
COUNCIL

Thursday, 11th July, 2024

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

Apologies: Councillors Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt and Kate Walsh

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the July Council meeting.

57 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt and Kate Walsh.

58 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

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

59 Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcements:

1) Setting the Tone for Constructive Debate

The Mayor expressed his views on the conditions which would set the tone for constructive debate at Council meetings during his term of office. He hoped that councillors would use the acronym 'THINK' as a guide when making their contributions. Speeches during the debate should be:

- True;
- Helpful;
- Inspiring;
- Necessary; and
- Kind.

The Leader of the Council then made the following announcements:

2) Srebrenica

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, reminded all that today was a memorial day to mark the genocide 29 years ago which had taken place in Srebrenica, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some 8,372 men and boys were known to have been killed and over 20,000 women and children had been displaced.

This Council had previously adopted a motion to honour the memory of those killed and to stand in solidarity with their families. In 2014, Councillor Dad had visited the area to meet with the families of victims who were still fighting for justice. Members were reminded that there was always an opportunity to make the right choice, even under the most challenging of circumstances. This Council would continue to remember and honour the victims with a view to ensuring a future rooted in peace and justice.

3) Planning Policies

The Leader indicated that he had asked officers prepare evidence based documents to support the implementation of an Article 4 Direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. The direction would remove permitted development rights for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The work involved preparation of policy documents against which HMO applications would be determined and would set out best practice and evidence for applications in relation to children's care homes. The evidence-based work had already commenced and should take around 3- 4 months to complete. Implementation of the Article 4 Direction would take a little longer. Members would be kept informed as to progress.

4) LGA Peer Review

The Council would shortly be taking part in a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Review, which was designed to support continuous improvement. The process, which was sector-led, should give valuable information to members and residents about what the Council did well and what it could do to improve further. It would be delivered by expert councillor and officer peers, who would act as critical friends, supported by the LGA's Regional Support Teams.

It was currently envisaged that the Review would take place between 28th October and 2nd November 2024. It was likely that many councillors would be involved in the review process and further information would be circulated to councillors as this became available.

5) Review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

The Boundary Commission had notified the Council that a ward boundary review would commence in Hyndburn later this year or early in 2025. The Commission carried out a rolling programme of electoral reviews and Hyndburn was now due for review, as one had not taken place in the Borough for over 20 years.

The aim of the Review was to ensure fair voter representation across the Borough, and the review would consider ward boundaries, ward names, the number of councillors needed and the Council's electoral arrangements. The review would include extensive consultation and both councillors and the general public would have ample opportunity to have their say.

The Commission had asked to make a presentation to Council to fully explain the process and answer any questions from councillors. It was anticipated that this would take place sometime in the autumn and the Leader undertook to keep Members updated as more information emerged.

6) Corporate Strategy 2023 -2028

In November 2023 the Council had adopted its latest Corporate Strategy. Subsequently, there had been a change of political control at the Council and in Government. Accordingly, the Strategy would be reviewed to ensure that it reflected the priorities of the new political administration and the new Government's priorities. The Leader had agreed with the Chief Executive that an updated version would be brought to the Council at a future date for formal approval.

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive on this occasion.

60 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 23rd May 2024 were provided.

Resolved - **That the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 23rd May 2024 be approved as a correct record.**

61 Question Time

One question had been received. The Mayor read aloud the question as shown below.

1) Update on a Waste Transfer Centre for Hyndburn

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

"Is there an update on a Waste Transfer Centre for Hyndburn?"

Response:

Councillor Eaves indicated that waste transfer was a subject about which that Lancashire County Council had delayed making a decision for a number of years. This issue had effectively been passed on to the Borough Council to resolve at the eleventh hour.

Borough Council officers had met with colleagues at Lancashire County Council recently to discuss how a solution might be reached. The Leader of the Council had also met with the shadow Leader and Portfolio Holder at the County Council. They had agreed to look into the issue and feed back to Hyndburn colleagues. It remained the Council's view that Lancashire County Council, as the waste disposal authority, should provide a suitable waste transfer facility.

The Waste Management Strategy for Lancashire 2008 – 2020: Rubbish to Resources, set out the waste partnership's ambition, which had now been delivered in the north and west of the County, but not in east Lancashire. An e-mail had been sent to the Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport & Health, at the County Council asking why a waste transfer solution had not yet been delivered in East Lancashire. A response was awaited. The current situation was considered to be unfair. Ideally a suitable site could be identified either at Whinney Hill or at the Suez Resource Recovery Park, in Darwen. Hyndburn was being proactive and had already set aside £500k to help fund a waste transfer station, if necessary.

Councillor Smithson asked the following supplemental question in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A2-2.2(vi):

“Can the Portfolio Holder explain why his election campaign leaflet indicated that the waste transfer station would be located at the site of the Council’s Central Vehicle Maintenance Unit (CVMU), in Church.”

Councillor Eaves replied that, when the leaflet was distributed, information provided by the then Portfolio Holder for Housing & Regeneration, Councillor Kath Pratt, had stated that this was a possibility.

62 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

The Mayor reminded Members that a list of proposed changes to the appointments made at Annual Council had been set out on the covering Agenda for the meeting. Subsequently, a number of other changes had been proposed and, for completeness, the full list had been circulated this evening as an Addendum to the Agenda.

The Council had a duty to give effect to the nominations to seats put forward by its constituent political groups.

Councillor Dad indicated a further addition to the list in relation to membership of the Lancashire Waste Partnership. The final list of changes was as follows:

Political Group	Committee / Outside Body	Vacating Councillor (and Role)	New / Replacement Councillor (and Role)
Labour	Audit Committee	Cllr Noordad Aziz	Cllr Heather Anderson
Labour	Licensing Committee	Cllr Edward Blake <i>(Vice Chair)</i>	Cllr Ethan Rawcliffe <i>(Vice-Chair)</i>
Labour	Lancashire Waste Partnership	Councillor Kimberley Whitehead <i>(change to substitute)</i>	Councillor Stewart Eaves <i>(change to lead)</i>
Conservative	Audit Committee	Cllr Kath Pratt	Cllr Danny Cassidy
Conservative	Planning Committee	Cllr Danny Cassidy	Cllr Kath Pratt
Conservative	Hyndburn Area Citizens’ Advice Bureau	Opposition Vacancy <i>(observer)</i>	Cllr Marlene Haworth <i>(observer)</i>
Conservative	Special Scrutiny	Cllr Josh Allen	Cllr Zak Khan
Conservative	Resources OSC	Cllr Steven Smithson	Cllr Josh Allen
Conservative	Judicial Committee (PH & HC Licensing)	Cllr Steven Smithson	Cllr Marlene Haworth

Decision - To approve the above list of changes to appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies.

63 Lithium-ion Batteries Campaign

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad, BEM JP, Leader of the Council, in support of the Electrical Safety First campaign to improve the safety of lithium-ion batteries (used in e-bike and e-scooters) and their disposal. Councillor Dad indicated that the request had been forwarded to him by the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.

Fires caused by lithium-ion batteries in e-scooters and e-bikes had multiplied fourfold since 2020, resulting in deaths, hospitalisations, homelessness, and staggering financial losses. These kinds of batteries stored a significant amount of energy in a very small space and were much more powerful than other types of batteries.

Since 2020, there had been over 1,000 fires nationally, with nearly 200 people injured, and over a dozen fatalities. Homes had been destroyed and the cost to the UK ran into £billions. The UK was now facing a disturbing projection of nearly one e-bike or e-scooter fire per day this year, a significant leap from just over one per week in 2020.

In Lancashire, there had been a year on year rise in lithium-ion battery related fires in the last three years, and three quarters of them had involved a charger. When batteries were charged in communal areas or escape routes, a fire could quickly block the way out. On occasions batteries could fail catastrophically; they could explode and lead to a rapidly developing fire.

Lancashire fires from Lithium-ion battery 2020-23

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Number of incidents	14	27	35	76

Incident data indicated the following:

- 29% of incidents involved e-bikes, e-scooters, or hoverboards.
- Fires had mainly started in a bedroom or living room.
- All Lancashire districts had experienced incidents.
- Half of incidents occurred between 3pm and 11pm.

Lord Foster and Electrical Safety First (*UK Charity dedicated to reducing the deaths and injuries caused by electricity*), with cross-party support, were promoting The Safety of Electric-Powered Micro mobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill, to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal of lithium batteries. They aimed to get the Bill into law as soon as possible when Parliament reconvened.

This Bill had received support from many national organisations, including the National Fire Chiefs Council, most County Fire and Rescue Services, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Royal Society for Public Health. In addition, two coroners had called for the law to be tightened to ensure greater safety.

Prominent voices like the National Fire Chiefs Council, local Fire and Rescue Services, insurance companies, and various organisations had issued warnings about the gravity of the lithium-ion battery situation.

The National Fire Chiefs Council had backed the charity Electrical Safety First who were now contacting all local authorities seeking support for this campaign regarding improved safety standards of e-bikes and e-scooter batteries. A change in legislation was needed to help prevent fires and ensure that the products in people's homes were safe.

The safe disposal of lithium-ion batteries was also a key issue, as batteries thrown in household rubbish bins had been linked to an increase in waste fires. Research had shown that lithium-ion batteries were responsible for around half of all waste fires occurring in the UK each year, costing the UK economy some £158 million annually.

The Campaign – Proposed Legislation

A summary of the proposed legislation dealing with these mounting challenges was as follows:

Clause 1: Safety Assurance - This clause mandated a third-party safety assessment, conducted by a government-approved body, for all e-bikes, e-scooters, and their lithium-ion batteries before they entered the UK market. This process mirrored safety measures in place for other high-risk products like fireworks and heavy machinery.

Clause 2: Responsible Disposal - This clause required the Government to make regulations ensuring the safe disposal of lithium batteries once their lifecycle ended.

Clause 3: Comprehensive Fire Safety - This clause assigned the Government the responsibility of comprehensively addressing fire-related concerns. This involved enhancing safe usage, charging, and storage practices for these devices. It included setting standards for conversion kits and charging systems and considering a temporary ban on the sale of universal chargers that heightened fire risks.

Additional Clauses: The remaining clauses handled technical definitions and empowered devolved assemblies.

The Bill proposed policies to regulate the safety standards for e-bikes and e-scooters, and lithium batteries and their safe disposal. Ultimately, this Bill would save lives, and help to prevent injuries and damage caused by lithium-ion batteries.

Unlike other high-risk products, such as fireworks or medical devices, e-bike and e-scooter manufacturers could self-declare safety compliance before their products entered the UK market. Clause 1 of the Bill proposed third-party safety certifications for these products, to enhance product and consumer safety.

Clause 2 of the Bill aimed to enhance the safety of lithium battery disposal in response to their documented role in causing fires at waste disposal and recycling sites. These regulations could apply to all types of lithium batteries – which were used in a variety of products, including disposable vapes – not just those utilised by e-bikes and e-scooters.

Clause 3 of the Bill required the Secretary of State to establish regulations specifying the safety standards for micro-mobility conversion kits. It would also require all micro-mobility vehicles to have either a non-proprietary charging system with a communications protocol, or a proprietary charging system with a matched charger.

Councillors Andrew Clegg, Paul Cox and Clare Pritchard spoke in favour of the proposals. Councillor Zak Khan enquired if the Council had appropriate safety measures in place to control the hazards posed by batteries in council equipment. Councillor Dad summed up by indicating that Lancashire Combined Fire Authority had lots of information available and that officers would seek advice from them as appropriate. It was hoped that the Council's motion would help to raise awareness with the public and that any subsequent legislation would further increase safety.

Resolved - **That the Council supports the Electrical Safety First campaign and the new bill 'The Safety of Electric-Powered Micro-mobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill' to improve the safety of lithium-ion batteries.**

Members considered a joint report of Councillor Noordad Aziz, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Education and Skills, and Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations, updating Cabinet on the Treasury outturn position for 2023/24. The report had previously been considered and noted by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 11th June 2024.

The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities required the Council to set Prudential Indicators annually for the forthcoming three years to demonstrate that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Council had adopted its prudential indicators for 2023/2024 at its meeting in February 2023.

The Prudential Code required the Council, having agreed at least a minimum number of mandatory prudential indicators (including limits and statements), to monitor them in a locally determined format on a quarterly basis. This full-year report complemented the quarterly reports presented to Cabinet throughout the year and a more regular review by the Executive Director (Resources).

The indicators were purely for internal use and not designed to be used as comparators between authorities. If it should be necessary to revise any of the indicators during the year, the Executive Director of Resources would report and advise the Council further.

'Treasury Management' related to the borrowing, investing and cash activities of the authority, and the effective management of any associated risks. In February 2023, in the same report referred to above, the Council had also set out and then approved its current Treasury Management Strategy. This had been in accordance with the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) code of practice on treasury management in public services, the Council having previously adopted, via Cabinet, the then revised code of practice. Associated treasury management Prudential Indicators had been included in the February 2023 report.

Prudential Indicators Monitoring

Appendix 1 to the report had set out the monitoring information for each of the prudential indicators and limits. They related to:

- External debt overall limits;
- Affordability (eg implications for Council Tax);
- Prudence and sustainability (eg implications for external borrowing);
- Capital expenditure; and
- Other indicators for Treasury Management.

Treasury Management Update

The balance sheet outturn position for treasury manage activity was set out in a table included within the report.

The table demonstrated that the Council was performing within the original targets set at the start of the year. Within the prudential indicators there were a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operated its activities within well-defined limits. In general, the requirement was that the Capital Financing Requirement exceeded gross debt. However, in 2023/24 the gross debt had exceeded the Capital Financing Requirement. This was due to the Council having historical debt with a maturity repayment profile (meaning all principal was paid at the loans maturity date) but the accounting treatment required that the Capital

Financing Requirement was reduced each year by the payment of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Other Liabilities reflected finance liabilities relating to vehicles and plant.

The requirement to have Capital Financing Requirement exceed Gross Debt centred around providing an assurance that borrowing was not taking place for Revenue purposes. However, as the Council was not borrowing additional funds at this time, this was not an issue.

The current position of the treasury function, and its expected change in the future, introduced risk to the Council from an adverse movement in interest rates. The Prudential Code was constructed on the basis of affordability, part of which was related to borrowing costs and investment returns.

Investments balances were higher than had been forecast when the Prudential Indicators and strategy had been set. This was mainly due to grants received in advance of capital spend being incurred, as well as slippage in the capital programme.

The Capital Programme 2023/24 had been funded by the use of Government Grants (including Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and other external financing. It had also been supported during the year by greater use of internal sources of capital finance (including capital receipts and use of the Council's reserve balances). No external or internal borrowing had been required during the year.

Expected Movement in Interest Rates

The Council had appointed Link Asset Services as treasury adviser to the Council and part of their service was to assist the Council in formulating a view on interest rates. A graph was provided in the report which gave Link's latest available view of the expected future movement in interest rates.

The latest forecast set out a view that both short and long-dated interest rates would start to fall, as it was expected that inflation would come closer to, and possibly fall below, the Bank of England's target of 2.00%.

The Council's exposure to interest rate movements was largely neutralised currently as its borrowings were effectively at a fixed rate until a trigger point was reached, where the lender believed a better rate could be achieved elsewhere. Interest rates would have to exceed current levels before this was likely to happen. The aforementioned graph indicated that this was unlikely to happen in the next few years as interest rates were expected to fall, although this would continue to be closely monitored.

The revenue outturn position on the Council's Treasury Management activities was shown in a further table included in the report.

Interest Receivable – The Council had invested amounts of surplus cash on a short-term, temporary basis. The interest received from these investments was above the budgeted expectations for the full year to 31st March, this was mainly due to three different factors:

- (a) Increased cash balances due to grants received in advance of capital spend and slippage in the capital programme;
- (b) Higher interest rates than had been forecast when the budget was set, at that time the Bank of England base rate had been forecast to peak at a high of 4.50% and to have fallen to 3.50% by 31st March 2024; and

- (c) A change in the Council's investment strategy which had been approved at Full Council in February 2023 to increase the limit for investments with the Government's Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility (DMADF) from £2M to unlimited. This had allowed greater flexibility for placing funds with potential for higher returns and greater security of principal amounts invested. It was estimated that this change in policy had resulted in additional investment income of £300,000 in 2023/24.

Other interest receivable related to interest charged on long term loans, mainly to Hyndburn Leisure.

The Council continued to invest surplus cash in top rated financial institutions. The authority continued to spread its money around a number of institutions to ensure that it was not potentially damaged by the unforeseen collapse of any one bank. Deposits were also held with banks where the Council believed that the respective governments were likely to be able to guarantee deposits in the event of bank failure. This strategy was continuing to yield an appropriate rate of return, though at a lower rate, as there was less risk attached to these deposits. The Council also operated a policy of holding no more than £2m in any one bank (with the exception of the liquidity account held with Nat West Bank where the limit was £3m) to ensure that the risk was spread.

Interest Payable – An estimate of interest on additional borrowing had been included in the budget and no new borrowing had been required during the year. There was also a delay in delivery of several new vehicles which the Council was acquiring on finance lease, which had resulted in an underspend on interest payable on finance leases.

Minimum Revenue Provision – Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was the charge to revenue made in respect of paying off the principal sum of the borrowing undertaken to finance the capital programme in previous years. The underspend on MRP was due to the delay in delivery of the new vehicles, as mentioned in the point above, but also slippage on the capital programme.

Decision - **That the Council notes the Treasury outturn position for 2023/24**

65 Summary of 2023/24 Call In of Cabinet Decisions by Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Members considered a report of the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees setting out the outcome of Cabinet decisions called in by Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2023/24.

When a decision was made by the executive (or an individual member of the executive, a committee of the executive, an area committee or under joint arrangements or a key decision was made by an officer with delegated authority from the executive) the decision had to be published, including where possible by electronic means, and should be available at the main offices of the Council normally within 2 days of being made. Chairs of the overview and scrutiny committees would be sent copies of the records of all such decisions within the same timescale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision. If the chair of the overview and scrutiny committee was of the same political party as the executive, copies of all such decisions should also to be sent to all members of the committee.

The notice was required to bear the date on which it was published and will specify that the decision would come into force, and might then be implemented, on the expiry of 6 working

days after the publication of the decision, unless an overview and scrutiny committee objected to it and called it in.

During that period, the proper officer was required to call-in a decision for scrutiny by the relevant committee upon receipt of the appropriate call-in form signed by the chair (or the vice chair in the chair's absence) or any 2 members of the committee, and should then notify the decision-taker of the call-in. He/she should call a meeting of the committee on such date as he/she might determine, where possible after consultation with the chair of the committee, and in any case within 9 working days of the end of the 6 working day call-in period. If there was a dispute over which committee should consider the call in, the final decision would lie with the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services).

If, having considered the decision, the overview and scrutiny committee was still concerned about it, then it could refer it back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns. The decision maker should then reconsider amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision. If it was a Cabinet decision, it would be reconsidered at the next scheduled meeting of the Cabinet. The member who sponsored the call-in could attend the relevant Cabinet meeting to make representations on the item, as could the chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee, if he/she supported the call-in. If the matter under consideration was an officer decision or a decision by an individual cabinet member, it should be reconsidered within 5 working days.

If following an objection to the decision, the overview and scrutiny committee did not meet in the period set out above, or did meet but did not refer the matter back to the decision making person or body, the decision would take effect on the date of the overview and scrutiny meeting, or the expiry of the 10 working day call-in period whichever was the earlier.

Details of all decisions called in by overview and scrutiny committees and the decision makers response to them were required to be reported annually to Council for information.

In 2023/24, two Cabinet decisions had been called in by Overview and Scrutiny Committees as follows:

- Minute No. 219. Hyndburn Leisure Request for Financial Support, Cabinet decision date 6th December 2023
- Minute No. 295. Community Chest Grants, Cabinet decision date 24th January 2024

Details of the decisions called in, outcomes of the overview and scrutiny process and any Cabinet response were as follows.

Hyndburn Leisure Request for Financial Support

Decision Details:

That Cabinet:

- (1) Notes the request from Hyndburn Leisure for financial support of up to £700,000, as set out in the letter provided as an Appendix to the report.
- (2) Approves a grant to Hyndburn Leisure of £490,000 in respect of the financial year 2023/2024 and notes that this qualifies as Service of Public Economic Interest (SPEI)

Assistance pursuant to section 38 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 as detailed in section 7 of the report.

- (3) Approves the payment of the £490,000 support to be funded from within the Council's forecast revenue underspend in year for 2023/2024.
- (4) Notes that further financial support may be required by Hyndburn Leisure in the current and future years and notes that the Council will be required to consider whether the provision of such support is consistent with the subsidy control principles before any decision is made in respect of the same.
- (5) Supports a proposal for the inclusion of a 'one-off' budget allocation in the 2024/2025 revenue budget in respect of any further financial support that may be needed by the Leisure Trust.
- (6) Approves the commissioning of a report on the most advantageous delivery model for the provision of quality leisure services in Hyndburn, with regard to achieving value for money.

Called in by: Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Meeting held on 9th January 2024)

Overview and Scrutiny Outcome: Decision released in full for implementation

Cabinet response: Noted

Community Chest Grants

Decision Details:

That Cabinet:

- (1) Rescinds the decision made at its meeting of the 18th October 2023 to allocate an equal amount of the Community Chest Fund to each of the Borough's 16 wards.
- (2) Approves the proposed list of Community Chest Grants attached at Appendix A of the report.

Called in by: Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Meeting held on 16th February 2024)

Overview and Scrutiny Outcome: Decision released in full.

Cabinet response: Noted

Councillor Zak Khan. Leader of the Opposition, thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Members for releasing the decisions, particularly the decision in respect of funding for Hyndburn Leisure, as this had helped to support that organisation to maintain services throughout a difficult period.

Decision

- **That Council notes the outcome of the two decisions called in by Overview and Scrutiny Committees in 2023/24.**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 13th February, 13th March and 11th June 2024 were submitted.

The following matters were raised in connection with the Cabinet meeting held on 11th June 2024.

Councillor Zak Khan, Leader of the Opposition, referred to Minute 22 – Appointment of Cabinet Committees and Cabinet Groups 2024/25. He enquired if the Economic Policy Forum and Net Zero Working Group would continue and offered to arrange a handover to the new Portfolio Holders. Councillor Khan also commented that the decision at Minute 24 – Long Term Plan for Towns - Funding Update, which illustrated the controlling group's continued use of consultants, appeared contrary to their stated position. In addition, Councillor Khan repeated a comment made at the same meeting, in connection with Minute 26 – Provisional Financial Outturn Position - Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24, which (although not recorded in the formal minutes) had highlighted the healthy state of the Council's finances.

Regarding Minute 22, Councillor Scott Brerton responded that the Economic Policy Forum would continue to meet. A date would be arranged shortly. He would be pleased to receive any information held by Councillor Khan.

The Leader of the Council reported that Councillor Kate Walsh was the lead for Net Zero projects. He undertook to ask her to speak directly to Councillor Khan.

Councillor Steven Smithson referred to Minute 20 - Portfolio Responsibilities. He noted the Leader's comment that there would be a review of the system of pest control charges. Councillor Smithson reminded Members the overview and scrutiny had already reviewed the decision to introduce changes to the previous system. The changes had resulted in reduced waiting times. He considered that the system was currently working well.

The Leader responded that the pest control decision had, in fact, been called in by overview and scrutiny, which had questioned how residents could afford the service. The new administration would look again at this decision and if found to be working successfully the charges would be retained, but if not, they would be scrapped.

In respect of Minute 26, the Leader noted that the previous Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services had not addressed the funding issues around the provision of a waste transfer station, which could cost in the region of £2m. The Council was of the view that this should be the responsibility of Lancashire County Council, as waste disposal authority. However, the new administration had recently set aside £500k to begin to tackle this matter.

In respect of Minute 24, Councillor Dad clarified that there would always be times when specialist advice via consultants would be needed. However, the new administration would avoid unnecessary use of consultants. For example, the Council was not using consultants to develop the new planning policy on HMOs and had asked officers to carry out this work in-house.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received and noted.

67 Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

Meeting (Municipal Year 2023/24)	Date
Judicial Committee (Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing)	23 rd January 2024
Planning Committee	14 th February 2024
Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Call-In)	16 th February 2024
Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Budget)	20 th February 2024
Special Scrutiny Committee	5 th March 2024
Management Review Committee	12 th March 2024
Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	14 th March 2024
Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	19 th March 2024
Planning Committee	20 th March 2024
Audit Committee	25 th March 2024
Management Review Committee	9 th April 2024
Planning Committee	17 th April 2024
Judicial Committee (Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing)	18 th April 2024

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

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

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed