
COUNCIL

Thursday, 7th November, 2024

Present: Councillor Mike Booth (Mayor), Councillors Judith Addison, Vanessa Alexander, Josh Allen, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Edward Blake, 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, Kath Pratt, Ethan Rawcliffe, Steven Smithson, Tina Walker, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates

Apologies: Councillors Scott Brerton, Stephen Button, Joyce Plummer, Clare Pritchard and Mohammed Younis

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the November Council meeting.

He went on to report the very sad news of the passing of Councillor Edward Blake, Labour councillor for Baxenden. Councillor Blake had been elected for the first time in May of this year and had served the Council diligently, until his passing. The thoughts of the whole Council were with his family and friends at this sad time.

Councillors Gilbert, Dad, Anderson and Aziz all spoke kindly about Councillor Blake and noted his humility, his quiet and reserved demeanour, his thoughtfulness and willingness to serve the community and his love for animals. In summary, he was an all-round gentleman, who would be sadly missed. Councillor Khan added that, although the Conservative Group had not had sufficient time to get to know him well, the Group wished to offer its sincerest condolences to his family and to his Labour colleagues.

The Mayor reminded Members that in August of this year, two former councillors had also passed away:

- Ed Saville was a former Leader of the Council from 1986 to 1988 and had been awarded the title of Honorary Alderman in 2004. He had served as a Labour Councillor for Hyndburn for 7 years between 1980 and 1988.
- Maurice Cowell was a former Mayor of the Borough in 1997/98 and had been awarded the title of Honorary Alderman in 2005. He had served as a Labour Councillor for Hyndburn for 8 years between 1991 and 1999.

As a mark of respect for the aforementioned departed colleagues, councillors were invited to stand to observe a one minute silence. This was dutifully observed, following which Members retook their seats.

220 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Scott Brerton, Stephen Button, Joyce Plummer, Clare Pritchard and Mohammed Younis.

221 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

The Mayor reported that all Members currently had an up to date dispensation, which included authority to speak and vote in connection with Members Allowances. This dispensation was relevant for the purposes of Agenda Item 8 - Review of the Members Expenses Scheme.

Councillor Clare Yates declared a personal interest in Motion 3 (Accrington Victoria Hospital) at Agenda Item 11, as an employee of East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust. However, in her employment role, she was not connected to services provided at that site.

Councillor Andy Gilbert declared a personal interest in Motion 3 (Accrington Victoria Hospital) at Agenda Item 11, as an NHS employee, but not connected to the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust.

222 Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcements:

1) Street Angels

The Mayor announced that he was part of the Accrington Christian Churches Together Street Angels, who patrolled and provided assistance to people on the streets of Accrington Town Centre on Saturday evenings between 10pm and 2am. On Sunday 27th October 2024, he had attended a celebration of the group which had just completed its first full year of operation. Some impressive statistics were provided, as follows:

- Over 500 calming interventions;
- 104 homelessness interventions;
- 25 first aid assistance provided;
- 24 taxis called;
- 74 persons picked up from the ground;
- 100 persons provided with food and drink;
- 50 persons provided with clothing;
- 2 persons escorted home;
- 3 persons taken to Accident & Emergency;
- 5 ambulance calls made;
- 1 person saved from death;
- 1 person saved from severe harm; and
- 50 persons provided with flip-flops and water.

The results were a credit to the Street Angels, which comprised a small group of individuals. The Mayor wished to congratulate them for their achievements. He was very proud of the group and of other volunteers in the community who gave their time freely.

2) Remembrance Sunday

This weekend would see the commemoration of Remembrance Sunday, a time during which communities remembered those who had lost their lives or who had suffered from the horrors of war. War itself was the enemy and this was a time for communities to pray for peace throughout the world. The services held on Remembrance Sunday should remind everybody of the futility of war.

The Leader of the Council then made the following announcements:

3) Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge

Last week the Council had welcomed a team of peers from across the local government family, including both elected members and officers. They had conducted a Corporate Peer Challenge, which was a tried and tested process focussed on supporting improvement within individual councils and identifying good practice across the sector.

The team had met over 110 people in 35 meetings across two very full days.

The overall messages were very positive and reflected that there was much that the Council should be proud of. The team had particularly remarked that Hyndburn had a friendly, loyal and dedicated workforce and strong partnerships across the community. The team was impressed by the Council's ambition, improvements made on systems and information from the Finance team and the Borough's success in attracting funding.

The team would be producing a report, which would provide more details on this and include their recommendations. The next step would be for the Council to consider these and produce an action plan, which would be published along with the report.

The peer team would return in about 10 months to see how the Council was progressing with the actions.

The Council was looking forward to building on this valuable feedback to drive some improvements.

Councillor Dad was keen to thank officers, councillors and the Leader of the Opposition for their hard work and valued contributions.

4) Islamophobia Awareness Month

The Leader drew attention to the fact that November was Islamophobia awareness month. This was a time to celebrate the contribution of the Muslim community to the Borough but also to consider the fact that prejudice created barriers and caused harm that affected real people, including exclusion, discrimination and violence. This occurred on a daily basis. Misunderstanding and stereotypes often overshadowed the true meaning of Islam. A large number of hate crimes had been recorded in Lancashire in recent years, including a 25% increase in religious hate crimes. This behaviour threatened society. Differences should be respected and people should engage in open dialogue. It was hoped that Islamophobia Awareness Month would help to promote better understanding.

5) Israel/Gaza Conflict

The Leader had recently signed a letter from the Labour Muslim Network, which they would send to the Prime Minister. Councillor Dad read out the contents of the letter. The letter called for the suspension of arms sales to Israel and highlighted the plight of Palestinian families who had been killed, air strikes on hospitals and the mass displacement of civilians. The Israeli Prime Minister had threatened to seal off food and aid supplies. To date some 31 hospitals and 80% of all schools had been destroyed or damaged in Gaza. The death toll was very high. The letter warned against the UK being complicit in breaches of international law. Accordingly, the call to suspend all arms sales to Israel was reiterated.

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

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26th September 2024 were provided.

Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE highlighted the reference at Minute 160(6) to the previous letter about the Israel/Gaza conflict sent by the Leader of the Council to The Rt Hon David Lammy, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs. He welcomed both letters, but felt that their timing was a little late. He also indicated that there were firms locally who made and supplied parts for F35 jets, which were involved in dropping bombs on Gaza. He asked what steps the Council might take to engage with those companies to halt production. He considered that that the companies may also be in breach of international law. He hoped that the Council would speak to those companies to advise them of the legal position and do all in its power to prevent any unlawful trading.

Resolved - **That the Minutes of Council meeting held on 26th September 2024 be approved as correct records.**

224 Question Time

One eligible question had been received, which was set out in the report. The Mayor advised that a lengthy preamble to that question, included in the report, had provided some background information and context. It was not proposed to read out the whole of the preamble on the understanding that Members would have already noted that information. Accordingly, the Mayor read aloud the question only as shown below.

1) Engagement with Taxi Drivers and Operators

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP)
Submitted by Councillor Shabir Fazal*

“Will the Council consider developing an overall strategy to engage with local taxi drivers and operators with the aim of:

1. Fully understanding why drivers and operators are choosing to get registered in Wolverhampton at considerable effort and expense rather than Hyndburn;
2. Further changing the taxi testing regime in favour of Hybrid and fully electric vehicles. For example, as hybrid and electric cars are far less polluting and far more reliable than even new diesel and petrol cars, extending the period that hybrid cars only needing to be testing every 12 months to the first 7 years of their life and the period for fully electric cars to the first 10 years of life;
3. Identify incentives for drivers to switch to hybrid and fully electric taxis e.g. by offering reduced fees for taxi and operator licences for hybrid and fully electric cars or offer grants and loans to encourage purchase of new and second hand zero emissions cars including wheelchair accessible cars. Additionally, the Council (Hyndburn and LCC) could include criteria in contract tenders to make these more favourable to operators with zero emission vehicles;
4. Improve the car-charging infrastructure within Hyndburn and offer cheaper charging for taxi drivers?

Many of these are currently being done by forward thinking councils who take their net zero responsibilities seriously. I hope Hyndburn will implement the obvious ones straight away and develop a longer strategy for others.”

Response:

The Leader thanked Councillor Fazal for the question. He reported that the Council had established a Taxi Liaison Committee, which involved taxi drivers and representatives of operators. The majority of issues were taken to this group for discussion. Councillor Dad undertook to refer all of the above issues to the Committee for consideration. If any changes were proposed, these would be decision for the Cabinet to take.

Councillor Fazal asked a follow up question, as set out below:

He thanked the Leader for his positive response. Councillor Fazal had listened to the LGA Peer Review feedback on 31st October 2024, which had highlighted the excellent net zero work undertaken by the Council. The above engagement with the taxi trade would demonstrate that the Council was being progressive and the suggested actions were obvious steps forward. He was aware that approximately 50% of licensed taxis in Hyndburn were purely petrol or diesel vehicles. Given that the Council was committed to net zero emissions, he asked that incentives be approved to promote the switch to hybrid or electric vehicles, which could lead to a reduction in pollution as well as delivering more economical taxis.

Response:

Councillor Dad remarked that the Chair of the Net Zero Working Group, Councillor Kate Walsh, was also present tonight and would look at these issues too.

225 Statutory Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, about the outcome of the latest statutory review of polling places and polling districts in Hyndburn and proposing recommendations.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 required the Council to review Hyndburn’s polling districts and polling stations periodically. The review had to cover the polling stations and polling districts used for Parliamentary, County Council and Borough Council elections and a statutory review had commenced in September 2024, so that any changes arising from the review could be implemented prior to the Lancashire County Council elections in May 2025.

When carrying out the review the Council was required by legislation to:

- ensure that all electors had reasonable facilities for voting; and
- ensure that as far as reasonable and practicable, polling places were accessible to all electors, including those with disabilities.

Polling Districts:

When reviewing polling districts the Council was required to look at the polling district boundaries and consider:

- were the boundaries well defined ?
- did the boundaries follow natural boundaries in the area ?
- was it clear which properties belonged in which polling district ?

In addition, the Council was required to look at the location of the polling district and consider:

- were there suitable transport links within the polling district and how well did these serve the areas of greatest population ?
- were there any obstacles to voters reaching the polling station e.g. steep hills, major roads that were hard to cross, railway lines, rivers etc ?

Polling Stations:

When reviewing polling stations the Council was required to look at the location of the polling station and consider:

- was it easy to get to – were there convenient transport links or were there barriers such as steep hills, major roads etc ?

In addition, the Council was required to assess the size of the polling station and consider:

- could several polling stations fit in the same room if need be ?
- was the polling station big enough, especially if there was a high turnout ?

The Council also had to look at the suitability of the polling station and determine:

- would the building be available if there was an unexpected election ?
- was the building likely to be demolished or become disused ?
- was the building accessible to people with a disability ?

Where possible, the Council had sought to avoid the use of mobile units as polling stations, as usually it was not possible to provide a wheelchair ramp within the space available at the relevant location. However, in a small number of polling districts there was no other suitable venue available within the polling district (or within a reasonable distance within an adjacent polling district) and the Council had no option but to use a mobile unit. Although this was not the ideal solution, experience from recent elections was that these units did not generate complaints or concerns in respect of a lack of full disabled access.

The full list of polling districts and polling places was set out in the report as Appendix 1. Only two changes to polling places were proposed in the Appendix, as follows:

Polling district	Current location	Suggested new location
ZD	Mobile unit at St Mary's School	St Mary's School
IA	Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre	Rhyddings Methodist Church

The Leader summarised the changes above indicating that for polling district ZD the new polling station was within a classroom at St Mary's School, rather than in a mobile unit at that location. In respect of polling district IA the new polling station would be at Rhyddings Methodist Church, rather than in a mobile unit at Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre. Councillor Allen, Deputy Mayor, welcomed the change proposed in polling district IA, but noted that the pathway from the car park to the Church was very rough and in need of repair. He asked if the Council could look into this matter in conjunction with Lancashire County Council.

Councillor Stewart Eaves pointed out an error in Appendix 1 (at Page 9 of the report). Polling Districts HA, HB, HC and HD were in the County Electoral Division of Accrington North, not Accrington West and Oswaldtwistle.

Councillor Gilbert noted that there were 3 polling stations with no disabled access. He suggested that councillors look at these polling places to see if anything more could be done.

- Resolved**
- (1) That no changes are made to the Council's current polling district boundaries; and**
 - (2) That the polling places identified in Appendix 1 of the report are agreed.**

226 Gambling Act 2005 - Review of Statement of Principles

Members considered a report of Councillor Melissa Fisher, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, advising on the responses received to the consultation in respect of the Council's draft revised Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles and proposing a policy for approval, having regard to the responses received.

Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 required that the Licensing Authority (the Council) prepared and published a Statement of Principles (the Policy) every three years.

The existing Policy had been kept under review since coming into force in January 2022.

In producing the draft policy the Licensing Authority had had due regard to –

- The Gambling Act 2005 licensing objectives namely:
 - Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime;
 - Ensuring gambling was being conducted in a fair and open way;
 - Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling;
- The Guidance to Licensing Authorities issued by the Gambling Commission (5th edition); and
- Responses from those consulted on the Gambling Policy.

The draft proposals had been advertised on the Council's website, with the consultation period running for 12 weeks from 15th July 2024 to 30th September 2024. Letters had been sent out to the gambling trade and a public notice and information about the policy and consultation had been placed in all of Hyndburn's public libraries. The consultees comprised:

- Council chief officers and service heads;
- Gambling Commission;
- HM Revenue and Customs;
- Lancashire Constabulary;
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service Authority;
- Lancashire County Council – including Lancashire Area Child Protection Committee and Trading Standards Section;
- All neighbouring Councils;
- Licensing Solicitors;
- The British Casino Association;
- Casino Operators Association of the UK;
- Company Secretary, Casino Operators Association of the UK;
- Business in Sport and Leisure;
- Racecourse Association Ltd;
- British Holiday & Home Parks Association;
- Community Trade Union;
- All Gambling and Licensing Premise Licence Holders;
- All Small Lottery Licence Holders; and
- The general public by way of the Council's website.

Response to Consultation

There had been 2 representations received during the consultation period. The Policy had been amended to reflect some of the comments in the consultation response submitted by Gosschalks Solicitors, on behalf of the Betting and Gaming Council. The changes were highlighted in the draft policy appended to the report, at paragraphs 12.9 and 12.45. However, although the second response was considered, the Licensing Manager did not think the Statement of Principles was the correct place to address the issues raised for the following reasons:

- The Gambling Act 2005 specifically required the Council to 'aim to permit' gambling. The legislation did not enable the policy to address general moral or ethical objections to gambling per se. The policy was instead intended to ensure that the Council addressed the statutory licensing objectives.
- Problem gambling was dealt with under Government initiatives and by the Gambling Commission codes of practice.
- One of the licensing objectives covered by the policy was protecting children and vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling. This would be considered when any applications for a licence were received and conditions could be added to licences to promote the achievement of this objective.

Councillor Fazal commented that the second consultation response referred to was from himself and he had simply been making a point about the negative effects of gambling. A lot of harm had been caused by gambling, particularly because of addiction. The Council had a responsibility to permit gambling, but this was not the same as making it easy to gamble. He considered that the Council should do its best to protect people at risk. This could perhaps be achieved by making it difficult to open new gambling establishments. He noted that there were four bookies in Accrington Town Centre alone. He confirmed that he was not advocating the prevention of gambling, just making it more difficult to access and

ensuring that appropriate enforcement was carried out, particularly in connection with children. In the worst cases, excessive gambling via betting shops or fruit machines, could potentially lead to families needing to visit food banks.

Councillor Cox reminded Members that the previous Labour administration had brought in planning restrictions in connection with gambling locations (and for takeaways). Councillor Dad reiterated this point. He also emphasised that the current report and the recommendation were to ensure compliance with existing legislation. Councillor Aziz added that former MP Graham Jones had lobbied hard to reduce the maximum stakes on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) from £100 to £2 in 2018. Councillor Walsh reported that she was a member of Christians on the Left, a group affiliated to the Labour Party, which was currently lobbying for tighter restrictions on gambling. Councillor Addison reminded members that a significant amount of gambling took place in the home, on-line, which was outside of the Council's control and something of a loophole. In some instances, people's homes had been repossessed due to gambling debts.

Resolved - **That the Council approves the final draft of the revised Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.**

227 Review of the Members Expenses Scheme

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, regarding the recent review of the members expenses scheme and the recommendations of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

Councillor Dad provided a brief introduction to the report and thanked the Independent Remuneration Panel for their work.

The statutory role of the Independent Remuneration Panel was to advise the Council in respect of the allowances and expenses paid to councillors. By law, the Council was unable to amend its members allowances scheme without having regard to the recommendations of its remuneration panel and this had to be done at a meeting of the Council as a whole, although the panel's recommendations were not binding on the Council. The Council was, therefore, able to take decisions about members allowances that differed from the recommendations of the remuneration panel.

By law, the Council was required to have a scheme for the payment of members' allowances. The scheme:

- must provide for payment of a basic allowance. The basic allowance must be paid to every councillor and every councillor must be paid the same amount;
- may provide for the payment of special responsibility allowances which were paid to councillors who had special roles and responsibilities;
- may provide for payment of a childcare and dependant carer's allowance.

A copy of the Council's current members allowances scheme was set out in the report at Appendix 2.

The last significant change to members expenses occurred in 2011/12 when the Council had revised its members allowance scheme to reduce members allowances to 2009/10 levels. This was to reflect the position with staff pay, which had remained static since 2009/10. Councillors were also limited to claiming only one special responsibility allowance each.

The Council's members allowances scheme provided for basic and special responsibility allowances to be increased on 1st April each year in line with the NJC local government pay award and, between 2011/12 – 2015/16, members allowances were therefore increased on this "inflation only" basis. However, the law only permitted "inflation only" increases to be made for four consecutive years without the benefit of a remuneration panel report which considered whether the practice should continue and at what rate. No such report had been presented to Council since 2011/12 and the allowances paid to members had therefore remained unchanged since 2015/16.

As the members allowances scheme had not been reviewed for several years, the Leaders Policy Development Board (which comprised the Leader and Deputy Leaders of the Council's political groups) had met on 29th July 2024 and had agreed unanimously to reconvene the Independent Remuneration Panel to consider the following matters:

- a. whether the Council should again have the capacity to increase allowances by reference to inflation as previously (subject to the legal proviso that this could only be done on four occasions without reference to the remuneration panel); and
- b. whether the special responsibility allowance for vice-chairs of overview and scrutiny committees was out of step with the special responsibility allowance paid to other committee vice-chairs and, if the panel considered that it was, what the appropriate level of allowance should be; and
- c. whether a special responsibility allowance should be paid in recognition of the "member champion" role and, if the panel considered that it should, what the appropriate level of allowance should be and whether a limit should be placed upon the number of such allowances payable.

In identifying the above issues, the Leaders Board had been mindful of the following:

- That it did not wish to seek an increase in the basic allowance or in special responsibility allowances generally, being mindful of the current cost of living crisis; and
- That it believed the Council's members allowances were now more in line with the Lancashire norm, having once been somewhat above that level; and
- That the Board did not want to put up financial barriers to local people becoming councillors and wanted to value the work that councillors did in their communities;

Member champions:

The Council was now thinking of appointing a number of member champions to lead on specific issues (such as young people, the armed forces, disability, etc). The champions would be expected to gain detailed knowledge of their subject area and come up with proposals for consideration by the Cabinet and Council. This idea was not unique to Hyndburn. The member champion role was fairly common nationally and had been adopted already by a number of Lancashire district councils, who also recognised the duties and obligations of the role by the award of a small special responsibility allowance, as follows:

Council	Amount	Number Permitted
Wyre	£250.00	5
Lancaster	£257.50 max	£1,000 total pot to be shared between champions up to cap of £257.50 each
Chorley	£399	
Preston	£1,246	3

At a meeting on 22nd October 2024 the Leaders Board considered the report and recommendations of the independent remuneration panel. The Leaders Board agreed the following:

Member Champions

The Leaders Board agreed that payment of a small special responsibility allowance was appropriate, as those appointed to the member champion role would be required to attend events and meetings related to their role, as well as acquiring detailed knowledge of their subject area and making recommendations to officers, Cabinet and Council. The sum of £250 was proposed, as this was in line with payments made for the role in Lancashire, subject to a limit of four member champion special responsibility allowances being payable annually.

Overview & Scrutiny Vice-Chairs

The Leaders Board agreed that the current rate of allowance was out of step with the payments made to other committee vice-chairs and that greater parity would be achieved by reducing the special responsibility allowance to £2,217.00. The Leaders Board considered that this sum more properly reflected the nature and obligations of the role.

Increase of allowances by reference to NJC pay award

The Leaders Board considered that it was appropriate to reinstate the annual inflationary increase, given that no such increase had been made since 2015/16. It was also considered that the proposal reflected the increasing professionalisation of the member role and the time commitment involved.

Councillor Khan spoke in favour of the recommendations. Councillor Fazal queried why the remuneration panel's recommendations in relation to abolishing the allowance payable to vice-chairs of overview and scrutiny committees had not been proposed for adoption. Councillor Dad responded that there was evidence to show that these post-holders were called upon to chair meetings from time to time in the absence of the chair. By way of comparison, their counterparts at Lancashire County Council received an allowance. The Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) commented that more up to date information had become available since the remuneration panel had considered the matter. The intention was to normalise the allowance with that of other vice-chairs.

Councillor Addison enquired about the review of the Members IT loan scheme and the cessation of free (limited) data usage by councillors for iPads. Councillor Vanessa Alexander responded that the loan scheme had been under review and would now come to an end. For data security reasons, all councillors would be given a suitable Council owned tablet device. A few different models were currently being trialled. Those councillors currently making loan payments would need to continue to do so, but would still receive a

new Council device. Returned Council tablets would be passported to new councillors upon election to office.

Resolved

- **That the Council:**
 - (1) Notes the report of its Independent Remuneration Panel attached at Appendix 1 to the report, and having done so;**
 - (2) Agrees to amend the members allowances scheme to:
 - i) create a new special responsibility allowance payable to member champions in the sum of £250 each, subject to a maximum number of four such allowances being payable annually; and**
 - ii) reduce the special responsibility allowance payable to vice-chairs of overview and scrutiny committees to £2,217.00 to bring it in line with special responsibility allowances payable to other committee vice-chairs; and****
 - (3) Agrees to enable basic and special responsibility allowances to be increased annually by the same percentage rate of increase as the NJC pay award for Council employees, noting that this will only be permissible for the next four financial years without consideration of a further report from the Independent Remuneration Panel; and**
 - (4) Agrees that resolutions (2) to (3) above will take effect from 1st April 2025.**

228 Minutes of Cabinet

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th September 2024 were submitted.

The following matters were raised.

In respect of the announcement recorded at the start of the meeting regarding a grant of £30m for the Huncoat Garden Village project, the Leader commented that a visit by Homes England had taken place today. The Council had invited them to attend and the Leader had thanked them in person for the funding offer. He had also sought support from Homes England for elements of the Accrington Town Centre Masterplan. Their response had been very positive. Councillor Melissa Fisher commented that a visit from Homes England was almost unprecedented and was a positive sign.

Councillor Khan indicated that the Conservative Group also supported the decision to proceed with the development and would be happy to work with the controlling administration to make it a success and to secure the right housing for the Borough. Councillor Khan expressed disappointment that the questions he had asked and the

answers given at the Cabinet meeting had not been recorded more comprehensively in the formal minutes.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received and noted.

229 Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

Meeting (Municipal Year 2024/25)	Date
Audit Committee	16 th September 2024
Standards Committee	19 th September 2024
Planning Committee	2 nd October 2024
Standards Committee	10 th October 2024

Resolved - That the Minutes be received and noted.

230 Motion(s) submitted on Notice

1) Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Danny Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Marlene Haworth, with support from signatories Councillors Zak Khan, Loraine Cox and Kath Pratt, under Council Procedure Rule A9:

“The Civic Theatre is a hub of activity that has welcomed residents of all ages into an amazing space of creativity and arts. Sat in the heart of Oswaldtwistle, it provides a highly valuable community service to those in Hyndburn.

To ensure that the building is restored and reopened to a new glory, this Council commits to creating a new cross-party working group, to be chaired by Cllr Josh Allen, Deputy Mayor and local Ward Cllr for Immanuel.”

Councillors Kate Walsh and Stewart Eaves sought to move an amendment to the motion and a brief debate ensued about the issue of cross-party working. Councillor Khan indicated that this had been the subject of an earlier discussion between Councillor Whitehead and himself. However, in the absence of Councillor Whitehead it was not possible to clarify what had previously been agreed.

The Chief Executive sought to clarify the precise wording of the amendment, to enable officers to consider whether the proposed amendment was valid. Before that could be actioned, a suggestion was put that the Mover and Seconder of the Motion might consider withdrawing it to enable further discussions to take place outside of the meeting. Accordingly, Councillors Cassidy and Haworth sought to withdraw the motion and this received the consent of the meeting.

Councillors Alexander, Dad and Gilbert all spoke to affirm the Council’s commitment to returning the Civic Theatre to use and to working cross-party to achieve this outcome. Councillor Allen thanked Councillor Whitehead, in her absence, for having invited him to participate in the recent meeting about the Theatre.

2) Change to Council Procedure Rules

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Zak Khan and seconded by Councillor Danny Cassidy, with support from signatories Councillors Kath Pratt, Judith Addison, Loraine Cox, Josh Allen, Marlene Haworth, Mohammed Younis, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker, under Council Procedure Rule A9:

“This Council approves a change to Council Procedure Rules that reverts to allowing motions and notices to be signed by at least two members.”

Councillor Khan indicated that he had sent a letter to the Chief Executive setting out the rationale for the proposal, which had subsequently been forwarded to the controlling group. In effect, democracy should be seen to be transparent. He acknowledged that when the change had been proposed initially, the Opposition had not noticed it. The original report had referred to changes highlighted in red, which were not apparent in the published Appendix.

Hyndburn was the only local authority in Lancashire, which had adopted this procedure. It was felt that this would unfairly affect minority political parties. Councillors Fazal, Allen and Haworth spoke in favour of the motion. Councillors Aziz, Walsh, Dad and Fisher spoke against the motion, noting that the original change had been fully supported at the Annual Council meeting.

On being put to the VOTE the motion was LOST.

3) Accrington Victoria Hospital

A motion in connection with Accrington Victoria Hospital was set out in the report provided for this Agenda Item. In moving the motion, Councillor Paul Cox made a minor alteration to the wording of paragraph (4) to clarify that the role of the working group would be to act as a consultative body.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Andrew Clegg, with support from signatories Councillors Munsif Dad, Bernard Dawson and Melissa Fisher, under Council Procedure Rule A9:

“This Council is hugely disappointed in the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust decision to close Accrington Victoria Hospital. As such a short timetable was released by the Trust, we feel it failed to allow residents and the community to have their voices heard. We feel as a Council this action has disproportionately affected Hyndburn residents and particularly those of Accrington.

This Council asks the ELHT to pause this action and rather than close it, invest in the building and vital services it delivers.

The Council resolves to:

- (1) Write to ELHT and ask them to pause this closure.
- (2) Contact the Right Hon Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to ask him to formally ask the NHS Trust to stop this closure.
- (3) Create a working group with key stakeholders including the NHS Trust, social housing providers and developers to look at forming a plan which will offer a solution

to ongoing building issues and look to access funding that will ensure Hyndburn residents are given fair and proportional health care based in the heart of our town.

- (4) Within the working group the Council would establish a residents, patients and local GP's community panel to consider matters about the site."

Councillor Paul Cox spoke about the history of the hospital, which was over 100 years old and had been built by public subscription to serve the community. He commented that ELHT appeared to have had an agenda to close the building for at least a decade. He expressed disappointment that the Trust had not approached the Council about options for the future of the hospital, that the building had been allowed to decline and that services had been eroded. He commented that investment had gone into hospital facilities in Blackburn and Burnley, but that these were under enormous pressure.

Councillors Clegg, Khan, Aziz, Dad, Fisher, Eaves, Haworth, Walsh, Clements, Anderson and Fazal spoke in support of the motion.

Councillor Paul Cox summed up by noting the need for more local healthcare services, particularly as additional housing was planned at Huncoat Garden Village. He considered that now was the time to act.

Resolved

- That the Council agrees to:

- (1) Write to ELHT and ask them to pause this closure.**
- (2) Contact the Right Hon Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to ask him to formally ask the NHS Trust to stop this closure.**
- (3) Create a working group with key stakeholders including the NHS Trust, social housing providers and developers to look at forming a plan which will offer a solution to ongoing building issues and look to access funding that will ensure Hyndburn residents are given fair and proportional health care based in the heart of our town.**
- (4) Within the working group, establish a residents, patients and local GP's community panel to consider matters about the site.**

4) Request for an Orgreave Inquiry

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Paul Cox and seconded by Councillor Andrew Clegg, with support from signatories Councillors Munsif Dad, Bernard Dawson and Melissa Fisher, under Council Procedure Rule A9:

"This Council is concerned and disappointed by consecutive Home Secretaries' refusals to hold an inquiry into policing of events at Orgreave during the 1984/85 Miner's Strike.

Many Hyndburn residents were involved in the dispute and were themselves members of the National Union of Mineworkers and as such have suffered injustice during the strike.

This Council congratulates the Scottish Parliament who in 2018 ordered an independent review to investigate and report on the impact of policing on affected communities in Scotland during the period of the miners' strike from March 1984 – March 1985. As a consequence of this review the Miners' Strike (Pardons) (Scotland) Act 2022 came into force on the 27th July 2022.

This Council is pleased that in 2018 the Bishop of Sheffield wrote to then Home Secretary, proposing that an Orgreave independent panel be established. This proposal was disappointingly rejected and more recently consecutive Home Secretaries have refused to meet with the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign to discuss a way forward.

This Council is also pleased about the decision of the Welsh Assembly in 2018 to write to the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, to ask for an independent review into policing in England and Wales during the miners' strike.

This Council praises the many Members of Parliament who have tried to use various parliamentary procedures to encourage the Government to hold an Orgreave inquiry.

This Council also praises the many other councils who have passed resolutions and contacted the Home Secretary to set up an Orgreave inquiry.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Ask, in light of such actions from the Scottish and Welsh Governments, the Bishop of Sheffield, Members of Parliament and Councils, that the current Labour Home Secretary holds an Orgreave inquiry, as soon as possible.
- (2) Write to the Home Secretary to say that the opinion of this Council is that there is widespread public concern about events and policing throughout the miners' strike and calls for the Home Secretary to order an Orgreave inquiry as soon as possible."

Councillor Cox outlined the background to the motion and reiterated that many councils had passed similar motions on this matter. Councillor Stewart Eaves recounted his personal experiences outside the Orgreave Coking Plant, near Sheffield.

Resolved

- That the Council agrees to:

- (1) Ask, in light of such actions from the Scottish and Welsh Governments, the Bishop of Sheffield, Members of Parliament and Councils, that the current Labour Home Secretary holds an Orgreave inquiry as soon as possible.**
- (2) Write to the Home Secretary to say that the opinion of this Council is that there is widespread public concern about events and policing throughout the miners' strike and calls for the Home Secretary to order an Orgreave inquiry as soon as possible.**

5) M65 Review

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Noordad Aziz and seconded by Councillor Kate Walsh, with support from signatories Councillors Heather Anderson, Melissa Fisher, Vanessa Alexander and Munsif Dad, under Council Procedure Rule A9:

“This Council resolves to write to Highways England and Lancashire County Council to request an urgent review of the general safety of the M65 motorway. Given the frequency of recent accidents, including those occurring in daylight and at night, it is essential to assess this stretch for potential safety improvements, including but not limited to lighting. This review should aim to enhance overall road safety, reduce accident risks, and ensure the well-being of all road users.”

Councillor Aziz spoke about the concerns of residents and road users about safety issues along the M65. There had been a number of tragic accidents particularly at night and during bad weather on the motorway in Hyndburn. This had prompted him to review the number of fatalities on this stretch of road in the Borough and then to extend the review to encompass the whole length of the M65. One letter received from a resident had identified safety concerns following the switching off of the lighted section of motorway. A possible reduction in the speed limit at night was also suggested.

The Chief Executive reminded members that the responsible body for England's motorways and major A roads was now known as National Highways.

Councillors Andrew Clegg and Zak Khan spoke in favour of the motion.

- Resolved**
- **This Council agrees to write to National Highways and Lancashire County Council to request an urgent review of the general safety of the M65 motorway. Given the frequency of recent accidents, including those occurring in daylight and at night, it is essential to assess this stretch for potential safety improvements, including but not limited to lighting. This review should aim to enhance overall road safety, reduce accident risks and ensure the well-being of all road users.**

The Mayor indicated that Agenda items 12 and 13 had been withdrawn.

231 Exclusion of the Public

[WITHDRAWN]

232 Appointment of Co-optees

[WITHDRAWN]

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

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed