyndburn Borough Council, primarily through a reduction in retained business rates income. The Council was working with LG Futures to model the potential financial implications of these changes.

In the standard scenario, a reduction of £1.75m was anticipated over the three-year multi-year period, phased with two-thirds of the reduction occurring in 2026/27 and the remaining third in 2027/28. A flat cash position was assumed for 2028/29.

In the optimistic scenario, the same phasing applied but with a reduced overall impact of £1.5m. The pessimistic scenario assumed a larger reduction of £2.0m over the same period.

A consultation response outlining the impact on Hyndburn and district councils more broadly had been submitted in August. The Government was expected to publish early

funding indications in November, followed by the provisional settlement and policy statement in December.

Income from Business Rates

Hyndburn Borough Council currently retained 40% of locally collected business rates and participated in the Lancashire Business Rates Pool, which allowed for a more efficient distribution of growth and risk across participating authorities.

However, due to the funding reset outlined in the Fair Funding Review (FFR 2.0), the future of the pooling arrangement remained uncertain. Any assumptions regarding future business rates income, including potential reductions, had already been incorporated into the funding scenarios detailed above.

Income from Council Tax

The main area of income over which the Council had direct control was Council Tax. As the billing authority, Hyndburn Borough Council was forecasting to collect a total of £52.748m in Council Tax during the 2025/26 financial year. Of this, only £6.141m (11.64%) was retained by Hyndburn, with the remainder distributed to Lancashire County Council, the Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner, and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service as precepting authorities.

Increases in Council Tax income was driven by two key factors:

- **Changes in the Council Tax base:** Each year, the Council calculated its tax base, which reflected the number of chargeable domestic properties, adjusted for discounts (e.g. single person discount) and Council Tax Support. This figure was converted into Band D equivalents to standardise comparisons. Growth in the tax base could result from new housing developments or bringing empty properties back into use. For Hyndburn, growth had been modest in recent years, with an increase of just 0.31% in 2025/26.
- **Changes in the Council Tax rate:** Each year, the Council decided whether to increase the rate of Council Tax it charged. Central Government set a referendum threshold, which limited how much councils could increase rates without triggering a local vote. In recent years, this had been 2.99% for district councils like Hyndburn, and 4.99% for upper-tier and unitary authorities.

The assumptions to be used for changes in Council Tax income in the revenue budget were as set out below:

	Pessimistic	Standard	Optimistic
Growth in Council Tax Base	0.31%	0.66%	1.13%
Increase in Council Tax Rate	1.00%	2.99%	2.99%

Council Tax Base

Under the Council's draft Local Plan, it was estimated that an additional 201 domestic properties would be built each year. When converted to Band D equivalents, this equated

to 146 properties, representing a 0.66% increase in the Council Tax Base. This assumption formed the basis of the standard scenario.

The Government had introduced new annual housebuilding targets for each borough, with Hyndburn's target set at 313 properties per year. This converted to approximately 250 Band D equivalents, resulting in a 1.13% increase in the Council Tax Base. This assumption underpinned the optimistic scenario.

The pessimistic scenario reflected the growth provided in 2025/26 and assumed a modest growth rate of 0.31%, equating to 69 Band D equivalents or approximately 94 new domestic properties.

The estimated annual increase in Council Tax income, before any changes to the tax rate, was:

- Pessimistic (0.31%) – £19,076
- Standard (0.66%) – £40,363
- Optimistic (1.13%) – £69,115

Council Tax Rate

The table below showed the current Council Tax charges per annum for each Council Tax band and the annual increase on each band across the three MTFS scenarios, ie. 1.00%, 2.99% and 2.99%:

Council Tax Band	2025/26 Charge	Increase of 1.00% (Pessimistic)	Increase of 2.99% (Standard)	Increase of 2.99% (Optimistic)
Band AA	153.59	155.13	158.18	158.18
Band A	184.31	186.15	189.82	189.82
Band B	215.02	217.17	221.45	221.45
Band C	245.74	248.20	253.09	253.09
Band D	276.46	279.22	284.73	284.73
Band E	337.90	341.28	348.00	348.00
Band F	399.33	403.32	411.27	411.27
Band G	460.77	465.38	474.55	474.55
Band H	552.92	558.45	569.45	569.45

The total changes in Council Tax income for each of the increases in the table above, before any growth in the Council Tax base were:

- Increase of 1.00% (Pessimistic) - £61,170 additional income ;
- Increase of 2.99% (Standard) - £183,288 additional income;
- Increase of 2.99% (Optimistic) - £183,288 additional income.

Total Council Tax Income

The table below showed the overall Council Tax Income which would be assumed under the three scenarios:

	2025/26	Pessimistic	Standard	Optimistic
Hyndburn BC Council Tax Income	£6,127,200	£6,207,600	£6,290,900	£6,381,700
Increase in Council Tax Income from 2025/26		£ 80,400	£ 163,700	£ 254,500

The assumptions mentioned above would be used initially and adjusted as appropriate once more certain information became available.

Revenue Budget Timetable

The Council's budget-setting timetable was influenced by the approval schedules of major Council Tax precepting authorities, such as Lancashire County Council. Hyndburn Borough Council's draft budget would be presented to Cabinet on 18th February 2026, with final approval scheduled for the Council meeting on 26th February 2026.

The timetable set out below ensured that the Council would meet its legal budget setting deadlines:

Action	Date
Process for the development of the budget report presented to Cabinet	10 Sept 2025
Finance Cabinet Working Group	02 Oct 2025
Initial Medium Term Financial Strategy report presented to Cabinet	22 Oct 2025
Finance Cabinet Working Group	04 Nov 2025
Provisional Finance Settlement expected to be published by Central Government (date to be confirmed)	Nov 2025
Finance Cabinet Working Group	02 Dec 2025
Council Tax Base Setting report approved by Cabinet	21 Jan 2026
Finance Cabinet Working Group	13 Jan 2026
Final Finance Settlement expected to be published by Central Government (date to be confirmed)	Feb 2025
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy & Revenue Budget reports presented to Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	16 Feb 2026
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy & Revenue Budget reports presented to Cabinet	18 Feb 2026
Final Medium Term Financial Strategy & Revenue Budget reports agreed by full Council	26 Feb 2026

Capital Budget Timetable

At the same Council meeting in February 2026, the Capital Programme for 2026/27 would be approved.

The timetable for the development of the Capital Programme was as set out below:

Action	Date
Process for the development of the budget report presented to Cabinet	10 Sept 2025
Capital Programme bidding process begins	27 Aug 2025

Deadline for submission of Capital Programme bids	30 Sept 2025
Finance Cabinet Working Group	02 Oct 2025
Finance Cabinet Working Group	04 Nov 2025
Finance Cabinet Working Group	02 Dec 2025
Finance Cabinet Working Group	13 Jan 2026
Draft Capital Budget report presented to Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	16 Feb 2026
Draft Capital Budget report presented to Cabinet	18 Feb 2026
Final Capital Budget report approved by full Council	26 Feb 2026

There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons

Resolved

- That Cabinet:

- (1) Notes the key risks and pressures to the delivery of the budget in 2025/26. These issues will continue to be monitored and reported through the regular Budget Monitoring updates presented to Cabinet.**
- (2) Approves the assumptions outlined in Section 5 of the report, which will be incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) updated for 2026/27 to 2028/29, to be presented to Cabinet in October.**
- (3) Notes the timetable set out in Section 6 of the report for the development of the Council's Revenue Budget for 2026/27.**
- (4) Notes the timetable set out in Section 7 of the report for the development of the Council's Capital Budget for 2026/27.**

With the agreement of the meeting, Agenda Item 8 was taken next.

148 Additional Climate Funding

The Cabinet considered a report of Councillor Stephen Button, Chair of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, setting out a recommendation of that committee that, during planning for the Council's budget for 2026-27, Cabinet give consideration to extending the Council's Climate budget in order to facilitate the Council's ability to achieve its net zero targets.

Councillor Button provided a short introduction to the report, in which he outlined the information provided to the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including the significant progress made to date in meeting the Council's net zero targets, but highlighting that progress had now slowed as much of the initial funding had now been used up.

Councillor Brerton thanked the Committee for its recommendation. He had attended that meeting and the debate had been very positive, recognising the Council's achievements so far. Some large projects had already been completed and the authority was widely regarded 'as punching above its weight'. The funding question could not be answered today, as there was a lengthy Budget process to go through. However, the suggestion would be considered positively at the appropriate time. Councillor Alexander thanked Councillor Button for his report and provided an assurance that the proposal would be on the table during the Cabinet's Budget deliberations.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

A Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been held on 14th July 2025 and had been consulted on the 'Draft Climate Strategy and Action Plan' and updated on the Hyndburn wide CO₂ emissions and the Council's transition to Carbon Net Zero. The Committee had been informed of the importance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C or staying well below 2°C to try to achieve pre-industrial levels and to achieve a 7.6% annual reduction in carbon emissions that would be required to achieve net zero targets. The Committee considered that further funding would be required to achieve its net zero targets and had made a recommendation that Cabinet give consideration to providing additional funding for the Climate Action Fund during its budget planning process.

In September 2019 Hyndburn Borough Council had declared a climate emergency and had committed to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2030. This pledge comprised a series of recommendations to help limit global warming.

One Carbon World had carried out a carbon footprint study between 2020 and 2023 and an initial review had indicated the Council's buildings were responsible for some 75% of its operational carbon emissions and the highest priority was to decarbonise energy usage, particularly from gas. The Council had set aside a £1m climate reserve pot to help to achieve Hyndburn's target to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030. The Council had been very proactive and had made great advances in reducing the Borough's carbon emissions. Since 2019 carbon emissions had been reduced by 55% by decarbonising the Council's building stock, procuring renewable energy tariffs, replacing diesel within the vehicle fleet with hydro veg oil and working towards sustainability, carbon capture and offsetting and habitat creation through various projects.

The climate reserve pot had also been used to appoint two officers, a Home Energy Reduction Officer and a Natural Spaces Project Officer over a 3 year period and both had contributed to the Council's successes in reducing or offsetting carbon emissions.

However, there had been a plateauing in the reduction of carbon emissions and without further funding the Council would be limited in how much more it could achieve and it might not be able to meet the 2030 net zero target. The Council had completed much of its work in decarbonising its Council buildings and many of the natural solution programmes delivered by external organisations were due to be completed within the next couple of years. As such, there was going to be a greater reliance on working towards net zero through a range of new smaller projects.

The Council's vision for a sustainable future was identified within the Corporate Strategy and focused on: Making the Council's Activities and Operations Net Zero by 2030, reducing fuel poverty – Home Energy Efficiency and Green Open Spaces and the Natural Environment to balance growth with sustainability.

Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

The Council could decide to provide no additional funding, but this would limit the Council's ability to achieve its target of net zero by 2030.

- Resolved**
- **That Cabinet notes the recommendation of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee that it should consider additional funding for the Climate Action Fund as part of its preparations for the 2026/27 Budget.**

149 Exclusion of the Public

- Resolved**
- **That, in accordance with Regulation 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item, when it was likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings that there would otherwise be disclosure of exempt information within the Paragraph at Schedule 12A of the Act specified at the item**

150 Telecommunications Mast at Harvey Street Oswaldtwistle

In accordance with Regulation 5(6)(a) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, approval was granted by Councillor Stephen Button, Chair of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the following decision being made by Cabinet on 10th September 2025, in private, on the grounds that the decision was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred. A notice to this effect had been published on the Council's website.

Exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 5 - In respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, updating Cabinet on a decision taken, following consultation with the Leader, in connection with resisting the proposed erection of a telecommunications mast on land at Harvey Street, Oswaldtwistle.

Councillor Dad provided a brief explanation of the Council's position as outlined in the report and indicated that Sarah Smith MP also supported this stance. Councillors Whitehead and Khan also placed on record their support for the actions as described.

Approval of the report was not considered to be a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The reasons for the decision were set out in the exempt report.

Alternative Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection

The alternative options considered and reasons for rejection were set out in the exempt report.

Resolved

- That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved.

151 Disposal of Elmfield Hall and External Areas to Community Solutions North West Limited

In accordance with Regulation 5(6)(a) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, approval was granted by Councillor Stephen Button, Chair of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the following decision being made by Cabinet on 10th September 2025, in private, on the grounds that the decision was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred. A notice to this effect had been published on the Council's website.

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

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, seeking approval for the grant of a new lease of Elmfield Hall and associated outbuildings and land to Community Solutions North West Limited on the basis set out in the report.

Councillor Dad indicated that the Labour Group continued to support community groups in the Borough and that both Community Solutions North West and the Green Spaces Forum should benefit from the arrangements proposed. Councillor Whitehead echoed these comments and highlighted what could be achieved when partners worked closely together.

Councillor Khan also mentioned that he supported these arrangements and added that he and Councillor Addison had met with representative of the lessee today, who had been complimentary about the work of the Council's officers to reach this solution. He asked what assistance might be available to community sector organisations who were having difficulties meeting the terms of a lease and if any protection for lease-holders could be built into those arrangements beyond the life of this Council. Leader responded that community organisations could discuss any financial issues with the Council. Cabinet members also agreed to look into the question of ensuring security of tenure for leaseholders following local government reorganisation.

Approval of the report was not considered to be a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The reasons for the decision were set out in the exempt report.

Alternative Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection

The alternative options considered and reasons for rejection were set out in the exempt report.

Resolved

- That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved.

152 Disposal of 3 and 5 Abbey Street, Accrington

In accordance with Regulation 5(6)(a) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, approval was granted by Councillor Noordad Aziz, Chair of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the following decision being made by Cabinet on 10th September 2025, in private, on the

grounds that the decision was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred. A notice to this effect had been published on the Council's website.

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

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, seeking approval for the disposal of two vacant Council owned properties, being 3 and 5 Abbey Street, Accrington, on the basis set out in the report.

Approval of the report was not considered to be a key decision.

Reasons for Decision

The reasons for the decision were set out in the exempt report.

Alternative Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection

The alternative options considered and reasons for rejection were set out in the exempt report.

Resolved

- That the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed