
COUNCIL

Thursday, 27th February, 2025

Present: Councillor Mike Booth (Mayor), Councillors Judith Addison, Vanessa Alexander, Josh Allen, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brerton, Stephen Button, Danny Cassidy, Jodi Clements, Loraine Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Peter Edwards, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Steven Smithson, Tina Walker, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates

Apologies: Councillors Heather Anderson, Andrew Clegg, Paul Cox, Bernard Dawson MBE and Mohammed Younis

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Council's Budget meeting for 2025/26.

359 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Heather Anderson, Andrew Clegg, Paul Cox, Bernard Dawson MBE and Mohammed Younis.

360 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

It was noted that, with the exception of one individual, all councillors present had a dispensation to speak and vote on matters in relation to the setting of the Council Tax or a precept under the Local Government Act 1992. Advice was provided setting out the Government's view that a dispensation was not an essential requirement for participation in the debate or voting on such matters.

361 Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcements:

1) Mayor's Ball 2025

The Mayor, and on behalf of the Mayoress, thanked all who had helped to make the Mayor's Ball a great success. A good night of entertainment had been enjoyed by all. Councillor Melissa Fisher added her comments in support of the event and noted that a considerable sum had been raised for charity.

The Leader of the Council then made the following announcements:

2) Local Government Reorganisation

Progress towards local government reorganisation was continuing at a pace. Since the last Council meeting the Government had confirmed reorganisation in Lancashire would be in place by 1st April 2028. Local authorities had been invited to submit initial proposals by 21st

March 2025 and councils were currently working on developing a single response. The response was likely to provide the Government with a range of options for consideration by the final deadline of 28th November 2025. The Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Rt Hon Jim McMahon MP, would then consider the views expressed in 2026 and determine the new structures to be implemented. Elections for Hyndburn Borough Council would continue to take place in 2026 and in the following year there would be elections for the shadow unitary authorities. The new authorities would be established from 2028. The controlling administration would keep all employees informed throughout this journey.

3) Israel/Hamas Conflict

A further e-mail had been sent to Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon David Lammy MP, signed by local councillors in connection with US President Donald Trump's proposals for the future of Gaza. The proposals would see the US to take long-term ownership of the Gaza Strip and the resettlement of Palestinians. This had left many people appalled and the Foreign Secretary was urged to take action. What was proposed was reprehensible and potentially amounted to ethnic cleansing. Both the UN and EU had condemned the announcement. The proposals threatened to undermine Phase 2 of the ceasefire deal and could spark renewed conflict, jeopardising stability across the region. The sensible course of action was to develop a two state solution, but President Trump's proposals could deal a fatal blow to this ambition. It was hoped that an independent state comprising the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza could be established.

The letter called upon the Government to oppose the US plans and to prevent the carrying out of a possible war crime. Over 180 councillors had added their signatures to the letter.

With the permission of the Mayor, the Leader of the Council invited Councillor Clare Pritchard to provide an update on the situation regarding Accrington Victoria Hospital.

4) Accrington Victoria Hospital

Councillor Clare Pritchard reported that she had attended a steering group meeting with East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust to discuss Accrington Victoria Hospital, which had been quite positive. It was noted that the Police and Fire Services had attended the premises around 20 times since its closure due to break-ins. It was not the responsibility of the Police to secure the premises. The Council had expressed disappointment at the apparent inertia of the Trust. However, the Trust's Chief Executive had promised to do what he could to address the matter and had provided an assurance that he took the matter seriously. He was keen to progress plans to get the site back into use.

The Chief Executive of the Council, Mr David Welsby, made the following announcement:

5) Welcome to Newly Elected Councillor David Heap

David Welsby noted the outcome of the recent by-election in the Baxenden Ward and welcomed Councillor David Heap onto the Council and to his first formal meeting.

362 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th January 2025 were provided.

In respect of Minute 282(4) – Israel/Hamas Conflict, Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE commented that the Leader of the Council had reported over the last few meetings that he

had signed various letters to the Government about the situation in Gaza. However, he was not aware that any replies had been received. He asked what the Government's stance was on Gaza and noted that arms and intelligence continued to be provided to Israel. He mentioned that one Palestinian child was reputedly killed every 15 minutes and suggested that Britain was complicit in this loss of life.

The Leader responded that councillors listened to the views expressed by residents and that these concerns were reported to the appropriate Ministers in Government. Written responses were not always forthcoming, but key issues were raised at the highest level.

In connection with Minute 284(2) – Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre, Councillor Steven Smithson thanked Councillor Kate Walsh for her report at the last Council meeting. He noted that last night a meeting had taken place of the Friends of the Civic Theatre Group, but that no representatives of the controlling group had been present. This had led to some difficulties in answering questions from members of the public present.

Councillor Dad responded that an invitation had been received to that meeting by a number of Cabinet members, who had hoped to attend. Unfortunately, two councillors had been required to attend Lancashire County Council's Budget meeting and one councillor had been delayed by a traffic jam on the motorway. The controlling group remained committed to working towards reopening the Civic Theatre and this was underlined by the funding allocation set out in the Budget item.

Regarding Minute 284(1) – King George V Playing Fields, Councillor David Heap, stated that he was pleased to be able to speak on this matter at his first Council meeting. This was an important issue for the people of Baxenden and the news of its possible reopening in 2026 was welcomed. He requested further information about when the work was due to commence.

Resolved - **That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16th January 2025 be approved as a correct record.**

363 Declaration of the Returning officer for the Baxenden Ward By-Election held on 6th February 2025

Members were informed that the following person had been elected at the Borough Council By-Election held on 6th February 2025:

Electoral Ward	Name and Address of Elected Councillor	Party
Baxenden	David James Heap (address in Hyndburn)	Conservative

On behalf of the whole Council, the Mayor extended a warm welcome to Councillor Heap and wished him well during his time serving the people of Baxenden and of Hyndburn, both in the Council Chamber and out in the wider community.

364 Review of Allocation of Seats to Political Groups and Appointments to Committees

The Council considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, on the outcome of a review of the allocation of seats to political groups and seeking approval to consequential amendments to committee sizes and any changes proposed to the appointment of individual councillors to serve on those committees.

Review of Allocation of Seats

In accordance with The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the Council was required to review the allocation of seats to political groups under s.15 Local Government and Housing Act 1989, in certain prescribed circumstances. This included following the service of a notice to the proper officer under Regulation 9 by a member wishing to join a political group on the Council and the acceptance of that application by the group concerned, accompanied by a further notice under Regulation 17(c) requesting a review.

Following the recent by-election in the Baxenden ward, the relevant notices had been received in connection Councillor Heap joining the Conservative Group and a request for a review of the allocation of seats.

The review had resulted in minor adjustments being proposed to the size of committees to maintain to the overall political balance and consequential amendments to the seats available for councillors to serve on the various committees affected.

Allocation of Seats

The total seats available across the Council should now, in so far as is practicable, be divided between the political parties in the following ratio: 63.6% (Labour and Co-operative) 36.4% (Conservative). The same ratio should be applied, in so far as is practicable, to the allocation of seats on each individual committee/sub-committee. Members were reminded that at the Council's Annual Meeting on 23rd May 2024, it had been agreed to gift a small number of seats to the Green and Independent members on the larger committees, as this would not materially affect the overall political balance. It was not proposed to alter this arrangement.

The basic calculation to allocate seats to committees of various sizes remained as had been indicated at the Annual Meeting and was as shown in Table 1 below. At that time the Council had noted that some adjustment to the ratios shown might be required in the final allocation of seats across the Council, to take into account the following principles as required by the legislation:

- (a) Not all seats to go to the same group;
- (b) If a Group had a majority on the Council, it should receive a majority of seats on each committee;
- (c) Total number of seats across all bodies must be proportionate (subject to (a) and (b));
- (d) Seats on each body must be proportionate (subject to (a) to (c)).

Table 1

No of seats on Committee	Lab	Cons	Green	Indpt	Proposed Ratio
2 members	1	1	0	0	1:1:0:0
3 members	2	1	0	0	2:1:0:0
4 members	3	1	0	0	3:1:0:0
5 members	3	2	0	0	3:2:0:0
6 members	4	2	0	0	4:2:0:0
7 members	5	2	0	0	5:2:0:0
8 members	5	3	0	0	5:3:0:0

9 members	6	3	0	0	6:3:0:0
10 members	7	3	0	0	7:3:0:0
11 members	7	4	0	0	7:4:0:0
12 members	8	4	0	0	8:4:0:0
13 members	9	4	0	0	8:4:0:1*
14 members	9	5	0	0	8:5:1:0*
15 members	10	5	0	0	10:5:0:0

* NB. Adjusted to provide for 1 Green and 1 Independent seat

Following the review, there were two amendments proposed to the size of committees/sub-committees since the Annual Meeting in 2024, in respect of the following Committees:

- Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (increase from 7 to 8 seats, providing an additional Conservative seat)
- Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (increase from 7 to 8 seats, providing an additional Conservative seat)

The proposals would increase the total number of available seats across all committees and sub-committees from 86 to 88.

A summary of the updated committee sizes was as set out in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Committee	Total No. of Seats	No. of seats by political group (Labour & Co-operative : Conservative : Green : Independent)
Audit Committee	6	4:2:0:0
Communities & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	8 (proposed increase from 7 to 8)	5:3:0:0
Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing)	6	4:2:0:0
Licensing Committee	14	8:5:1:0
Licensing Sub-Committee	3	3 from Licensing Committee, one of whom must be the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee (2:1:0:0 where practicable)
Management Review Committee	5	3:2:0:0 Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, plus an additional member of the Cabinet, and Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition Group
Planning Committee	13	8:4:0:1
Planning (Trees) Sub-Committee	5	3:2:0:0 (drawn from the parent committee above)

Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	8 (proposed increase from 7 to 8)	5:3:0:0
Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee	7	5:2:0:0
Standards Committee	8	5:3:0:0
Standards Committee – Hearing Sub-Committee	5	For matters relating to Hyndburn Borough Council: 5 members plus 1 non-voting independent person For matters relating to Altham Parish Council: 5 members, plus 1 independent person and 1 parish representative (3:2:0:0) where practicable)
Total	88	55 – Lab & Co-op (62.5%) 31 – Cons (35.2%) 1 – Green (1.1%) 1 – Indpt (1.1%)

Appointment of Councillors to Individual Committees

Nominations had been sought from the Conservative Group for the committee vacancies created by the review. Any consequential changes to the appointments to other committees/sub-committees could also be dealt with at the same time.

In the event that nominations were not put forward at the Council meeting, a delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make the appointments in consultation with the relevant political group leader would be required.

Resolved

- (1) To note the outcome of a review of allocation of seats to political groups.**
- (2) To approve the political composition and size of committees and sub-committees of the Council, as set out in Paragraph 4.5 of the report, and the consequential amendments required to committee sizes at Appendix 1 of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council's Constitution.**
- (3) To authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant political group leader, to approve any changes submitted in respect of the membership of committees and sub-committees, so as to give effect to the wishes of that political group.**

365 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2027/28

The Council considered 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, regarding the 3-year projections of income and expenditure for the Council ahead of formulating its 2025/28 Revenue and Capital Budgets.

Councillor Aziz gave a brief introduction to the report. A copy of the report had also been provided to the Cabinet on 12th February 2025.

The Council required an update on its medium-term financial outlook ahead of setting the Budget for 2025/26 and determining the level of Council Tax for the new financial year.

In summary, the Council's activities and finances had been dominated this year by the focus on continuing to deliver its major capital projects, which had included the Levelling Up / Town Centre regeneration, its Leisure transformation through the construction of the new Leisure Centre at the Wilson playing fields site and securing almost £30m in funding to facilitate the development of over 1,800 new homes at Huncoat. These activities had been carried out along-side of ensuring it delivered its day-to-day services and other key strategic projects.

It was expected that these key events and their impact on the Council's finances would continue over the next few financial years, with the potential for the effects to continue much longer.

The Council would operate a roll forward Budget for 2025/26 based on the 2024/25 Budget with adjustments for changes to salary and wages, energy and other cost pressures. This provided Service Managers the ability to respond to inflationary pressures and allowed a degree of stability for 2025/26. To achieve a balanced Budget, the Council would need to generate £163,900 of internal savings during the year. Overall expenditure would need to be contained at around £17.314m in 2025/26 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 both national and global issues. 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 was unclear at this time, which produced great uncertainty and potentially significant variance around the forecasts contained in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

With the change in Government in May 2024, the new Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had stated that there was a vision for change, with local government at its very heart, although there were no illusions about the scale of problems facing local government with funding cuts since 2010 disadvantaging the most deprived areas. It had also stated that the Government would reform how councils were funded and would deliver funding where it was needed most. As a result, 2026-27 would mark the first multi-year funding settlement for local government in ten years.

Central Government had indicated that there would be significant reform of funding for Local Government before the 2026/27 Finance Settlement was produced, as well as a reset of the business rates system. Therefore, there were high levels of uncertainty over funding for future years, about which the authority did not have enough information to be able to accurately predict at the current time. Should the future funding changes reduce the

income received from Central Government, the Council would need to take tough decisions around the future shape of its services.

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 any reform in the finances of Local Government still existed. Government had indicated they wished to reallocate funding to reflect an updated assessment of local need and revenues to now move away from the previous funding allocations that seemed to disadvantage the deprived areas with the greatest need.

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, would see 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 it might present to the Council.

These two 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.

The main MTFS document, provided as an Appendix to the report, included the following detailed sections:

- Snapshot View;
- Corporate Strategy Summary;
- Summary;
- Elements of the MTFS;
- Background;
- Resources (including Government Grant, Council Tax, Business Rates);
- Changes in Costs;
- Budget Pressures;
- Capital Costs;
- Growth;
- Reserves;
- Other Assumptions;
- Equality Impact Assessment;
- Scenarios (including Breakdown of Pessimistic, Standard and Optimistic Models and a Suggested Course of Action);
- Robustness of the Forecast;

- Overall Net Position;
- Statutory Obligations of the Responsible Financial Officer (s151 Officer); and
- Meeting Future Funding Gaps.

Councillor Khan noted that, at Section 20.1 of the Appendix, the robustness of the forecasts had been affected by the Government's lack of a long-term financial settlement. Councillor Aziz responded that this would impact upon the 2025/26 Budget, but that the Government had announced its intention to provide multi-year settlements going forward.

The Chief Executive indicated that the recommendation section in the report contained a minor error, in that the Strategy was for noting only. He clarified that consideration of the Strategy was an executive function and that the MTFS had been approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on 12th February 2025.

Resolved - **That the Council notes the report and the accompanying Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as approved by the Cabinet on 12th February 2025.**

366 Prudential Indicators, Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies 2025/26 - 2027/28

Members considered 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, setting out the Council's policy and objectives with respect to treasury management, to explain how it would achieve its objectives and manage its activities; and to agree an investment strategy for 2025/26.

Councillor Aziz provided a brief introduction to the report. A copy of the report had also been provided to the Cabinet on 12th February 2025.

The Council required an update on the Council's Capital and Treasury Management activities, and the strategy for the upcoming year.

Treasury management was defined as:

"The management of the Council's investment and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions.

The effective control of the risks associated with these activities.

And the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

The Council was required to operate a balanced budget which meant that cash raised during the year would meet cash expenditure. Part of treasury management was to ensure the cash flow was properly planned with cash available when needed. Surplus monies were invested in line with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of treasury management was funding the Council's capital plans. The plans gave a guide to the future borrowing need of the Council. The management of this longer-term cash flow might involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. Occasionally, outstanding debt might be restructured to reduce Council risk or meet cost objectives.

The report had been prepared in line with the Treasury Management Code and Guidance (2021) written by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA). In the case of local authorities in England and Wales, the Code was significant under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003. This required local authorities 'to have regard:

- (a) to such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue, and
- (b) to such other guidance as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify'.

The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 in paragraph 24 required local authorities to have regard to this guidance. Acceptance of this report fulfilled those obligations.

CIPFA had published revised codes on 20th December 2021 and the Council had now adopted the liability benchmark treasury indicator to support the financing risk management of the capital financing requirement.

Appendix 1 of the covering report comprised the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26-2027/28 document, which included the following detailed sections:

- Background;
- Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators;
- Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing Requirement;
- International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 - Leasing;
- Minimum Revenue Provision;
- Affordability Prudential Indicators;
- Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 – 2027/28;
- Current Treasury Position;
- Expected Movement in Interest Rates;
- External Debt Overall Limits;
- External v Internal Borrowing;
- Liability Benchmark;
- Limits on Activity;
- Debt Rescheduling;
- Investment Strategy;
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG);
- Treasury Management Practices (TMP);
- Policy on the use of External Service Providers; and
- Treasury Management Strategy In-Year and Year End Reporting.

Appendix 2 of the report comprised the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement 2024/25.

Appendix 3 set out the detail of the authority's Treasury Management Practices 2025/26, comprising the 12 identified TMP areas, as follows:

1. Risk Management;
2. Performance Management;
3. Decision-Making and Analysis;
4. Approved Instruments, Methods and Techniques;
5. Organisation, Clarity, Segregation of Responsibilities and Dealing Arrangements;
6. Reporting Requirements and Management;
7. Budgeting, Accounting and Audit Requirements;

8. Cash and Cash Flow Management;
9. Money Laundering;
10. Training and Qualifications;
11. Use of External Service providers;
12. Corporate Governance.

Appendix 4 provided the Capital Strategy 2025/26, which included information on the following:

- Overview and Scope;
- Capital Expenditure;
- Capital v Treasury Management;
- Service and Commercial Investments;
- Council Objectives;
- Capital Budget Setting Process;
- Monitoring of the Capital Programme Expenditure;
- Multi-Year schemes;
- Funding Strategy and Capital Policies;
- Procurement and Value for Money;
- Partnerships and Relationships with Other Organisations;
- Management Framework;
- Performance Management;
- Risk Management; and
- Other Considerations.

In response to a question by Councillor Khan about in-year changes, Councillor Aziz reported that the Cabinet received quarterly monitoring reports on Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management.

Resolved

- **That the Council agrees the recommendations of the Cabinet to:**

- (1) Adopt the prudential indicators and limits detailed in the report;**
- (2) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy, and associated indicators, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (3) Approve the Investment Strategy as set out in Section 13 of Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (4) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for the year 2025/26 – as set out in Section 5 of Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (5) Approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2025/26 – Appendix 2 of the report**
- (6) Approve the Treasury Management Practices Statement 2025/26 – Appendix 3 of the report;**
- (7) Approve the Capital Strategy 2025/26 – Appendix 4 of the report.**

367 General Fund Revenue Budget, Council Tax Levels and Capital Programme 2025/26

Members considered various reports 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, setting out the information required to enable the Council to determine its Revenue Budget, Council Tax Levels and Capital Programme for 2025/26.

The Council firstly considered the procedure to be followed during the Budget debate, which included temporary amendments to its Standing Orders. Approval was granted to the proposed procedure as circulated at the meeting.

Councillor Khan confirmed that the proposed Opposition amendments to the Budget would be circulated later during consideration of this item, at the formal amendment stage of the debate.

The following reports were provided:-

a) General Fund - Revenue Budget 2025/26

The decision to set the Budget was a fundamental decision of the Council. The role of the executive was to recommend a proposed Budget to Council. This report comprised the proposals as presented to and approved by the Cabinet on 12th February 2025 and incorporated a number of minor updates since that meeting. Additional papers were also circulated at the Council meeting, as Addendum A, incorporating the authority's final proposals on the Revenue Budget 2025/26

The report set out the Council's Revenue Budget for 2025/26. This would require net expenditure of £17,313,300.

Under these proposals, Council Tax for Hyndburn residents would incur a rise in charge for Hyndburn Council provided services and the charge for a Band D property would increase from £268.43 in 2024/2025 to £276.46.

A number of national and global issues had undoubtedly had an impact on the Council's budgets and this along with the impact of higher inflation and forecast pay settlements had contributed to the Council raising its element of the Council Tax by the maximum 2.99%, an increase of £8.03 annually on a Band D property.

At the time of drafting the report, Lancashire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner had not yet formally taken their decisions on Council Tax Levels for 2025/26. It was expected that the County Council would raise its Council Tax for each household by a general increase of 2.99% and a 2.0% increase to assist with meeting the cost of Adult Social Care, which would equate to a £82.50 (4.99%) increase overall. The Police Commissioner had provisionally indicated that he would increase a Band D Property by £14.00 (5.31%).

At their budget meeting on 17th February 2025, Lancashire Combined Fire Authority had approved an increase to its Council Tax for a Band D Property of £5.00 (5.90%).

Altham Parish Council had set a separate precept for its activities. This year the Parish Council had decided to increase its precept by 2.66% and the Band D charge for Altham Parish Council would therefore increase from £43.18 for 2024/25 to £44.33 for 2025/26. The Parish Council would precept the Collection Fund for £14,185.60 for 2025/26. Details

of the proposed position on other Bandings for properties in Altham were shown in Appendix 6 of the report.

In setting the Budget for 2025/26 the Council faced continued volatility around some of the most significant items within its Budget. Major reforms of local government finance had transferred the risk of business rate revenues and Council Tax benefits to the Council. The certainty on which the Council could budget and manage its finances had therefore decreased since 2013 and it would be important going forward to plot any deviations away from the expected figures and take appropriate action if these should start to emerge. This might result in the need to reduce spending during the year, if revenue monitoring started to indicate the amounts of funds received would fall short of the target or if the Council faced an upsurge in spending.

The Cabinet intended to continue the good financial stewardship of the Council's affairs by continuing its successful policies to manage costs effectively and promote appropriate service investment. This Budget would therefore deliver:

- A continuation of the Council's established approach of limiting enhancements on early retirement, continuing the rigorous approach to absence management and committing to minimising borrowing costs. These actions had already stemmed the build-up of unproductive costs within the organisation. In each of these cases the Council had put a stop to the costly and financially damaging policies of the past and created a healthier and more financially stable culture within the Council.
- The Capital Programme for 2025/26 would continue to deliver key investment in council and public facilities adding another £2.48m to £44.87m the Council currently had approved.
- A large proportion of the capital programme would be phased over the next few financial years and this included the continued delivery of £24m investment in Accrington Town Centre, with £20m coming from the Government's Levelling Up Fund into the authority's Leisure Estate to modernise it and significantly boost the number of people making use of the facilities to keep fit and healthy.
- The additions to the programme in 2025/2026 of £2.48m included:
 - a) £317,000 of investment into Parks and Play areas of which the Council expected to be able to attract £52,500 of external grant funding to contribute to the improvements.
 - b) £1,359,906 to provide Disabled Facility Grants this year, which was fully funded from the Better Care Fund.
 - c) £115,000 to maintain and invest in the Council's operational assets and vehicle fleet.
 - d) £419,500 to improve and develop new ICT and technical equipment to deliver services in a more efficient way.
 - e) £177,800 on UK Shared Prosperity projects. Decisions on which schemes this would involve had not yet been made, and this would be reported once a proposal was available.
 - f) £87,000 on Community projects that involved War Memorial restoration, Christmas decoration replacement and Maiden Street Clock Towner lighting at Church.
- Despite costs of over £87,000 to provide car parking in Hyndburn for residents and visitors and particularly for shoppers, the Council would continue to provide this

facility free of charge and not introduce charges for parking in Hyndburn. The authority believed this action would help bolster the town centres through these difficult economic times and provide an incentive for people to shop locally rather than drive and pay to shop elsewhere across the North-West.

- Further reductions in the Council's accommodation costs, building on the success over the last 15 years including further rationalising of accommodation and looking at more ways of using the accommodation more effectively. The authority would also continue its actions to reduce its carbon emissions and energy costs and continue contributing to the improvements of the Council's environmental footprint by positive action.

The Council intend to continue to deliver all the above and remain committed to a radical agenda of improvement while managing within its available resources. This would be more difficult in the years to come, given the reduced resources from the Government. However, there remained a firm commitment and absolute determination amongst Members and Officers of the Council to control the finances of the Council, drive forward on the efficiency agenda and continue to improve service delivery. The authority wished to continue to push forward on the drive for delivering value for money as a key priority for the Council.

The rewards of strong financial control remained clearly evident. The Council had built itself back from experiencing major difficulties in controlling expenditure and a position of negative reserves in 2003/04 to a situation by March 2025, in which general reserve balances were expected to be just under £2.5m. The Council had been able to operate within its existing financial resources over the last four years, through good financial management and would continue to deliver strong financial performance in the years to come.

Within the Budget for 2025/26 there were a number of areas which were subject to the Council's best estimation. There were therefore a number of risks around the Budget, should these estimated costs or revenue amounts vary during the year.

After the introduction of the Government reforms to Business Rates Funding of Local Government, the Council now carried a significant risk around the level of monies available, fluctuating substantially from this source. In addition, as the calculation of how much funds would be available was dependent on a number of factors including debt collection rates, the size of appeals against business rates assessment and the success of these appeals, new rules around levies, safety nets and pooling, the introduction of new rules on rates relief on retail premises and small businesses, as well as predicted levels of growth or decline in business activities and the estimation of a number of figures which would only truly emerge after the end of the financial year, the imprecision in these estimates was regarded as high and could be subject to variations of hundreds of thousands of pounds. The volatility around these forecasts had increased due to the impact that recent national and global issues had had on the Business Community.

The detailed Revenue Budget Report 2025-2026, set out at Appendix A of the report, included the following information:

- Background;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Continuation Budget;
- Growth and Inflation Pressures;
- Available Resources;
- Resources Summary;

- Budget Proposal;
- Budget Saving Proposals;
- Reserves;
- Risks and Management;
- Consultation;
- Conclusion; and
- Appendices Nos. 1 - 6

The following recommendations were approved by the Cabinet:

- (1) *That Council approves an increase in Council Tax for 2025/26 of 2.99%, increasing the charge for a Band D property to £276.46.*
- (2) *The Budget for 2025/26 will therefore be £17,313,300 as detailed in Appendices 1 to 3 of the Revenue Budget 2025-2026 report attached at Appendix A of the report (Note: as updated by the information at Addendum A).*
- (3) *That Council approves the changes in budget requirement through including inflation, growth and savings identified in Appendix 3 of the Revenue Budget 2025-2026 report, to ensure the Council can set and approve a balanced budget.*
- (4) *That Council notes the significant improvement made in relation to budget monitoring and cost reduction within the Authority over the past 20 years and confirms its commitment to continuing this approach in the year ahead.*
- (5) *That Council approves that during the financial year 2025/26, the Executive Director (Resources) be delegated responsibility to amend the Budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) for technical reasons, such as the restructuring of cost centres, the re-apportionment and re-allocation of overheads etc., provided such amendments have an overall neutral impact on the Budget.*
- (6) *That Council approves that during the financial year 2025/26, the Executive Director (Resources) be delegated responsibility to amend the Budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) should the estimate of Business Rates not be sufficiently accurate, by drawing on reserves if needed or paying over additional contributions to reserves.*
- (7) *That to aid future financial management planning any surpluses generated during 2025/26 are set aside to help the Council reduce its cost base over the next three years, to support its long-term capital programme or to strengthen its overall reserve position.*
- (8) *That Council approves that the Extended Producer Responsibility Grant is set aside in reserves to be drawn down as required, so the Council can meet its obligations under the legislation.*
- (9) *That Council approves that any additional funds from Government that are not ring-fenced funding, as well as any other surplus funds, can be used, if required, to support Capital expenditure as determined by the Executive Director (Resources) in the overall financing of capital expenditure or be transferred to Reserves.*

b) Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2027/28

This report set out the Council's Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2027/28, including forecast slippage on schemes from 2024/25 and the additions of new schemes to the Council's Capital Programme for 2025/26. The report included proposals as presented to and approved by the Cabinet on 12th February 2025. Additional papers were also circulated at the Council meeting, as Addendum A, incorporating the authority's final proposals on the Capital Programme.

The significant level of investment in previous years had only been possible by the Council obtaining external financial support, as well as the Council's own effective financial management over recent years, which had allowed it to have the funds necessary to finance these major projects when other funding had become available.

The new additions to the capital programme for 2024/25 had reduced to £2.726m (updated as per Addendum A), compared to £4.404m in 2024/25. External funding of £1.538m had been confirmed towards the cost of these new capital schemes (Disabled Facilities Grant and UK Shared Prosperity Funding) with a further £0.052m funding to be secured.

The additions to the programme in 2025/26 would bring the total approved capital programme to £26.304m, including forecast slippage of the unspent programme from 2024/25 of £23.578m, which could be seen in Appendix 1 of the report (updated as per Addendum A). The forecast slippage from the 2024/25 programme included £4.555m for the Leisure Estate Investment Programme and £16.789m for the Levelling Up Programme. The capital budgets for the Levelling Up Programme were based on the latest forecast of costs, however as these were not tendered figures, they were still subject to change and should there be any changes to the current forecast, these would be reported during the year.

It was important to note that the funding of the 2025/26 capital programme was based on the realisation of additional capital receipts during the year. The programme assumed £3.092m of expenditure would be funded from capital receipts, of which £0.595m related to the King George V Pavilion and pitches scheme, which was contingent on funding from the disposal of land (subject to the relaxation of restrictions as described in Addendum A). £1.147m in available receipts was forecast to be brought forward at the beginning of the year, leaving a target of £1.350m of new receipts which were required, which if not realised would need to be replaced by funding from earmarked reserves.

The capital programme currently excluded the proposed Huncoat Garden Village scheme which would be wholly funded from the Homes England Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund grant of £29.898m. When the funding agreement was approved, the capital and revenue costs of the scheme and associated funding would be submitted for inclusion in the Council's revenue and capital budgets.

The expected new schemes for 2026/27 and 2027/28 (totalling £2.4m) were detailed in Appendix 3 of the report (updated as per Addendum A). This was for information only as funding would need to be identified for these schemes before they were put forward for approval into the programme in future years.

The Council intended to continue its strong policies of financial management and look only to borrow what it needed to fund these major investment projects. The Council would continue to rely on securing external sources of funding, using capital receipts, making revenue contributions to capital projects and would use unspent monies to fund its programme. It would also apply a rigorous approach to selecting projects by examining all proposals against its corporate objectives and only selecting the most pressing and deserving projects to fund. This was in accordance with Council policy.

The Revenue implications to finance the Capital Programme continued to be a key element in the affordability issues on the Revenue Budget this year. The programme contained a limited amount of risk this year. The level of risk remained increased compared to previous years due to the size of programme. However, to further reduce the risk the Council had supplemented its own project management and cost control capacity by the appointment of experienced professionals in both disciplines for its two largest projects. The Council's overall resources and management systems were believed to be sufficiently robust to effectively monitor these risks and ensure appropriate action was taken if they should materialise.

The Council would continue with its strategy to reduce its level of debt wherever possible by restricting borrowing and repaying debt and would continue to work extensively with external funders to bring forward realistic plans for Capital investment in the area.

A detailed report on the Capital Programme was provided as an Appendix to the covering report, which set out information on the following:

- Summary of the major additions to the Capital Programme;
- Improving the management of Capital Investments;
- Conclusion;
- Appendix 1 - Capital Programme 2025/26 (Summary);
- Appendix 2 - Capital Programme 2025/26 (Detailed); and
- Appendix 3 - Capital Programme 2025/26 (New Additions).

The following recommendations were approved by the Cabinet:

- (1) That Council approves the Capital Programme for 2025/26 including new scheme additions of £2,726,206 with a net cost to the Council of £1,136,000 as set out in Appendix 3 of the detailed report (Note: as updated by the information at Addendum A).*
- (2) That Council approves the funding of the programme by the use of newly anticipated direct external grants totalling £1,590,206 with the remaining funding of £1,136,000 to come from the Council's resources.*
- (3) That Council notes the expected new scheme additions for 2026/27 and 2027/28.*
- (4) That delegated authority is given to the Executive Director (Resources), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources to flex the programme in accordance with the available funding, provided this does not require any additional borrowing.*
- (5) That the individual projects within the Capital Programme require the written authorisation of the Executive Director (Resources) following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Council Operations before commencing and incurring expenditure and that Service Managers provide the Executive Director of Resources, with written details of estimated costs of schemes with full justification of the need and benefits from undertaking the capital investments before approval is provided and that approval to commence is delegated to the Executive Director (Resources), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources. That where he deems it appropriate, the Executive Director (Resources) be given authority to release funding in stages to ensure effective financial control can be maintained and the project risk managed.*

- (6) *That in-year underspends are not made available to fund new projects during the year.*

c) Overview and Scrutiny Consideration of the 2025/26 Budget Process

This report contained the recommendations of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had met on 20th February 2025 to consider the Budget proposals.

Councillor Steven Button provided a brief introduction to the report. The Budget proposals submitted had been reviewed and discussed in depth by the Committee. Relevant Portfolio Holders and officers had engaged with the scrutiny process. In addition, three valid questions had been received from members of the public. Some disappointment was expressed that the Opposition Group had not provided alternative budget proposals at that time.

The recommendations of the Committee were as follows:-

“That Council notes the following resolutions of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) That the Committee note the content of the reports relating to Performance Indicators, Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies 2025/26 – 2027-28, Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/28, General Fund Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28;*
- (2) That the Committee thanks the joint Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and the Budget Process, Councillors Alexander and Aziz and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Munsif Dad, for responding to the questions submitted by Members and members of the public and for their participation in the Scrutiny meeting and debate;*
- (3) That the Executive Director - Resources, and all other officers involved, be commended for their work in producing the budget;*
- (4) That having reviewed and debated the budget reports submitted, the Committee supports the content of the General Fund Revenue report and Capital Programme report for 2025/26.*

d) Council Tax Resolution 2025/26

This report highlighted the statutory basis for calculating the authority's Council Tax requirement and set out details of the Council's Precept on the Collection Fund and the formal details surrounding the Precepts of the other bodies on the Collection Fund. The report also provided context regarding the identification of the Council's Budget requirement for 2025/26 and signposted Members to the recommendations as presented to the Cabinet on 12th February 2025 (as updated by the additional papers circulated at the Council meeting as Addendum A).

The Localism Act 2011 had made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and now required the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year, not its budget requirement as previously. Details of the budgetary proposals were contained elsewhere in the supporting papers to this Agenda item, deriving from the Cabinet meeting held on 12th February 2025.

This report outlined the authority's Council Tax requirement and precepts from the other councils and sought permissions to roll forward any unspent Capital and Revenue balances

and make a transfer of sums to the Local Government Pension Scheme to reduce any long-term pension liability.

The overall Council Tax requirement for a Band D property was to be increased by the maximum 2.99%. This would increase a Band D property to £276.46 and the Council's Budget for 2025/26 was £17,313,300.

The County Council was due to hold its meeting to approve its budget on 26th February 2025. At the time of drafting this report, the indications remained that it would be proposing to increase its Council Tax requirement for each household by 4.99%. This was an increase of £82.50 for a Band D property from the previous year's figure of £1,653.29 to £1,735.79.

At the time of drafting this report, the Lancashire Police & Crime Commissioner had not yet officially notified Hyndburn Council of his Council Tax charges for 2025/26. Indications remained that the Commissioner would be proposing an increase to his Council Tax requirement for a Band D property household by £14.00. This was an increase of 5.32% for a Band D property from the previous year's figure of £263.40 to £277.40.

The Lancashire Combined Fire Authority had notified Hyndburn Council on the 18th February 2025 that it had approved an increase to its Council Tax requirement from £84.73 to £89.73 for a Band D property at its budget meeting held on 17th February 2025. This was a rise of 5.90%.

Altham Parish Council had notified Hyndburn Council that it intended to increase its Council Tax requirement by 2.66% from £43.18 to £44.33 for 2025/26.

The overall increase in Council Tax for 2025/26 compared with 2024/25 was 4.83% (Altham 4.79%). A Band D property would have to pay an additional £109.53 over the year. The amounts charged by each authority for each Council Tax Band were shown in the tables set out at paragraph 2.7 of the report, along with the combined amount due for each Council Tax Band. Information was also provided in those tables of the charges for each band payable for residents in the parish of Altham.

2024/25 Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit

The following estimated amounts, due in relation to Council Tax Collection Fund surplus/(deficit) in 2024/25, were reported:

Preceptor	Council Tax £
Lancashire County Council	(389,374)
Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner	(62,035)
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	(19,955)
Hyndburn Borough Council	(63,365)

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

In accordance with Section 59A of The Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended by The Local Government Finance Act 2012, the report informed members of the calculations carried out in estimating the level of National Non-Domestic Rates (the business rates tax base) which the Council anticipated collecting in 2025/26. The business

rates tax base, reported in the NNDR1 submission to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), was noted as £25,002,666 (Part 1a, line 11).

The following estimated amounts due to each authority in relation to NNDR surplus/(deficit) Collection Fund for 2024/25 were reported

Preceptor	NNDR £
Central Government	712,228
Lancashire County Council	128,201
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	14,245
Hyndburn Borough Council	569,782

Currently the Council operated a policy that required surplus funds to be returned to a central pot at the end of the year. The Cabinet had previously indicated that it would allow Area Councils or their successor bodies to utilise unspent monies into the future until these sums were exhausted. This recommendation paved the way for this to continue to occur.

The financial pressures on the Council in 2024/25 indicated that it might be difficult to achieve a surplus in 2025/26 and it was recommended that if a deficit was to occur, the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to take any action necessary to maintain the authority's General Reserve at the level advised by the Executive Director (Resources).

If a surplus was generated in 2024/25 it was recommended that, as in previous years it would be used to assist the Council to address any shortfall in funding occurring in future years, the need to continue to reduce its long-term cost base via invest to save actions, funding additional capital expenditure, meeting other costs and enhancing its reserves. The surplus would be placed under the direction of the Chief Executive to ensure that it could be used effectively and flexibly in response to the continuing financial pressures the Council faced.

Overall Financial Position and Robustness (Local Government Act Section 25 Statement)

There were a number of significant areas within the Budget for 2025/26 that required a degree of estimation. These estimates were based on the best professional judgements, developed upon data that was available to the Council at the time of drawing up its budget. However, there was always potential for the actual figures to vary from the estimates during the year. Within the Budget there was therefore a degree of risk. The most notable areas of risk were:

- a pay settlement above the estimate used in rolling forward the Budget;
- the impact of non-pay inflation;
- further fluctuations in interest rates and the collapse of any Bank where we deposit our funds;
- the impact of changes on funding around business rates and Council Tax, particularly council tax support; and
- the corporate savings target that had to be achieved during the year.

Councillor Aziz **MOVED** the Budget recommendations, including alterations comprising five additions to the Revenue Budget and three additions to Capital Programme, as set out at Addendum A, which were tabled at this point in the meeting.

A brief adjournment was agreed to allow time for Members to discuss the Addendum information.

Upon recommencement of the meeting, Councillor Aziz gave a brief introduction to the various reports provided, outlining the Controlling Group's aims, some key priorities, the additional projects included in Addendum A and the overall financial impact on Council Tax payers.

The alterations proposed at Addendum A are summarised below:

Proposed Additions to the Revenue Budget 2025/26		
Project/Scheme	2025/26	Funding Sources
1. Skip Days	£18,000	This would be funded utilising the amount within the Invest to Save reserve
2. Market Hall Trader Support	£40,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
3. Retail , Hospitality and Leisure Sector Support	£50,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
4. Provision of Additional Dog Waste Bins	£57,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
5 Community Township Funding	£80,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
Total cost of proposed additions	£245,000	
The impact on Budget in-year was NIL, although the above proposals would reduce the reserves forecast in the report by: Invest to Save (£18,000) and General Fund Reserves (£227,000)		
Updated versions of the following documents, included within Appendix A of the Revenue Budget Report 2025-2026, were also provided:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 1 – Initial Outline Budget 2025/26 • Appendix 2 – Revenue Budget 2025/26 • Appendix 3 – Budget Movements In-Year 2025/26 		

Proposed Additions to the Capital Programme 2025/26		
Project/Scheme	2025/26	Funding Sources
1. Increase of funding for Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre	£250,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
2. King George V Playing Fields	£0	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
3. Climate Change Reserve	£250,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
Total cost of proposed	£500,000	

additions		
The impact on the Capital Programme in-year was an increase of £250,000, although the above proposals would reduce the reserves forecast in the report by: General Fund Reserves (£500,000) and an increase in the Capital Funding Reserve of £250,000		
An updated version of the following document, included within detailed report on the Capital Programme, was also provided:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 3 - Capital Programme 2025/26 (New Additions). 		

The Controlling Group considered that these schemes were deliverable and had highlighted suggested methods of funding. The costing of the schemes had been confirmed with the Executive Director (Resources) / S.151 Officer.

The motion was then **SECONDED** by Councillor Vanessa Alexander and was as follows:

- (1) That Council approves the acceptance and adoption of the Cabinet's recommendations on the Revenue and Capital Budgets (incorporating the alterations at Addendum A) and Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management Report for 2025/26 to 2027/28 made at the Cabinet meeting on 12th February 2025.
- (2) That Council Tax for Hyndburn Borough Council be increased by 2.99% from the 2024/25 charge and therefore increasing the charge by £8.03 to a new charge of £276.46 for the year for a Band D property.
- (3) That the Council commits to continuing to strengthen its Reserves during the year and requires the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Resources to take appropriate action to protect the Council's overall financial position and further strengthen its reserves during the forthcoming year.
- (4) That the Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive to take such action as he considers necessary to implement the measures contained in the Revenue Budget for 2025/26.
- (5) That it is noted that on 22nd January 2025 Cabinet approved the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2025/26 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):
 - 22,163 "D" Band equivalent units, being the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); and
 - 320 "D" Band equivalent units, being the Council Tax Base for dwellings in that part of the Council's area to which a parish precept relates, being Altham Parish.
- (6) That Council agrees that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purpose for 2025/26 (excluding Parish precepts) is £6,127,183.
- (7) That Council agrees that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

a)	£52,077,000	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council
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		estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.																																				
b)	£45,935,631	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.																																				
c)	£6,141,369	Being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).																																				
d)	£277.10	Being the amount at 4(a) above less the amount at 4(b) above, divided by the amount at 2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31(B) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).																																				
e)	£14,185.60	Being the aggregate amounts of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.																																				
f)	£276.46	Being the amount at 2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2 (e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.																																				
g)	£320.79	For part of the Council's area, Parish of Altham, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area 4(e) above divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.																																				
h)	Being the amounts shown below that are given by multiplying the amounts at 4(f) and 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with 3 Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.																																					
<table><tr><th colspan="9">Valuation Bands</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>A</th><th>B</th><th>C</th><th>D</th><th>E</th><th>F</th><th>G</th><th>H</th></tr><tr><td>Parish of Altham</td><td>£213.86</td><td>£249.50</td><td>£285.14</td><td>£320.79</td><td>£392.08</td><td>£463.36</td><td>£534.65</td><td>£641.58</td></tr><tr><td>All other parts of the Borough</td><td>£184.31</td><td>£215.02</td><td>£245.74</td><td>£276.46</td><td>£337.90</td><td>£399.33</td><td>£460.77</td><td>£552.92</td></tr></table>			Valuation Bands										A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Parish of Altham	£213.86	£249.50	£285.14	£320.79	£392.08	£463.36	£534.65	£641.58	All other parts of the Borough	£184.31	£215.02	£245.74	£276.46	£337.90	£399.33	£460.77	£552.92
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i)	That it be noted that for the year 2025-26 the Lancashire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance																																					

	with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the Categories of dwellings shown below:-																																																																															
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At the time of publication, the above rates have not been approved																																																																																
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k)	That it be noted that for the year 2025-26 the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-																																																																															
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l)	That, being calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4.2(h) above and 4.2(i), (j) and (k) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2025-26 for each of the categories of dwellings show below:-																																																																															
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- (8) That Council determines in accordance with Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2025/26 is not excessive in accordance with principles determined by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC. As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2025/26 is excessive and therefore the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (9) That the Executive Director of Resources, is given delegated authority to amend the budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) for technical reasons or to comply with legal requirements, such as the restructuring of cost centres, the re-apportionment and re-allocation of overheads etc., so long as these changes have an overall neutral impact on the budget.
- (10) That any continuing balances on Revenue or Capital previously earmarked for Area Councils continues to be set aside for use by these or their successor bodies.
- (11) That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority to use any unallocated surplus generated in 2025/26 should this occur to fund any future shortfall in income or additional expenditure, to support "Invest to Save" projects that will help reduce the Council's long term costs (including additional payments to the Pension Fund as outlined below), or support specific capital projects, or finance other commitments that he deems to be in the best long term interest of the Council or to transfer funds to Reserves as required and to allocate funds between Reserves should an overspend occur in 2025/26 to maintain the General Fund Reserve at that appropriate level as advised by the Executive Director of Resources.
- (12) That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority following consultation with the Leader to make a payment or payments to the Lancashire Pension Authority to help reduce any of the Council's pension liabilities, if this is calculated to be an appropriate use of Council Funds.
- (13) That estimated amounts due in relation to Council Tax collection fund surplus/(deficit) 2024/25, as set out at Paragraph 3.9 of the Council Tax Resolution report, be noted.
- (14) That estimated amounts due to each authority in relation to NNDR surplus/(deficit) collection fund for 2024/25, as set out at Paragraph 3.10 of the Council Tax Resolution report, be noted.

Amendments

Addendum B, which contained five amendments to the Budget recommendations, was tabled at this point during the meeting by the Opposition Group.

A brief adjournment was agreed to allow time for Members to discuss the Addendum information.

Upon recommencement of the meeting, Councillor Zak Khan **MOVED** the amendments *en bloc* and spoke briefly about the projects/schemes proposed, which he anticipated would

create long-term improvements within the Borough. He commented favourably on a number of the Controlling Group's Budget alterations, but expressed concern about the proposed Skip Days.

The amendments proposed at Addendum B are summarised below:

Proposed Additions to the Revenue Budget 2025/26		
Project/Scheme	2025/26	Funding Sources
1. Transformation Manager	£70,000	This would be funded utilising the amount within the Invest to Save reserve
2. Regeneration Manager	£70,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
3. Anti-Social Behaviour Fund to initially fund the appointment of Community Safety Officer (CSO)	£46,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within Balances Set Aside Future Programme reserve
Total cost of proposed additions	£186,000	
The impact on Budget in-year was NIL, although the above proposals would reduce the reserves forecast in the report by: Invest to Save (£70,000), General Fund Reserves (£70,000) and Communities for Health Funding Reserve (£46,00)		

Proposed Additions to the Capital Programme 2025/26		
Project/Scheme	2025/26	Funding Sources
1. Additional Allocation of Reserves to Civic Theatre Budget	£500,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
2. Economic & Regeneration Reserve Fund	£350,000	This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve
Total cost of proposed additions	£850,000	
The impact on the Capital Programme in-year was an increase of NIL, although the above proposals would change the reserves forecast in the report by: General Fund Reserves (£850,000), an increase in the Capital Funding Reserve of £500,000 and the creation of a new Economic & Regeneration Reserve of £350,000		

The Opposition Group considered that these schemes were deliverable and had highlighted suggested methods of funding. The costing of the schemes had been confirmed with the Executive Director (Resources) / S.151 Officer.

The amendments were then **SECONDED** by Councillor Danny Cassidy,

Councillor Fazal spoke about the overall impact of Council Tax rises on residents and about the desirability of evidence about the likely benefits of items included within the draft Budget. Councillor Clements responded that Councillor Fazal could have raised these issues at the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Smithson spoke in favour of the Civic Theatre proposals within the Controlling Group's additions to the Budget, but highlighted that the Opposition Group's proposals would double the funding to be made available. Councillors Alexander, Dad, Eaves and Pritchard spoke against the amendments.

Councillor Allen commented that the various proposals tabled this evening all had merit, and that the Controlling Group's Budget modifications addressed some immediate concerns. However, he was of the opinion that the Opposition amendments took a longer-term view.

Councillor Aziz responded to the amendments and stated that he was not in favour of the proposals. He also reaffirmed the Controlling Group's commitment to Skip Days.

The **AMENDMENTS** were then put to the **VOTE** individually.

Amendment 1

Transformation Manager (Revenue Budget)

AMENDMENT 1 was then put to the **VOTE**.

For the Motion (12)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Danny Cassidy, Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker.

Against the Motion (18)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth (Mayor), Scott Brereton, Steven Button, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Perkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates.

Abstentions (0)

NIL

Accordingly, **AMENDMENT 1** was **LOST**.

Amendment 2

Regeneration Project Manager (Revenue Budget)

AMENDMENT 2 was then put to the **VOTE**.

For the Motion (13)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Danny Cassidy, Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, Shabir Fazal OBE, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker.

Against the Motion (17)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth (Mayor), Scott Brereton, Steven Button, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates.

Abstentions (0)

NIL

Accordingly, **AMENDMENT 2** was **LOST**.

Amendment 3

Anti-Social Behaviour Fund to initially fund the appointment of Community Safety Officer (CSO) (Revenue Budget)

AMENDMENT 3 was then put to the **VOTE**.

For the Motion (12)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Danny Cassidy, Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker.

Against the Motion (18)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth (Mayor), Scott Brereton, Steven Button, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates.

Abstentions (0)

NIL

Accordingly, **AMENDMENT 3** was **LOST**.

Amendment 4

Additional Allocation of Reserves to Civic Theatre Budget (Capital Programme)

AMENDMENT 4 was then put to the **VOTE**.

For the Motion (12)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Danny Cassidy, Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker.

Against the Motion (18)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth (Mayor), Scott Brereton, Steven Button, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates.

Abstentions (0)

NIL

Accordingly, **AMENDMENT 4** was **LOST**.

Amendment 5

Economic & Regeneration Reserve Fund (Capital Programme)

AMENDMENT 5 was then put to the **VOTE**.

For the Motion (12)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Danny Cassidy, Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker.

Against the Motion (18)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth (Mayor), Scott Brereton, Steven Button, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates.

Abstentions (0)

NIL

Accordingly, **AMENDMENT 5** was **LOST**.

The Substantive Motion

The Mover of the original Motion declined the opportunity to speak further on the Substantive Motion at this point and, accordingly, the meeting went directly into the debate stage.

Councillor Smithson welcomed many of the proposals within the draft Budget, but sought clarification about the detail of some projects. Councillor Eaves responded to the points made around promoting bulky waste collections to address fly-tipping and using enforcement to tackle dog waste. Councillor Khan reiterated his view that an opportunity had been missed to fund some projects which would generate long-term improvements. Councillor Heap welcomed the proposals around George V Playing Fields, but was disappointed by the overall increase in Council Tax for residents on top of other national inflationary pressures. Councillor Fazal spoke against the installation of additional dog waste bins and requested better enforcement.

Councillor Dad spoke in favour of the Motion and addressed a number of points made by Councillor Smithson, including the future of Livingstone Road Sports Ground and the refurbishment of play areas, including Gatty Park in 2025/26. He also highlighted the following:

- A freeze in the cost of providing the green bin service;
- A freeze in taxi licensing fees;

- Relief for town centre market traders;
- Additional funding for Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre;
- Removal of funding restrictions for King George V Playing Fields;
- Additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding of £1.359m;
- Funding for Lee Lane Cemetery tap and water supply;
- Funding for Bullough Park Pavilion;
- Community Township Funding (in addition to money already earmarked for Great Harwood); and
- Sufficient reserves to address any revenue consequences of waste transfer changes.

Councillors Gilbert and McKenna spoke in favour of the Motion and highlighted particular schemes within the proposals.

Councillor Aziz did not wish to sum up on the Motion, but commented that under the previous administration the waste transfer issue had not been sufficiently progressed.

The **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION** was then put to the **VOTE**.

For the Motion (17)

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth (Mayor), Scott Brereton, Steven Button, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates

Against the Motion (13)

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen, Danny Cassidy, Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, Shabir Fazal OBE, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Steven Smithson and Tina Walker.

Abstentions (0)

NIL

Accordingly, the **MOTION** was **CARRIED** and it was:-.

Resolved

- (1) That Council approves the acceptance and adoption of the Cabinet's recommendations on the Revenue and Capital Budgets (incorporating the alterations at Addendum A) and Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management Report for 2025/26 to 2027/28 made at the Cabinet meeting on 12th February 2025.
- (2) That Council Tax for Hyndburn Borough Council be increased by 2.99% from the 2024/25 charge and therefore increasing the charge by £8.03 to a new charge of £276.46 for the year for a Band D property.
- (3) That the Council commits to continuing to strengthen its Reserves during the year and requires the Chief Executive and the Executive Director of Resources to take appropriate action to protect the

Council's overall financial position and further strengthen its reserves during the forthcoming year.

- (4) That the Council delegates authority to the Chief Executive to take such action as he considers necessary to implement the measures contained in the Revenue Budget for 2025/26.**
- (5) That it is noted that on 22nd January 2025 Cabinet approved the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the year 2025/26 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):**
 - 22,163 "D" Band equivalent units, being the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Council area (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Act); and**
 - 320 "D" Band equivalent units, being the Council Tax Base for dwellings in that part of the Council's area to which a parish precept relates, being Altham Parish.**
- (6) That Council agrees that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purpose for 2025/26 (excluding Parish precepts) is £6,127,183.**
- (7) That Council agrees that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:**

a)	£52,077,000	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
b)	£45,935,631	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
c)	£6,141,369	Being the amount by which the aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
d)	£277.10	Being the amount at 4(a) above less the amount at 4(b) above, divided by the amount at 2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31(B) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
e)	£14,185.60	Being the aggregate amounts of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

f)	£276.46	Being the amount at 2 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2 (e) above by Item T (1 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
g)	£320.79	For part of the Council's area, Parish of Altham, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area 4(e) above divided in each case by the amount at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
h)	Being the amounts shown below that are given by multiplying the amounts at 4(f) and 4(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with 3 Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.	

Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Parish of Altham	£213.86	£249.50	£285.14	£320.79	£392.08	£463.36	£534.65	£641.58
All other parts of the Borough	£184.31	£215.02	£245.74	£276.46	£337.90	£399.33	£460.77	£552.92

i)	That it be noted that for the year 2025-26 the Lancashire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the Categories of dwellings shown below:-
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Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
LCC Total	£1,157.19	£1,350.06	£1,542.92	£1,735.79	£2,121.52	£2,507.25	£2,892.98	£3,471.58

At the time of publication, the above rates have not been approved

j)	That it be noted that for the year 2025-26 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:
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Valuation Bands								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£184.93	£215.76	£246.58	£277.40	£339.04	£400.69	£462.33	£554.80

At the time of publication, the above rates have not been approved

k)	That it be noted that for the year 2025-26 the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
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Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	£59.82	£69.79	£79.76	£89.73	£109.67	£129.61	£149.55	£179.46																																																																								
Total Non Parished Area	£1,586.25	£1,850.63	£2,115.00	£2,379.38	£2,908.13	£3,436.88	£3,965.63	£4,758.76																																																																								
Parish of Altham	£1,615.80	£1,885.11	£2,154.40	£2,423.71	£2,962.31	£3,500.91	£4,039.51	£4,847.42																																																																								

- (8) That Council determines in accordance with Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2025/26 is not excessive in accordance with principles determined by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC. As the billing authority, the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2025/26 is excessive and therefore the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with section 52ZK of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (9) That the Executive Director of Resources, is given delegated authority to amend the budget (following consultation with the Leader of the Council) for technical reasons or to comply with legal requirements, such as the restructuring of cost centres, the re-apportionment and re-allocation of overheads etc., so long as these changes have an overall neutral impact on the budget.

- (10) That any continuing balances on Revenue or Capital previously earmarked for Area Councils continues to be set aside for use by these or their successor bodies.**
- (11) That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority to use any unallocated surplus generated in 2025/26 should this occur to fund any future shortfall in income or additional expenditure, to support “Invest to Save” projects that will help reduce the Council’s long term costs (including additional payments to the Pension Fund as outlined below), or support specific capital projects, or finance other commitments that he deems to be in the best long term interest of the Council or to transfer funds to Reserves as required and to allocate funds between Reserves should an overspend occur in 2025/26 to maintain the General Fund Reserve at that appropriate level as advised by the Executive Director of Resources.**
- (12) That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority following consultation with the Leader to make a payment or payments to the Lancashire Pension Authority to help reduce any of the Council’s pension liabilities, if this is calculated to be an appropriate use of Council Funds.**
- (13) That estimated amounts due in relation to Council Tax collection fund surplus/(deficit) 2024/25, as set out at Paragraph 3.9 of the Council Tax Resolution report, are noted:**
- (14) That estimated amounts due to each authority in relation to NNDR surplus/(deficit) collection fund for 2024/25, as set out at Paragraph 3.10 of the Council Tax Resolution report, are noted:**

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

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed