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# CABINET

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**Wednesday, 19th October, 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE (in the Chair), Councillors Peter Britcliffe, Marlene Haworth, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt and Steven Smithson

**In Attendance:** Councillors Noordad Aziz, Loraine Cox, Bernard Dawson, Melissa Fisher, June Harrison, Katie-Louise Walsh and Kimberley Whitehead

**Apologies:** Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP

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## **145 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, who had a standing invitation to attend Cabinet meetings as Leader of the main Opposition party.

## **146 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no reported declarations of interest or dispensations.

## **147 Minutes of Cabinet**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

In respect of Minute 105 – Pest Control, Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE, Leader of the Council, reminded Members that the waiting time for visits was currently up to 5 weeks, but that 40% of appointments led to no treatment being undertaken. A trial scheme to reduce abortive visits, by retrospectively charging £25 for missed appointments, had not been successful. The new appointment fee proposed of £30 would equate to £7.50 per officer visit. The Lancashire average appointment fee was £48.62. The impact of the new pricing policy would be carefully monitored. The Opposition had raised some concerns about the changes via the Call-In process. Earlier today, at the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the availability of a local Household Support Fund had been pointed out. Eligibility for the fund was means tested, but there was no charge for applications.

Councillor Noordad Aziz applauded the actions of Councillors Scott Brerton and Colin McKenzie who had called in the decision, which had led to the above assurances around access.

Councillor Aziz also referred to Minute 108 – Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme, and indicated that he had not yet received a written response to questions submitted in accordance with the advice set out at Paragraph 3 of that minute. The Leader and Head of Regeneration and Housing indicated that they did not recall receiving the questions, but officers would follow up this matter after the meeting.

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

## **148 Reports of Cabinet Members**

The Leader reported that the public consultation on the proposed submission version of the Local Plan had now commenced. The Local Plan would shape the future growth of the Borough, through its employment and housing plans. Public meetings had been arranged on the following dates:-

- Clayton-le-Moors Community Centre – Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 (3.30pm – 7.30pm)
- Oswaldtwistle Civic Arts Centre – Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 (3.30pm – 7.30pm)
- Bank Mill House, Great Harwood – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (3.30pm – 7.30pm)
- Rishton Conservative Club – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (3.30pm – 7.30pm)
- Accrington Town Hall – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (3.30pm – 7.30pm)
- Huncoat (date in November and venue to be arranged)

This would be the final consultation before the submission and examination stages of the process.

A former Huncoat councillor, Mr Dave Parkins, was given permission to speak and asked if public meetings in Huncoat could be arranged at St Augustine CE Church and at Huncoat Primary School. The Leader responded that he would put forward those suggestions, but it was likely that only one meeting would take place.

The Leader summarised by stating that the Local Plan was critical to housing and employment development in the area.

## **149 Market Hall Rent Concessions**

The Cabinet considered a report of Councillor Marlene Haworth, Deputy Leader of the Council, seeking a continuation of the support for the ground floor indoor market hall traders by extending the current period of rent concessions.

Councillor Haworth highlighted key elements of the report as follows. The main proposal was to extend the period of rent concessions for ground floor traders. The traders had been supported through lockdown and although COVID-19 restrictions had now been lifted, despite some initial improvements in footfall, the economic downturn and other pressures on household spending meant that trading conditions were still difficult. She was delighted to be able to propose the extension to the support already provided. Councillor Peter Britcliffe, Portfolio Holder for Levelling Up, added that it was vital to continue to support market traders, particularly given their location at the heart of Accrington Town Centre. He hoped that the ground floor cafes would also be eligible for this support.

The Leader added that the extension would run for nine months, from 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023. He summarised the support which had been provided previously. A second decision was being proposed in connection with the introduction of a service charge in certain circumstances for the balcony units, following an application from a potential tenant who would require significant electrical energy usage.

Councillor Melissa Fisher, Joint Deputy Leader of the Labour group, made some comments and asked a number of questions as follows:

- The Labour group supported the use of concessions.

- Could a discount be offered to the balcony units, particularly as problems with the lift might have reduced footfall upstairs?
- Some concerns had been expressed about plans to move traders to temporary accommodation on Broadway for up to 14 months during remodelling, subject to the success of the Levelling Up Fund bid.

Councillor Haworth responded that the lift had been a cause of concern, as parts were becoming more difficult to source. She was currently discussing with officers the possible provision of a new lift. It was hoped that this could be installed within the next few months. In respect of the relocation of traders, the use of Broadway was one of several suggestions discussed with traders, including the use of porta-cabins, pop-up stalls or empty shops. No firm plans had yet been made, as this was dependent on the Levelling Up Fund bid. However, traders would be kept informed. The Leader added that engagement would take place with traders when any firm options were being considered. The option chosen would depend on the nature and time requirements of the refit, which could involve staged moves or a full closure of the market hall.

Councillor Aziz asked if the service charges proposed for the balcony units and the fact that this was at the discretion of officers, might force traders to leave the market hall. The Leader reiterated that this would only be in exceptional circumstances. Councillor Haworth indicated that the matter had been discussed with the potential trader, as the Council simply wished to offer a deal which was fair.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

#### *Reasons for Decision*

Throughout the downturn in trading on the Borough's high streets and difficulties throughout the COVID-19 lockdown/restrictions, Cabinet had supported the market hall traders through various rent concessions. Whilst the COVID restrictions had been fully lifted and footfall levels were slowly improving, unfortunately there had been a dramatic downturn in the economy. Businesses were now facing severe cost increases and there had been a reduction in household income/spending levels not seen for over half a century.

The Council, wishing to support the indoor market hall traders, had approved a number of concessions over the past 4 years (listed below). However, without any further extension, the current rent concessions would expire at the end of this financial year.

- a 50% concession on rents and service charges for two months in 2018
- a permanent reduction in rents of 13.4% in 2019
- a 30% concession on rents for a period of three years in 2020
- a 22.5% concession on rents for twelve months in 2020
- an extension to the 22.5% concession on rents for a further six months in 2021
- a further extension to the concessions on rents until 31 March 2023 in late 2021

Whilst there was a 'potential' loss of income circa £24k from extending the rent concessions, this assumed traders were able and willing to pay the level of rent set many years ago when trading conditions were very different. Where rents were too high and not aligned with other local commercial rents, there was a risk many traders would simply leave the market hall, meaning all of a trader's rental income would be lost.

If approved, the terms of the concession being proposed would be as per previous agreements:

- that traders continue to make all monthly rent or other payments via Direct Debit and adhere to the Council's Market Regulations.
- where a current trader was in rent arrears, this concession would not be applied to the arrears and if applicable, any credits due would be used to reduce the outstanding debt.
- where a trader was up to date, and if applicable, any credits would be returned in full.

The report did not propose any concessions to service charges and traders within the balcony units or outside Peel Street Kiosks would not be eligible for the proposed rent concession.

Historically, there had been no separate service charges applied to the balcony units within the Market Hall and rents had been set low to provide 'incubator units' for new a business to test the market with their offering, before hopefully moving on to bigger premises in the town centre. There had been a number of recent examples to highlight the success of this offer. Whilst the vast majority of balcony tenants only had simple strip lighting and one or two small appliances, recently, the market manager had been approached by a potential tenant needing the use of large chest freezer and fridge. Given the recent rises in electricity costs and the use of these very energy hungry appliances 24/7, the electric cost could be greater than the rent paid by the tenant.

The small balcony units were unmetered and, therefore, it was not possible to take meter readings. It was therefore proposed that the Executive Director (Environment) be given authority, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, and at their sole discretion, to agree the addition of separate service charges to new leases to enable service costs, including utility costs, to be recovered from tenants where such costs were not otherwise already the responsibility of the tenant.

#### *Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection*

The Council could let the current rent concessions expire. However, this had been rejected because the indoor market hall traders continued to raise concerns around high rents compared to other commercial units in the town centre and trading viability if the concessions did not remain.

The Council could look to make the concessions permanent, rather than an extension. This had been rejected given the potential redevelopment works in the market hall which would necessitate decanting traders from December 2023 and most likely there would be new agreements/leases when traders returned.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That Cabinet notes the report and the work undertaken by the Market Manager in continuing to implement improvements within the market hall, which contributes to the retention of existing traders.**
- (2) That Cabinet approves an extension to the current rent concessions applied to ground floor market hall traders for a further 9 months from 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023 and notes the reduced income levels within this period.**

- (3) That Cabinet supports a scheme to introduce a service charge for balcony units, as set out in Paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 of the report, and delegates authority to the Executive Director (Environment), following consultation with the Legal Services Manager, to incorporate this charge, where applicable, in new leases.**

## **150 Allotment Rental Charge 2024**

Councillor Steven Smithson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, provided a report seeking approval for a proposed increase in allotment rent charges from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

Councillor Smithson outlined the main elements of the report. It was proposed that the allotment rent charge be increased from 24p/m<sup>2</sup> per annum to 25p/m<sup>2</sup> per annum (4.2% increase) from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024. In order to make the change 12 months' notice needed to be given. The increase would maintain the service on a cost neutral basis to the Council. The increases were considered to be reasonable when compared to neighbouring authorities, such as Blackburn with Darwen and Burney Councils. The Leader also highlighted some issues including the tenants' preference for small regular increases, historically low rents, recent site improvements and the lack of objections from the Hyndburn Federation of Allotments.

Councillor June Harrison asked if there was a waiting list for tenancies. Councillor Smithson believed this to be the case, but the matter would be clarified as information was due to be reported soon to Overview and Scrutiny. A written response would be provided to Councillor Harrison. Councillor Kate Walsh, Joint Deputy Leader of the Labour group, asked how long the waiting list was and whether new allotments could be created via the Local Plan process, to avoid over-development of urban areas and to improve the green environment. The Leader responded that there were already designated sites for allotments, which included some private sites near the Dunkenhalgh Hotel and some sites transferred to Altham Parish Council. However, to increase this number would require additional land to be purchased by the Council and require changes within the Local Plan which could not easily be implemented until the next plan in 2037.

Approval of the report was deemed a key decision.

### *Reasons for Decision*

It was recommended that from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 the allotment rent charge be increased from 24.0p/m<sup>2</sup> annum to 25.0p/m<sup>2</sup> annum (4.2% increase).

The allotment rent increment 2025 onwards would be considered in subsequent Cabinet reports during 2024, at a time when the increased inflationary pressures on the Council's service costs were known.

During 2012 the Council had consulted with the allotment tenants. 83% of those responding had said that rent should be increased regularly in small amounts rather than a single large increase at irregular intervals.

Since 2014 the Council had progressively increased the allotment rents in small annual increments to ensure that the annual rate of increase was kept reasonable. A list of annual rents charged per m<sup>2</sup> and the minimum charge regardless of plot size, for the period 2014 to 2024 was set out in the report,

Prior to 2014, the allotment rents had not been increased since 2006 and were amongst the lowest in England (data supplied by the National Allotment Society). Between 2006 and 2014 the annual allotment rents were charged at an average of 7.5p/m<sup>2</sup>

The Council had a legal duty to notify tenants 12 months in advance of an allotment rent increase. To facilitate the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 rent increase, allotment tenants would have to be advised by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

The Councils allotment service was operated 'cost neutral' ie. without profit. Having taken into account inflationary pressures for 2023-2024, and increased Council costs, the recommended rent increase would enable the Council to continue to provide the present 'cost neutral' service level. The Council's allotment related costs had been estimated to increase by 4.88% for 2023 to 2024.

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

- Comparison with other neighbouring Local Authorities;
- Comparison with other local recreational activities;
- National Allotment Society Policy Document 103. Rents; and
- Consultation with the Hyndburn Federation of Allotments.

Comparative information for 2019 was reproduced in the report, which had been supplied by 12 allotment authorities attending the North West Allotment Officers meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Information was also provided about rents charged in 2022 in Blackburn with Darwen and Burnley. There was a high degree of variability in the amount of allotment rents charged amongst local authorities and parish councils. It was evident that a number of local authorities had not increased their rent for several years, others were using self-managed options to keep costs down, whilst others provided a far greater range of direct allotment services, including toilets, and similar.

The average 2019 rent charged (excluding Bury) was 26.2p/m<sup>2</sup>, whilst the 2022 average of Blackburn with Darwen and Burnley was 28p/m<sup>2</sup>. The allotment rent charged by Hyndburn remained year-on-year below average and extremely favourable when compared to the rents presently charged by Hyndburn's immediate neighbours Blackburn with Darwen and Burnley. It was reasonable to conclude that the proposed rent increase was consistent and below average when compared to other local authorities.

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

The National Allotment Society had produced Policy Document 103 – Rents. The National Allotment Society recognised within its Policy the significance of rent to the allotment provider as an income, and further added that rents would have to be reasonable and set in accordance with the legal requirement. When considering NAS Policy 103 the Council had taken the following into account:

- The long-term financial sustainability of the allotments;
- The nature, quality and cost of facilities provided, including the cost of maintenance; and

- Expenditure on management and administration.

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

Further information on the relevant legislation, case law and procedures was set out in the report.

*Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection*

No rent change or reduced rate of rent increment:

Owing to inflationary pressures and increased Council costs, the allotment service would become under-funded during 2024 resulting in the need to achieve cost savings. In this event the allotment service would reduce its ability to undertake functions in compliance with its management role and that described within the allotment tenancy agreement.

In officers' opinion, there were no other reasonable alternatives. Officers recommended that the options of no rent change, or reduced rent increment, be rejected on the grounds that the allotment service would have to continue to provide a cost neutral, effective and efficient service in its present format. The recommended option was reasonable and would ensure that the allotment service continued to provide the level of service expected by allotment tenants.

- Resolved**
- **Cabinet approves the increased allotment rent charges from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 as set out in Paragraph 3.1 of the report, allowing for the statutory notification period, as noted in Paragraph 3.5 of the report.**

**151 Oakhill Park Tennis Court**

Councillor Steven Smithson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, provided a report informing the Cabinet about an offer from the national governing body for tennis in the UK, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), to fund the refurbishment of the tennis courts in Oakhill Park.

Councillor Smithson outlined the proposal from the LTA, and the recommendations to accept the offer, to approve the necessary delegations to officers to negotiate and agree terms with the LTA and to enter into a licence or agreement to allow the works to be carried out. He highlighted that there were three tennis court sites in the Borough, at Oakhill Park and Peel Park in Accrington and at Lowerfold Park in Great Harwood. The largest site was at Oakhill Park, but the surface was uneven and line markings were faded. The LTA had categorised the courts as poor and had offered to invest around £50k for their refurbishment. The costs proposed by the LTA for use of the refurbished tennis courts at Oakhill Park were £5 per hour for 'pay as you play' or £25 for an annual household pass. The Council's other tennis courts would remain free to use.

Councillor Peter Britcliffe commented that this was great news, as the tennis courts had been somewhat neglected over time. Other tennis courts across the Borough in Rhyddings Park and Gatty Park had been taken out of use in previous years. Councillor Harrison commented that she and Councillor Joyce Plummer had personally erected the netting at the Peel Park courts over the last few years.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

### *Reasons for Decision*

The majority of park tennis courts in the UK were owned by local authorities, however, increasing pressure on local authority budgets over the years had resulted in significant underinvestment, leaving approximately 45% of all park tennis courts in a poor, very poor, or unplayable condition.

Research had found that poor quality courts were disproportionately found in lower income areas. The LTA's Parks Investment Funding aimed to help address this underinvestment, opening up the sport to people of all backgrounds, and ultimately providing greater opportunities for everyone to follow the Chief Medical Officer's guidance on physical activity.

At the Autumn Budget 2021, funding of £21.9m had been made available for investment into rejuvenating dilapidated park tennis courts throughout the UK. Alongside this, a further £8.4m of funding committed had been committed by the LTA, taking the total funding package for the two year investment programme to £30.3m.

Park tennis courts were particularly important in providing affordable opportunities for anyone to pick up a racquet. With over 1.7 million adults playing on park courts every year, parks played a critical role in ensuring the sport was accessible to all and tennis could contribute to well-being benefits.

Through this Investment Programme, LTA's ambition was to support local authorities to develop quality, sustainable park tennis facilities for all, and attract 1 million more players to the sport across the UK, contributing to health, social and wellbeing outcomes for residents and communities.

There were three tennis court sites located within parks in Hyndburn. There were tennis courts in Oakhill Park & Peel Park in Accrington and Lowerfold Park in Great Harwood. Over the last few years the tennis courts at Peel Park and Lowerfold Park had received some investment.

Oakhill Park was the largest tennis venue with three individual courts. Unfortunately the surface was uneven and line marking faded which made for a poor tennis experience. The courts at Oakhill Park had been surveyed by the LTA and categorised as poor, which meant they were eligible for funding.

The LTA offer was to invest circa £50,000 into the tennis courts at Oakhill Park which would lead to the surface being refurbished, the lines being re-painted and some of the fencing being replaced.

The LTA's own contractor would undertake the refurbishment work at Oakhill Park under licence from the Council. The LTA were using their own contractor to ensure that all sites refurbished via the investment programme were done so to a specific standard required by the LTA, which would be the same across the UK, so as to provide a national standard of park tennis court.

As the LTA investment programme was designed to produce sustainable tennis courts, a condition of the funding was that use of the courts at Oakhill Park would become a chargeable leisure activity with all income derived put into a sinking fund used to resurface



the courts so they remained in good condition for the long term. The Council would also have to ensure the courts were swept, kept clean and nets installed to facilitate tennis.

The tennis courts at Oakhill Park would be booked via an online booking system which would provide a code to gain entry to the tennis courts.

The LTA would work with the Council (post capital works) to offer coaching opportunities and increase opportunities for participation.

As the courts at Peel Park and Lowerfold Park were not included in this project, the use of those courts would remain free of charge.

#### *Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection*

Not to accept the LTA funding offer to refurbish the tennis courts at Oakhill Park. This had been discounted as the tennis courts were in need of refurbishment and the funding would provide a quality tennis facility for the people of Hyndburn, both in the short and long term.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That Cabinet accepts the offer from the LTA to refurbish the tennis courts in Oakhill Park.**
- (2) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director (Environment) to negotiate and agree terms of the funding agreement with the LTA to deliver this project.**
- (3) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director (Environment) to enter into a licence or other suitable written agreement with the LTA to enable the LTA's preferred contractor to undertake the proposed works in Oakhill Park.**

#### **152 Medium Term Financial Strategy - 2023/24 to 2025/26 - October 2022 Update**

Members received a report of Councillor Joyce Plummer, Portfolio Holder for Resources, informing the Cabinet of the 3-year projections of income and spending for the Council ahead of formulating the actions it needed to take to produce its 2023/24 Revenue and Capital Budgets.

Councillor Plummer provided a brief introduction to the report. She summarised the background to the Strategy, including high levels of uncertainty due to COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, as well as pressures caused by demand for food, oil and gas, as well as inflation and global recession. The Government was required to balance the demands of public expenditure and its own financing. It was hoped that some of these uncertainties would diminish over time to provide economic stability. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) presented three different scenarios for the next three years based on standard, pessimistic and optimistic models. Each scenario would have different financial consequences for the Council.

Overall, good financial management needed to be maintained, income maximised and reserves maintained.

The Leader added that the Council would operate a roll forward Budget for 2023/24 based on the adjusted 2022/23 Budget. The Council would need to generate £104,000 of internal savings during the year. Overall expenditure would need to be contained at around

£14.5m. The intention was still to freeze Council Tax for 2023/24. The Council would also need to maintain Reserves of £2M. An update to the MTFS to take account of any new information or changes, would be provided in February 2023, prior to the setting of the Budget for 2023/24.

The Capital Programme for 2022/23 had been around £23M due to anticipated Levelling Up and Leisure Transformation funding. The Programme for 2023/24 would be more modest, although the Council would still seek to deliver its existing commitments. Spending would be limited to available resources (including grants and capital receipts), so as to avoid borrowing and the consequential impacts on the Revenue Budget.

Councillor Noordad Aziz enquired about how much Revenue Support Grant (RSG) had been lost over the last decade. The Leader responded that in 2010, George Osborne MP, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had announced the ending of RSG. The Council's income up to that time was broadly split between  $\frac{1}{3}$  Government grant,  $\frac{1}{3}$  non-domestic rates and  $\frac{1}{3}$  Council Tax. Since that date the Council's RSG had reduced from c.£7M to c.£1.5M and the Fair Funding review was still awaited. Councillor Plummer referred Councillor Aziz to Table 1 at Page 21 of the report.

Councillor Aziz also queried what the impact of a possible second period of austerity might be on the Council's capital finances. The Leader indicated that the Capital Programme was proposed to return to its previous annual level of around £1M in future years. The programme was always oversubscribed with bids, which meant that projects would always need to be prioritised. Councillor Aziz asked if delivery of the Capital Programme was reliant on bids such as Levelling Up, as no announcements had yet been made, and whether the Programme should be reconsidered now. The Leader responded that the anticipated Chancellor's Statement on Halloween might give further clarity. However, there were other bids to and potential grants from a variety of organisations which supported the Capital Programme. No adjustment was required to the Capital Programme at present.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

#### *Reasons for Decision*

The Cabinet required an update on its medium term financial outlook ahead of commencing its Annual Budget process for the 2023/24 financial year and determining the level of Council Tax. The Strategy ensured those decisions were taken with a view to the overall position of the Council going forward and were not limited to a narrow one-year perspective.

The substantive MTFS report included the following summary. The Council's activities and finances had been dominated this year by the continuing impact of COVID-19 and the economic consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It was expected that these two linked key events and their consequences would continue to have a major impact on the Council's finances for at least the next financial year as a minimum, with the potential for the effects to continue much longer.

In response to the great uncertainty the Council faced, the authority would operate a roll forward Budget for 2023/24 based on the 2022/23 Budget adjusted for changes to salary and wages, energy and other cost pressures and anticipated changes to the Council's income from the Government. This would provide Service Managers a fixed reference point from which to continue to respond to the inflationary pressures now faced and allowed a degree of stability for one further year, while everyone recovered from another year of significant challenges. To achieve a balanced Budget during the year the Council would need to generate £104,000 of internal savings during the year. Overall expenditure would need to be contained at around £14.5m in 2023/24 to set a balanced budget.

If necessary, the Council might have to use some of its Reserves to help balance the Budget. This was particularly likely if the Government reduced the amount of financial support it provided the Council, or reduced the amount of Business Rates it was allowed to retain. 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 consequence of COVID-19 and the War in Ukraine. Addressing the impact of any proposed Government funding reforms and increased pressures on spending would present it with further challenges over this period. As the extent of the Government financial reforms were unclear at this time and were unlikely to emerge until December 2023 at the earliest, this produced great uncertainty and potentially significant variance around the forecasts contained in the MTFS.

Previously, for the last four years the expectation had been that the Government would implement what it termed as a “Fair Funding Review of Local Government Finance.” This proposal would effectively end the Revenue Support Grant to the Council and potentially redistribute the amount of Business Rates the Council was allowed to retain to other Councils. The expected impact of these changes if they went ahead were expected to cause a significant decrease in the funding available to the Council. In these circumstances, the Council would need to make substantial reductions in its expenditure levels as a consequence. The changes would need to be made either immediately in the aftermath of the announcement or over a short period, if some form of transitional arrangements accompanied the changes to assist those Councils most dramatically impacted.

After 4 years in which these reforms had been postponed for various reasons and with a new Government under a new Prime Minister in power, the certainty around the introduction of Fair Funding was no longer as sure as it once seemed and it might be the case that these reforms would be postponed for a number of years or dropped altogether. This would allow the potential current levels of funding to the Council to continue.

As a consequence, the modelling now recognised that there was a real possibility that continuation of Government funding at current levels might be the most likely outcome over the next few years of all the potential different scenarios that could occur. However, many of the drivers around the need to reform the finances of Local Government still existed. As such the strong prospect of a Fair Funding Review which significantly reduced the Council's funding remained a very real prospect. DLUHC officials continued to indicate they wished to introduce some kind of Fair Funding Review to re-shape Council finances and the prospectus of this occurring over the next few years remained a distinct possibility.

This presented the Council with two very different future budget scenarios. The first was a scenario in which funding from Government remained largely in its current shape and where the Council while under financial pressure from high pay inflation and a steep rise in its energy costs, should be able to largely cope. While the second scenario, saw reform of local government finance, with a wide range of possible outcomes for the Council potentially occurring, from changes that were relatively small in consequence, all the way through a whole series of potential results some of which would be large and very dramatic in terms of the challenges they presented to the Council.

These 2 scenarios were modelled within the report. The more severe of the two, as the Pessimistic Scenario and the other as the Standard Model. A third model was also presented which indicated the Council's potential position if the Government chose to provide local government with an injection of cash over and above current levels and locally

the Council was able to boost its own tax revenue as a consequence of a buoyant tax base. 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.

Detailed information was provided in the MTFS in relation to the following:

- Introduction;
- Objectives;
- Elements of the MTFS;
- Service Planning;
- Integrated Resource Planning with Service Plans;
- Background Information;
- Financial Analysis 2023/24 to 2025/26;
- Changes in Costs;
- Growth;
- Reserves;
- Other Assumptions;
- Equality Impact Assessment;
- Scenarios;
- Robustness of Forecast; and
- Overall Net Position.

*There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons*

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

### **153 Financial Position Report - August 2022 - Report for the Year Ending 31st March 2022**

Councillor Joyce Plummer, Portfolio Holder for Resources, provided a report to inform Cabinet of the financial spending of the Council up to the end of August 2022 and the financial forecast outturn position for the Accounting Year 2021/22.

Councillor Plummer provided a brief introduction to the report. The Council was on course to achieve a positive variance of £89k on its Budget for 2022/23. This took into account the proposed annual pay award, which was larger than had been predicted when the Budget had been set, as well as increased energy costs due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Increasing energy costs had been mitigated by good energy management and the Government's package of financial support. Budget holders had worked hard to contain inflationary pressures within Budget. The forecast assumed that additional expenditure caused by any future spike in COVID-19 cases would be funded by the Government.

Councillor Noordad Aziz indicated that he had submitted some 15 questions directly to the Portfolio Holder via e-mail, this afternoon, for a written response, but he would be grateful if answers could be provided today to the following:-

- Given that the variance on year to date expenditure as at 5 August, shown in the Table (at Page 124), was £4,265k, how did the projected expenditure only produce a predicted year end variance of £87k? - *Response:* The Deputy Chief Executive indicated that report focused on the anticipated year end variance, but that during the year money flowed into and out of the Council. At the start of the year spending decisions might have reflected a difficult cashflow position. Also, income will have been recorded in the system, but might be earmarked for future commitments. The spending trajectory would, however, smooth out over the course of the financial year. At the year to date point, the variance was around 80% of planned expenditure.
- Did the positive variances against Departmental staffing budgets reflect unfilled staff posts? - *Response:* The Leader indicated that this question would be answered within the written response due to be provided.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

### *Reasons for Decision*

The detailed figures underpinning the report were shown as a table at the end of the document provided.

The current forecast spend to the end of the financial year in March 2023 was £12,246,000 compared to a Budget of £12,334,000. The forecast produced a positive variance of £89,000 by the end of the financial year.

The report included more detailed commentary about expenditure in the following service areas:-

### Environmental Services

Environmental Services were predicting a year-end adverse variance of £155,000. Waste Services were predicting an adverse variance for the year of £61,000. This was due to £103,000 of additional costs and a predicted decline in income of £3,000, offset by £46,000 savings on staff costs. The Parks & Cemetery Service was forecasting an adverse variance of £84,000, due to additional income of £22,000 and savings of £17,000 on staff costs less £123,000 of miscellaneous additional costs. The Town Centre & Market Budget was predicting an adverse variance of £33,000, with £35,000 of additional operating costs less £2,000 of salary saving. Environmental Health were predicting a positive variance of £23,000 due to £35,000 of additional income and £19,000 of savings on expenses less £31,000 of additional staff costs.

### Culture & Leisure Services

Culture and Leisure Services were indicating a positive variance of £81,000. Service expenditure on Leisure was forecasting a positive variance of £130,000, while the Haworth Art Gallery was predicting an adverse variance of £50,000 due to increased expenditure on staff of £13,000, and £46,000 of additional expenditure less £9,000 additional income.

### Planning & Transportation

Planning & Transportation were predicting an adverse variance for the year of £133,000. This is due to predicted unfinanced additional spend on salary costs of £93,000, £38,000 of extra miscellaneous costs and £2,000 less income.

### Regeneration & Property Services

Regeneration & Property Services were predicting a small adverse variance of £21,000 at year-end. This was the net of additional staff and miscellaneous costs less additional income.

### Policy & Corporate Governance

Policy & Corporate Governance were predicting a positive variance of £132,000. This was due to £23,000 of salary savings less the Corporate Salary Savings Target of £101,000, an increase of income of £122,000 and £88,000 additional miscellaneous savings.

### Non Service Items

The current estimate for the year was a positive variance of £185,000.

In respect of the robustness of the forecast and other issues, the Council was facing a period of inflationary pressure, particularly in relation to energy and fuel costs and the national pay award for Local Government Employees remained unsettled. The current forecast included the latest assumptions around these developments, but the situation remained volatile. Any significant changes in the underlying Budget assumptions that impacted the overall outturn forecast would be reported at the next Cabinet meeting.

As in the previous two years, if there was a spike in COVID-19 that required the Council to take action to prevent the spread of the virus or to provide additional support to the local community, it was expected that additional funding provided by Government would be used to meet any additional costs the Council incurred.

*There were no alternative options for consideration or reasons*

- Resolved**
- **That Cabinet notes the report and asks Corporate Management Team to continue to reduce expenditure and increase income so as to further improve the overall financial position of the Council over the remaining months of the year.**

### **154 Huncoat Garden Village Infrastructure Funding Bid**

Members considered a report of Councillor Kath Pratt, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing, updating Cabinet on progress concerning the Huncoat Garden Village project and seeking approval for the Council's Infrastructure funding bid.

Councillor Pratt indicated that this was a major growth project provided for in the Council's Corporate Strategy. The Masterplan represented an opportunity to retain existing households and attract new households into the Borough. Liaison was on-going with Homes England, Lancashire County Council, National Highways and various landowners in order to deliver the Masterplan. There was estimated to be a funding gap in the region of £25M to make the scheme viable. The plan included a new access road; additional school places; and remediation of the former power station and colliery sites. The intention was to make a bid of around £30M to Homes England.

The Leader reiterated that the scheme was a game-changing opportunity to retain households and attract new ones into the area. He outlined the key elements of the scheme listed in the report, which would deliver 1,816 new homes, including 312 safeguarded for the next Local Plan period beyond 2036. He also summarised the content

of the proposed bid to Homes England. He commented that the proposed Junction 8, M65 improvements would also benefit the Altham employment site. The overall scheme would help to protect other Green Belt land within the Borough. The project was the culmination of much hard work over many years by a large number of people.

Former councillor, Mr Dave Parkins, was given permission to speak on this item. He enquired about the number of homes which would need to be built before the link road would be required. Current proposal suggested that 400 homes would be required, but previously the figure stated had been 451 homes. The current road infrastructure in Huncoat was inadequate. Councillor Pratt indicated that the exact number of homes would be a matter for Lancashire County Council. The Leader commented that some housing development could take place before the new link road was in place. However, the wider Huncoat Garden Village scheme was more aspirational and would include housing, biodiversity and a link road. Housing was critical to the growth of the Borough. Councillor Melissa Fisher asked what would happen if the funding bid was not successful. The Leader responded that the report presented a positive picture of what the Council wished to achieve. There would still be some housing development in Huncoat, even if the full scheme was not realised. However, there was a strong belief that the bid would be successful.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

#### *Reasons for Decision*

Huncoat Garden Village formed a major part of Hyndburn Borough Council's growth plans including a once in a lifetime opportunity to diversify Hyndburn's housing offer and provide new housing in a fabulous landscape setting. The Garden Village was a game-changing opportunity for market making housing in Hyndburn, at a scale that not only helped the Borough retain those households that otherwise would leave to meet their housing aspirations elsewhere, but also attract new economic households to the Borough.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021, Cabinet had approved the Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy. The Masterplan framework was now a material consideration to any planning application within the area. The Masterplan also formed part of the Council's new, emerging Local Plan. The key elements promoted by the masterplan framework over the next 15 years included:

- Delivery of 1,816 new homes, including 312 safeguarded for the next plan period beyond 2036, with an assumption of policy compliant affordable housing delivery within the mix;
- A new residential relief/distributor road linking Huncoat Garden Village directly with the A56;
- Provision to expand Huncoat Junior School (or an option to build a new school if that became necessary);
- A new village centre located at the junction of Lower Gate Road, Altham Lane and Station Road. This would link the existing Huncoat Village with the Garden Village area providing local facilities including shops and car parking within walking distance for all existing and new households;
- Railway Station improvements including a significant car parking facility with cycle storage and improved access arrangements;
- Circa 40 hectares of improved open space including 24 hectares of safeguarded land for a potential Biological Heritage site;

- In addition to the existing football/sport pitches of Bolton Avenue, a new state of the art 11-a-side 4G pitch with floodlighting and a 9-a-side grass pitch; and
- 7 formal and 7 informal play areas

Since the Masterplan framework's approval, the Council had been working with Homes England, Lancashire County Council and National Highways to bring forward the Masterplan sites within Huncoat for residential development. The Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy had been subject to high level viability analysis to help inform whether the Masterplan was ultimately deliverable. On the basis of the analysis, it had been concluded that there was a headline viability funding gap likely to be in the region of £25 million, plus the need to generate an appropriate per acre land value that would enable development to commence. The Masterplan Delivery Strategy had recognised that due to the viability challenges identified, the comprehensive delivery of the Garden Village would require grant funding to achieve a viable and deliverable Garden Village. The key viability drains were the proposed relief/distributor road, excessive abnormal costs on the former developed sites (former power station and colliery sites), school expansion and other key infrastructure costs including off-site electricity reinforcements, foul drainage connections, new surface water attenuations and management, etc.

Following discussions with Homes England, the Government's housing accelerator, Homes England had encouraged the Council to make a Business Case submission to its Brownfield Land Infrastructure Funding programme. Jointly funded by Homes England and the Council, Avison Young had been appointed to help the Council make a bid, using their expertise to prepare a five case Business Case (strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management). In addition, funded by Homes England, Arcadis had been appointed to prepare an outline relief/distributor road design with costings to inform the Business Case.

Arcadis had concluded its commission to plot and confirm the route and costs of the proposed new relief/distributor road. In addition, Avison Young were well advanced in preparing the Council's Business Case submission, subject to Cabinet approval. If approved, the Business Case should be ready for submission to Homes England before the end of October 2022.

Following further viability work and analysis, the Council proposed to make a funding submission of circa £29.6 million to Homes England, with the main grant funding costs as follows:

- £6,762,327 for delivery of the relief/distributor road;
- £4.5m contribution to delivery of Junction 8, M65 upgrades;
- £18,317,660 for abnormal costs associated with the need for site remediation on the two brownfield development areas;
- £29,579,987 total bid submission.

Factoring the above into an updated viability appraisal from that prepared as part of the Masterplan process, the residual value showing on the viability appraisal was £15,582,511 (positive) which equated to a land value of £215,317 per hectare. Engagement with Homes England and review of Government 'reasonable' land value benchmarks supported the view that this was an acceptable residual land value to leverage grant support.

Whilst the appointed external consultancy had developed suggested responses to the questions needed for the Council's Infrastructure Funding bid submission, there would be a number of specific bid documents / statements which required the Council's Chief Finance Officer, (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Executive to make and sign as a true and correct record on behalf of the Council.



The Huncoat Garden Village Business Case would seek funding for the following three key interventions, further details of which were set out in the report:

- Huncoat Relief / Distributer Road;
- Huncoat Junction 8, M65 Upgrade; and
- Site Remediation on the two Brownfield Sites.

#### *Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection*

The Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy had considered six options as part of the process to arrive at the preferred option for Huncoat Garden Village. This had been reported in the Masterplan report to Cabinet on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Detailed analysis of the option development and testing was provided within the Masterplan Stage 2 Option Testing and Development Report which could be viewed on the Huncoat Garden Village Website.

The Council could decide not to make a funding submission, and Cabinet could decide not to support the recommendations in the report. This was not recommended as this was a major opportunity to access significant funding to bring forward housing at scale to support the Council's growth plans. If the market was left to deliver new housing development in Huncoat there was a significant risk that delivery would be compromised and slowed down, and the Council would lose the opportunity to direct development in line with the Masterplan and emerging Design code.

#### **Resolved**

#### **- That Cabinet:**

- (1) Notes and welcomes the progress being made on bringing forward development land and infrastructure to enable new residential development as set out in the Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy.**
- (2) Approves the principal interventions set out in Paragraph 3.8 of this report to be included within the Council's Infrastructure Funding bid submission to Homes England.**
- (3) Approves the proposal to apply for Infrastructure Funding to Homes England for up to £30 million for Huncoat Garden Village as outlined in this report.**
- (4) Delegates authority to the Head of Regeneration and Housing, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder, to make amendments to the Infrastructure Funding Bid submission prior to submission of the same to refine costs or improve project viability.**
- (5) The Council's Chief Executive and Director of Finance are given delegated authority, following**

**consultation with the Leader of the Council, to sign off the relevant documents required for the Council's Infrastructure Funding bid submission as highlighted in Paragraph 3.7 of the report.**

- (6) Note that if the Infrastructure Funding Bid is successful, a further report will be brought to Cabinet to approve acceptance of the funding, once the terms and overall project structure have been confirmed. In addition, further approvals will be sought in relation to procurement, appointment of contractors and professional services, and a number of legal agreements with third parties including land owners/developers and National Highways as set out in the report.**
- (7) Further notes, in progressing the Huncoat Garden Village project should the Council's Infrastructure Fund bid be successful, entering a funding agreement with Homes England and the spend programme will generate a number of risks for the Council. Some of the key risks are set out in in Paragraph 3.13 of the report. Should the Council's bid be successful a further report will be brought to Cabinet as described in Resolution (6) above. This will include a risk register with details on how the risks will be mitigated.**

## **155 Rough Sleeping Grant Funding**

Councillor Kath Pratt, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing, provided a report outlining the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022 - 2025 and Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) 2022 - 2024 grant funding, which the Council had recently been awarded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The report identified how the Council proposed to utilise both funding programmes and sought approval to enter into agreements with Stepping Stone Projects and Maundy Relief to support their activities in the relief and prevention of rough sleeping.

Councillor Pratt highlighted that, with the effects of the cost of living crisis, more individuals were at risk of rough sleeping. The Council currently met its responsibilities, in part, through external bodies, including Stepping Stone Projects, Maundy Relief and others. The Council had received some £423k grant funding over a three year period under the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and a further £80k over 2 years via the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP). As well as the existing support, some RSI funding was earmarked for new schemes including the flexible surge accommodation fund and support into employment and training for rough sleepers

Councillor Peter Britcliffe welcomed the initiatives and the work of the various charity organisations and their volunteers. He commented that even with the support available some individuals, unfortunately, chose to sleep rough. This was their right in a free country, but bedding in shop doorways was unsightly. However, Hyndburn had received Government funding over a number of years to help tackle the issue. Councillor Fisher remarked that not all rough sleepers had chosen a life on the street and that more support was required. Councillor Loraine Cox added that the Maundy Navigator Service knew the location of rough sleepers and went out every night to offer support and a bed for the night.

Approval of the report was not deemed a key decision.

*Reasons for Decision*

Rough Sleeping Grant Programmes

In 2018 the Government had published their national Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan aiming to halve rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament and eliminate it by 2027. The Government had committed funding for programmes such as the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) programme and the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP).

Local authorities had been invited to apply for funds to address rough sleeping. The RSAP and RSI programmes were designed to fund complementary interventions and activities for this purpose. There continued to be a need in the Borough for accommodation for rough sleepers as a route off the street and to prevent people from sleeping rough. Consequently the Council submitted applications and had been successful in securing both RSI and RSAP grant funding.

The Council had successfully worked with a number of local charitable agencies such as Stepping Stone Projects and Maundy Relief to prevent and reduce rough sleeping. The overall aim was to extend those activities. The latest RSI and RSAP programmes offered funding for more than one financial year and this enabled existing activities to be maintained as well as new activities to be planned and introduced.

Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Funding 2022 - 2025

The RSI funding programme aimed to provide additional bed spaces for rough sleepers with tailored support including help with mental health problems, addiction services, tenancy support, and access to training and employment.

Hyndburn had previously been awarded funding under the RSI 2020/21 funding programme via a joint submission with other East Lancashire authorities. As part of the bidding process for RSI funding for the period 2022-25, Hyndburn's bid for funding would maintain existing activities that worked well, as well as providing for new activities that would be complementary.

The bid submission process involved the completion of a self-assessment plan and bid application. Meetings with DLUHC advisors and agencies who supported the Council in delivering for rough sleepers had helped develop Hyndburn's bid submission.

The table below summarised Hyndburn's RSI 2022-2025 grant funding award:

Table 1

	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Sum of total
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	£	£	£	grant £
A Bed Every Night	20,000	20,000	20,000	60,000
Flexible surge accommodation fund	8,900	7,790	6,325	23,015
Emergency night shelter	15,000	15,000	15,000	45,000
Maundy navigator service	31,000	31,000	31,000	93,000
Step Forward Hyndburn	22,432	28,576	28,576	79,584
Support into employment and training for rough sleepers	33,250	45,000	45,000	123,250
<b>Totals £</b>	<b>130,582</b>	<b>147,366</b>	<b>145,901</b>	<b>423,849</b>

Hyndburn's submission had proposed to maintain these existing activities and interventions:

- A Bed Every Night (ABEN) was an existing project which offered short term secure self-contained accommodation with support prior to securing longer term accommodation. Stepping Stone Projects provided support to occupants who lived in 5 dispersed flats.
- The night shelter was an existing activity that provided emergency overnight accommodation for rough sleepers and those at imminent risk of rough sleeping. Access to the accommodation, subject to space, was available year round. Based at Maundy Relief in the centre of Accrington, the accommodation was in three single rooms with two shared bathrooms. Users could access showers, a washing machine and a kitchenette and were provided with an evening meal and breakfast.
- The navigator service was a continuation of an existing activity and was provided by Maundy Relief. It provided an outreach activity that proactively sought out rough sleepers in their locations and offered immediate emergency support with food, clothing and overnight accommodation in Maundy's night shelter.

Hyndburn's submission had also included new activity for accessing and securing accommodation for rough sleepers:

- Following a visit from DLUC's Rough Sleeping Advisor to Hyndburn's rough sleeping and homelessness projects, the Council was encouraged to include within its submission a funding request for both the Step Forward Hyndburn project and support into training and employment.
- Step Forward Hyndburn was a 12 bedroom project for single male homeless cases including rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. On reviewing the

project it was concluded that there was need to provide 24/7 on-site management, security and support.

- Support into employment and training for rough sleepers presented a further opportunity to help rough sleepers rebuild their lives. The approach outlined in Hyndburn’s submission was working with a suitable experienced agency to identify a range of interventions to support rough sleepers into work and training. The Council proposed to procure this activity with appropriate training agencies.
- Flexible surge accommodation provided funds to improve access to a wider range of accommodation such as deposits/rent upfront payments to secure private rented accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. It also provided funding for cold weather payments. This activity would be directly administered via the Council’s Housing Advice and Homelessness Team.

#### Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP), 2022-2024

The Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) was another programme to meet the Government’s manifesto commitment to halve rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament and eliminate it by 2027.

This Programme provided for both capital and revenue funding to meet the cost of longer term accommodation and support to help rough sleepers rebuild their lives. Local Authorities were expected to work with accommodation providers and specialist agencies to end rough sleeping, especially where local authorities were no longer a landlord.

In 2021 Hyndburn had secured £175,833 funding for 2021/2024 to provide access to accommodation and support for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. This had been covered in a report which went to the Cabinet meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022. Approval had been granted to enter into a grant agreement with Stepping Stone Projects to deliver support to rough sleepers living in five properties.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUC) had invited Councils including those who had already been awarded grant to submit further proposals and bids for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 for the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP). Proposals could include securing additional grant to support existing RSAP projects.

Hyndburn had made a submission and had been awarded additional revenue grant to expand the existing RSAP project so that an additional 5 people who had been rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping could be accommodated with support. This grant would cover the cost of support from Stepping Stone Projects and furnishing accommodation.

Table 2

RSAP Grant Programme	2022/2023	2023/2024
Grant awarded	£55,417	£25,000

#### *Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection*

The Council could have decided not to submit bids for RSI and RSAP funding, but this would not have maximised the funding opportunities available to the Council and potentially put at risk existing provision for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

RSAP and RSI funded interventions supported Hyndburn's Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. It was widely recognised that housing and support for vulnerable people provided a quicker and more effective service to ensure vulnerable residents could move forward with their lives, and in the case of rough sleeping, preventing a cycle of rough sleeping.

Local housing authorities had been encouraged to submit proposals naming the proposed organisations they would support financially which limited alternative options now the Council had secured the funding. Additionally, Stepping Stone Projects and Maundy Relief were the only organisations operating in the Borough with the level of local presence, local knowledge and expertise to deliver rough sleeping activities successfully. A key element in the RSI funding interventions submission process was a Local Authority self-assessment which invited local authorities to explain which interventions they wanted to build, grow and improve. This had helped DLUHC to make informed assessments in awarding funding. Hyndburn's submission had identified the activities already done by Stepping Stone and Maundy with rough sleepers, and how this further funding award would develop and enhance both organisations existing activities in preventing and reducing rough sleeping.

As these agreements were considered grants, they were not subject to the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules, but good practice and transparency would be observed throughout. The Council proposed to award the funding by way of grant to Stepping Stones and Maundy as set out in the report because both organisations already carried out work to prevent and respond to rough sleeping, and by awarding a grant it allowed both organisations extend and enhance the activities they already provided.

**Resolved**

**- That Cabinet:**

**(1) Notes that the Council has been awarded grant funding of £423,849 through the Governments' Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) grant programme for three years as follows:**

- i) £130,582 for 2022/23**
- ii) £147,366 for 2023/24**
- iii) £145,901 for 2024/25**

**Table 1 at Paragraph 3.2.4 of the report, describes gives a breakdown of the Council's bid for the funding and how the funding is proposed to be allocated.**

**(2) Notes that the Council has been awarded through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) additional grant of £80,417 for two financial years as follows:**

- i) £55,417 for 2022/23**

ii) £25,000 for 2023/24

Paragraph 3.3.5 of the report summarises how the Council proposes to allocate the funding.

- (3) Notes that this funding will be used to support both the continuation of existing activities and introduction of additional activities to relieve and prevent rough sleeping in the Borough.
- (4) Considers and approves the following grants from the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) 2022 – 2025 funding to the charities who are currently providing support to Hyndburn Borough Council to continue and enhance support for people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping:
  - (i) Approves a grant of £60,000 to Stepping Stone Projects for the continuation of the Bed Every Night project;
  - (ii) Approves a grant of £79,584 to Stepping Stone Projects for the continuation of the Step Forward Hyndburn project;
  - (iii) Approves a grant of £45,000 to Maundy Relief for the continuation of the emergency night shelter;
  - (iv) Approves a grant of £93,000 to Maundy Relief for the continuation of the street navigator activity.
- (5) Considers and approves an additional grant from the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) 2022 – 2024 of £80,417 to Stepping Stones Projects to increase the existing grant award previously made at Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022 and described in Paragraph 3.3.5 of the report.
- (6) Delegates authority to the Head of Regeneration and Housing, in consultation with the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) to draw up, finalise and execute agreements to grant Maundy Relief and Stepping Stone Projects the funds listed above to continue the support they are currently providing.
- (7) Notes that there is RSI grant of £23,015 which will be administered and allocated by the Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Team to secure private rented accommodation through deposits and rent upfront (as indicated

under ‘flexible surge accommodation fund’ in Table 1 at Paragraph 3.2.4 and described in Paragraph 3.2.5 of the report).

- (8) Notes that there is RSI grant of £123,250 to support rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping into training and / or employment, and that this tranche of grant will be subject to a procurement exercise to employ a suitable experienced training/employment agency. (as indicated under ‘support into employment and training for rough sleepers’ in Table 1 at Paragraph 3.2.4 and described in Paragraph 3.2.5 of the report)

## 156 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.

## 157 Property Acquisitions - LUF Interventions

*In accordance with Regulation 5(6)(a) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, approval was given by Councillor Josh Allen, Chair of the Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the following decision being made by Cabinet on 19th October 2022, in private, on the grounds that the decision was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred.*

*Exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)*

Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE, Leader of the Council, provided a report outlining progress to date with the acquisition of two interventions within the Council’s Levelling Up Funding bid submission in respect of the Accrington Acre. The report also sought approval to certain delegations to officers in connection with the necessary acquisitions, as well providing information about the circumstances under which a further report to Cabinet might be required. The Leader highlighted the principal purpose of the report.

Approval of the report was not 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