

# Agenda



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## Special Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday, 25th March, 2026 at 4.00 pm,**  
Queen Elizabeth Room, Scaitcliffe House, Ormerod Street, Accrington

### Membership

Chair: Councillor Kate Walsh  
Vice-Chair: Councillor Mike Booth

Councillors Josh Allen, Heather Anderson, Zak Khan, Clare McKenna, Clare Yates and Mohammed Younis

Co-optee – Shahed Mahmood

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## AGENDA

- 1 **Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**
  
- 2 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**
  
- 3 **Minutes of the last Meeting (Pages 3 - 6)**

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee, held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025, were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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



**4 Town Centre Levelling Up Project Progress** *(Pages 7 - 12)*

Councillor Clare Pritchard, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Town Centres, and Steve Riley, Executive Director, Environmental Services, to update the Committee on the Council's Town Centre Levelling Up projects.

## SPECIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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**Tuesday, 18th November, 2025**

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

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### **182 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.

### **183 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

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

### **184 Minutes of the last Meeting**

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

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

### **185 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 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> 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.**

## **186 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

# Agenda Item 4

<b>REPORT TO:</b>		Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
<b>DATE:</b>		25 March 2026	
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>		<b>Councillor Clare Pritchard – Transformation and Town Centres</b>	
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>		Steve Riley – Executive Director (Environment)	
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>		Town Centre Levelling Up funded project progress	
<b>EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)</b>	<b>Options</b>	Not applicable	
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	<b>Options</b>	If yes, date of publication:	

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the Levelling Up funded (LUF) town centre projects.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Special Scrutiny Committee note the detailed report and raise any questions prior to the scheduled meeting to allow for responses to be provided.

## 3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

- 3.1 The Levelling Up Fund was announced at the 2020 Government Spending Review. Its focus was on capital investment in local infrastructure projects that require up to £20m of funding and builds on prior programmes such as the 'Local Growth Fund' and 'Towns Fund'.

- 3.1.1 In January 2022, Cabinet gave its formal approval in support of the Town Centre Stakeholder Board's recommendations that the Council's LUF submission should focus around the following three principal interventions, noting that at the time 2 and 3 were not in the Council's ownership.

1. Redevelopment within the Indoor Market Hall and removal of the outdoor pavilions along Peel Street to provide an enhanced food and drink offering alongside traditional market stalls and new leisure offering – the intervention known as Market Hall.
2. Acquisition and external façade improvements/roof repairs to the properties of 43-59 Blackburn Road / 2-4 Church Street – the intervention known as Market Chambers.
3. Acquisition and redevelopment to the block 61-69 Blackburn Road to provide for a shared workspace offering – the intervention known as Burtons Chambers.

### 3.2 Acquisitions

3.2.1 Market Chambers - In total, six freehold and twenty-five leasehold interests have been acquired across the properties 2-4 Church Street and 43-59 Blackburn Road. The first secured in August 2023 and the last in July 2025. A General Vesting Declaration was made by the Council on the 10 February 2026 and notices have been posted around the property subsequent to the confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Order by the Inspector. Following a 3-month notice period, the Council will register the acquired land as a single title with the Land Registry.

### 3.3 Phase 1 construction contract

3.3.1 All works procured under the phase 1 contract are complete and the small number of defects identified by the phase 2 contractor have been resolved by the phase 1 contractor and their subcontractors.

### 3.4 Phase 2 construction contract (fit-out)

3.4.1 The following work headings are instructed:

- Full internal fit-out works to Market Hall and Burtons Chambers, such as floors, walls, ceilings, electrical, mechanical and ventilation systems, decorations, fixtures/fittings etc.
- Installation of a new damp proof protection system to two elevations in Burtons Chambers which are below the external ground level
- Re-covering to the roof of Burtons Chambers
- Further replacement of roof glazing, guttering and safety walkway to the Market Hall roof
- Installation of a Solar Photovoltaic system to the Market Hall roof including any repairs to the existing covering
- External public realm works to Peel Street (reduced scope from the original approved planning application, following extensive surveys which identified the proximity/quantity of utility services and river culvert)

3.4.2 Additional works have been identified as the project has progressed. These being additional asbestos removal, make secure existing floor joists, additional weatherproofing details to roof glazing. Whilst it has been necessary to instruct this work under the phase 2 contract, these costs are being managed within the overall approved budget.

3.4.3 There is no LUF funded work planned to the remaining leaseholder's ground floor external façade in Burtons Chambers, although designs have been future proofed as far as possible to enable the space could be incorporated, the curtain walling system/windows and internal services extended into the redeveloped workspace if/when it becomes vacant and the Council wished.

### 3.5 Monitoring / Reporting

3.5.1 The quarterly reporting requirement to MHCLG has changed. The Council is now required to report progress every six months, starting from April 2026 and the spending deadline has been extended, from 31 March 2026 to 31 March 2028.

3.5.2 The phase 2 contractor's most recent progress report highlights seventeen different contractors on the project. Of these, seven have head offices in the Merseyside area, four

in Greater Manchester, two in Cheshire/North Wales, two in West Yorkshire and one in Lancashire. Whilst there are no contractors registered address in Hyndburn, twelve operatives working on site live within postcodes BB3, BB4, BB5 and BB12.

### 3.6 Budget

3.6.1 At the end of the phase 1 contract, the project cost consultants and Council finance team reported £14,336,357 expenditure against £25,416,516 of available funding (£20,000,000 LUF funding, £3,916,516 from Hyndburn Borough Council and £1,500,000 of match funding from Lancashire County Council). This provided a remaining approved budget of £11,080,159 for phase 2 works (plus a separate client contingency of £500,000). At the time of writing the report, the latest cost report produced by the Council's consultants Rihbell and Rider Levett Bucknall, currently estimate an overall phase 2 cost of £11,129,503, which would be a £49,344 overspend and less than 2% of the approved budget. However, there are still twenty-two outstanding Provisional Sums yet to be agreed and instructed. These have a tender estimated contract value circa £1.3m so the overall phase 2 cost could still fluctuate upwards or downwards. The project team and phase 2 contractor are working to have these works agreed and the prices fixed within the coming month.

### 3.7 Programme

3.7.1 At the time of writing the report, the contractor's programme still showed a working assumption that the construction works to Burtons Chambers will be 'practically complete' by 6 July 2026 and Market Hall by 13 July 2026 (**RIBA 6 – Handover**).

3.7.2 Following the change to leasing the Market Hall, where the Council will now manage the Market Hall day-to-day operations, there is a substantial amount of work for the Council to undertake in promoting and signing up new food and drink traders plus any other general market type traders to compliment the existing traders temporarily decanted to the town square. The Head of Policy and Communications, who is not part of the existing LUF project team, has been asked to lead this work to ensure the Market Hall opens successfully.

3.7.3 Given the time required to secure new tenants and recant the traders from the temporary cabins, it has been agreed that the Market Hall re-opening will align with the Christmas Lights Switch events, on either the 19 or 20 November 2026 (exact day will be agreed nearer the time with market traders). The Council continues to liaise closely with the Burtons Chambers operator to understand the work/timescale they require for testing or any soft launching, but the operator has agreed to open in line with the Market Hall as the temporary cabins will need to have been removed from in front the building's entrance (**RIBA 7 – Use**).

## 4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 The report is for updating Cabinet on progress only.

## 5. Consultations

5.1 Monthly update meeting with Portfolio Holders, updates to Cabinet and progress briefings the existing Accrington Town Centre Stakeholder Board.

**6. Implications**

<p><b>Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)</b></p>	<p>The Council approved an additional £250,000 of funding to complete the agreed scope of works under the phase 2 contract (this represents a circa 1% increase in the total phase 1&amp;2 LUF budget).</p> <p>The Council approved a £500,000 'Client Contingency' for the phase 2 contract. Any use of this contingency will be at the sole discretion of the Council.</p> <p>The Council has updated its medium-term financial strategy MTFP as a result of acknowledging it will need to create a suitable maintenance budget and staffing structure given its responsibilities as a landlord, obligations under the management agreement with Burtons Chambers operator and funding the new in-house Market Hall operations team.</p> <p>Once the temporary market cabins on the town square have been removed some repairs to the existing paving may be needed. At present the work is unknown/uncosted but any repair work will be managed directly by the Council.</p>
<p><b>Legal and human rights implications</b></p>	<p>There are no legal and human rights implications from this update report.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of risk</b></p>	<p>There is a risk of unforeseen additional costs or client driven changes to the phase 2 works. This is mitigated as far as possible in agreeing a defined scope of works, fixing the costs of works were ever possible, strict procedures to investigate/sign off any claims for additional work/cost incurred by the contractor and where the designs have yet to be finalised/agreed, provisional sums have been market tested to give accuracy and some assurance.</p> <p>There is a risk to the Council of the contractor not completing by their programme date. This is mitigated as far as possible by including</p>

	<p>appropriate levels of liquidated damages. The level of such damages would cover additional costs incurred by the Council such as retaining the client project team, extended cabin hire etc.</p> <p>There is a risk to the Council of the Burtons Chambers operator withdrawing if the project is substantially delayed. This is mitigated as far as possible by regular briefings with the operator on the fit-out specification and project progress.</p>
<p><b>Equality and diversity implications</b>  <i>A <a href="#">Customer First Analysis</a> should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i></p>	<p>Not applicable for this report</p>

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

### 7.1 Accrington Martel Hall Operator Update – Cabinet December 2025

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=3031&Ver=4>

### Levelling Up Funded Projects Update – Cabinet October 2025

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=3030&Ver=4>

### Town Centre Levelling Up Funded Project Update – Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee October 2025

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=323&MId=3053&Ver=4>

### Town Centre Levelling Up Funded Project Update – Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee February 2025

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=323&MId=2990&Ver=4>

### Market Chambers Operating Costs - Cabinet January 2025

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2898&Ver=4>

### Appointment of Operator for Burtons Chambers – Cabinet March 24

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2802&Ver=4>

### Levelling Up Funded Projects Update - Special Scrutiny Committee March 2024

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2802&Ver=4>

### LUF and Other Funding Update – Cabinet February 2024

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2801&Ver=4>

### Markets Decant – Cabinet December 2023

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2799&Ver=4>

Market Traders Decant Accommodation – Cabinet October 2023

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2798&Ver=4>

LUF General Update and Operator Procurement – Cabinet September 2023

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2797&Ver=4>

Levelling Up Update – Special Scrutiny Committee July 2023

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=323&MId=2814&Ver=4>

Levelling Up Update – Cabinet June 2023

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=2795&Ver=4>

Levelling Up Update – Special Scrutiny Committee March 2023

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=323&MId=2773&Ver=4>

Levelling Up Update – Special Scrutiny Committee December 2022

<https://democracy.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=323&MId=2762&Ver=4>

**8. Freedom of Information**

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