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# COUNCIL

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**Thursday, 10th July, 2025**

**Present:** Councillor Josh Allen (Mayor), Councillors Judith Addison, Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brerton, Stephen Button, Danny Cassidy, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Loraine Cox, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson MBE, Stewart Eaves, Peter Edwards, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Joyce Plummer, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Steven Smithson, Kate Walsh and Clare Yates

**Apologies:** Councillors Mike Booth, Kath Pratt, Tina Walker, Kimberley Whitehead and Mohammed Younis

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The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and made brief statement about the filming of proceedings and generally within the Town Hall, followed by a fire safety announcement.

He also sought the consent of the meeting to take the Corporate Strategy report (Item 11 on the Supplemental Agenda) earlier in the meeting. The Council agreed to this item being considered immediately following Item 6 (Review of Allocation of Seats).

## **79 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mike Booth, Kath Pratt, Tina Walker, Kimberley Whitehead and Mohammed Younis.

## **80 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

In connection with Agenda Item 10 (Motion 2) – Reforming UK Maternity Services, Councillor Clare Yates made the meeting aware that she was a serving NHS senior midwife.

There were no formal declarations of interest or declarations of dispensations submitted.

## **81 Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Mayor on this occasion.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, made the following announcements:

### **1) Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation**

Local Government Reorganisation was moving forward at a pace. Consultants had been engaged to lead the process in Lancashire. Phase 1 would involve data analysis in close collaboration with all local councils. Phase 2 would see the development of clear proposals and specific options for either three (Hyndburn's preferred option) or four unitary authorities. The structures should be effective, have a strong identity, provide community impact and

sustainability. The submission to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was due to be made on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Overall, the changes were designed to better meet the needs of the population. Local council leaders were continuing to collaborate and everyone would have a voice. The Leader undertook to keep members informed as to progress.

## 2) Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre

The Leader reported that the Council had recently allocated £517k for roofing works at the Civic Theatre. £10k had also been received from Theatres in Trust to pay for a survey of the roof, advice and works. The building was a complex structure and would need scaffolding to enable roof works to be undertaken. The slates would need to be stripped off and batons removed. These would be reused, if possible. Work would be required to roof lights, insulation, guttering, drain pipes and for timber treatment. The aim was to make the structure waterproof. The tender would be let next week with work due to commence in Autumn for completion in December 2025, subject to the survey not uncovering any hidden problems.

Some treatment for dry rot in the building had already been carried out, but no other works were planned yet beyond what was described above. A detailed project plan would be required, funding identified and a strategy developed for the Civic Theatre's future use.

*With the permission of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Noordad Aziz, made the following announcement:*

## 3) Srebreneca Commemoration

The Deputy Mayor reminded members that the Council had previously passed a motion against islamophobia and that 11<sup>th</sup> July 2025 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide around the town Srebreneca, during which over 8000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were systematically murdered. The Deputy Mayor had visited that area three times over the years. Councillors were invited to highlight injustice and atrocities wherever they occurred.

As part of the above commemoration, Councillor Aziz had attended an event held at St Paul's Cathedral London on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025, during which survivors, political leaders, religious dignitaries and community representatives had gathered to pay their respects.

*With the permission of the Mayor, the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Zak Khan, made the following announcement*

## 4) Air and Army Cadets Headquarters

Councillor Khan reported that, along with the Mayor, he had recently attended the official opening of the new headquarters of the Borough's Air and Army Cadets on Harvey Street, in Oswaldtwistle. Councillors had met with numerous cadets on what had proved to be an enjoyable occasion. It was hoped that the Council would continue to support the various Cadets' organisations in the Borough.

There were no announcements from David Welsby, Chief Executive, on this occasion.

## 82 **Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the Annual Council and Special Council meetings both held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and the Mayor Making Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025 were provided.

In respect of Minute 6 – Confirmation of Minutes (Minute 417), Councillor Steven Smithson noted that progress had been made in relation to continuing the skip days and he thanked Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, and officers. He also asked if the community beat sweeps would be reintroduced. In response, Councillor Eaves considered that it might be possible to carry out community beat sweeps too.

In connection with Minute 6 – Confirmation of Minutes (Minute 416), Councillor Smithson enquired if the Council intended to cancel the 2026 local elections. Councillor Munsif Dad indicated that it was a matter for the Government to determine whether those elections would be held. He stated that he was not aware of any proposals to cancel the elections.

Regarding Minutes 17 and 25 – Appointment of and Conferment of the Titles of Honorary Aldermen and Freeman, the Leader of the Council remarked that all recipients had attended the Mayor Making meeting and luncheon event, which had been an excellent day. The individuals appointed were the right choice for the honours and the Council would continue to consider other community champions for these awards next year.

In respect of Minute 6 – Confirmation of Minutes (Minute 427(3)), Councillor Paul Cox asked if there was any further information about Accrington Stanley FC, as residents continued to make enquiries about the club's situation. He had previously received a verbal update, but was aware that there might be some more recent developments. Residents had also asked about any plans for the Livingstone Road site. He requested that ward councillors be kept informed. Councillor Dad confirmed that he had spoken to both Milnshaw ward councillors on these matters previously and that there were likely to be further developments in the future. He undertook to keep them both updated going forward.

**Resolved** - **That the Minutes of the Annual Council and Special Council meetings both held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and the Mayor Making Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025 be approved as a correct record.**

## **83 Question Time**

Twelve eligible questions had been received, which were set out in the report.

### **1) Determination of Planning Applications**

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor Zak Khan, on behalf of a resident, Vinette Davitt*

"I would like to raise the following question at the next full Council meeting please.

The National Planning Portal says that the standard time for a decision is 8 weeks, but that this can be extended to 13 weeks if an Application is unusually large or complex.

The Government website says no more than 26 weeks for Major Applications.

11/24/0417 was registered with HBC Planning Dept on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024, which I roughly calculate to be 31 weeks.

What is the reason for the delay, bearing in mind that HBC Planning Department could be penalised for allowing it to go over the Government's timescale for a complex Application?"

*Response:*

The Leader of the Council thanked the resident and Councillor Khan for the question. The standard target to determine a non-major planning application was 8 weeks and 13 weeks for a major application. 26 weeks was the maximum for a major application, unless a longer period had been agreed in writing. Normally, applications were decided within a shorter period. If the matter was complex it was proper to extend the time period.

The application identified by the questioner (a proposed burial ground to the south of Blackburn Road, Oswaldtwistle) was significant, complex and technical in nature, so both parties had agreed to an extension. Accordingly, the Council would not be penalised for the extended timeframe. This would allow the officer team time to consider all of the information available and to assess the application thoroughly, along with any objections, based on the local development plan and other relevant guidance.

Currently, the Planning Department was aiming to submit this application to the Planning Committee on 20 August 2025. However, officers were required to take all of the relevant issues into account, so it might be necessary to agree a longer timescale.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Khan on the following:*

Councillor Khan acknowledged that the matter was both contentious and complex and had been over four years in the making. He noted that residents were concerned about the application and expressed the view that providing more time for consideration might give the applicant an advantage. He asked what specifically were the reasons for granting the extension and if he could have a copy of those details.

The Mayor commented that the total time allowed for all questions was 30 minutes and that a lengthy interaction on single question could adversely affect the time available to hear other questions and answers. In the light of this, Councillors Dad and Khan agreed to a written response being provided after the meeting.

2) Land on Albert Street in Oswaldtwistle

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor Steven Smithson*

“What are the Council’s plans for the land on Albert Street in Oswaldtwistle.”

*Response:*

The Leader of the Council replied that this was a small plot of land and that there had been some initial interest in the site from a housing developer. However, this proposal had subsequently fallen through. The Leader undertook to take into account the views of local residents and would keep Councillor Smithson updated about any new proposals.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Smithson on the following:*

Councillor Smithson commented that the land in question had previously been hot spot for rubbish and dog fouling, but was currently a pleasant green space. He asked if relevant councillors and officers could meet to discuss whether a suitable use could be made of the existing green space.

*The consent of the Mayor had been obtained in advance to the submission of two personal questions by Councillor Smithson.*

### 3) Reinstatement of BMX Track off Harvey Street in Oswaldtwistle

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor Steven Smithson*

“Will this Council consider investing and bring back into use the old BMX track off Harvey Street in Oswaldtwistle.”

*Response:*

Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, indicated that it would be prohibitively expensive to bring the BMX track back into use at Harvey Street and that on-going maintenance costs would be high. However, it might be possible to invest in a pump track at a suitable alternative location. This type of facility would require less maintenance and could be used for other wheeled sports. The Harvey Street site was no longer suitable, as the overall strategy had changed. Modern sites need to be safe, overlooked and close to other facilities.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Smithson on the following:*

Councillor Smithson thanked the Portfolio Holder for his response and acknowledged the stated position. He mentioned that he had spent many of his formative years on the BMX track. The infrastructure remained in place. Given that there was a significant amount of anti-social behaviour in Oswaldtwistle and the existing track was in a prime location, he enquired if both he and Councillor Gilbert could be involved discussions about its redevelopment.

Councillor Eaves undertook to provide a written reply.

### 4) Council Owned Garages

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor Marlene Haworth*

“On what does the money collected from the Council owned garages’ annual rent, get spent? Why do the garages’ plots, which are rented out commercially, not have a repairs and maintenance budget?”

*Response:*

The Leader of the Council indicated that during the 2025/26 financial year the Council would receive £19,700 income from its garage plot tenancies. The burden of expenditure fell against Allotment & Garage Service staff costs and Central Service Charges. There was no remaining room in the budget for expenditure against garage repair and maintenance costs, without further increasing garage rents. The service did hold a small allotment repair and maintenance budget of £4,000pa. On very rare occasions, where a matter need expediting, such as a dangerous garage building, the allotment budget had been used, but only as a matter of urgency.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Haworth on the following:*

Councillor Haworth thanked the Leader for his promising response and asked whether he and the Cabinet would be prepared to look at providing a property budget to maintain the

garages. She expressed a view that there were currently lots of repairs that need to be undertaken.

Councillor Dad agreed to look into the matter.

5) Land at Livingstone Road

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor Zak Khan*

“Is the Cabinet willing to open formal conversations with Accrington Stanley FC, in order to find a suitable arrangement for the additional land on Livingstone Road owned by Hyndburn Borough Council and adjacent to the WHAM Stadium, thereafter, allowing them to expand their operations and invest in their existing site? Alternative arrangements are already in place for existing occupants, which will allow all organisations to flourish.”

*Response:*

Councillor Melissa Fisher, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration, confirmed that the Council had opened formal discussions with Accrington Stanley FC about their interest in the site at Livingston Road. The Council recognised that this was an opportunity, subject to the Football Club's interest and legal terms. However, the negotiations comprised commercially confidential information, which could not be discussed in public. She undertook to keep councillors informed, as appropriate.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Khan on the following:*

Councillor Khan commented that he was pleased to note that the question appeared to have sparked some renewed action, but stated that, given that the conversions had been on-going for some time, he requested that a definitive timeline be established.

Councillor Melissa Fisher, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration, responded that she was unable to share this information at the current time, but would make this available, as appropriate.

6) King George V Playing Fields

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor David Heap*

“Please could the Portfolio Holder give an update on King George's playing fields?”

*Response:*

Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, reported that the tenders for the groundworks had been let and were due to be returned by Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025. The tenders were due to be opened on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 and then evaluated, which should take approximately one week. Following this, a contractor would be appointed. Commencement on site was expected by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 and the works should take around 5 weeks to complete. In spring or summer 2026 the playing surface should be laid, with the playing fields available for sports from September 2026.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Heap on the following:*

Councillor Heap thanked Councillor Eaves for his reply and noted that Accrington Wildcats Amateur Rugby League FC were interested in using the site. He referred to the fact that the club needed a home with a 25 year lease in order to attract sports funding. Councillor Heap added that he had spoken to residents last Tuesday to see if they would welcome the Wildcats being based on this site and the response had been positive. He asked if the Portfolio Holder would meet with local councillors, residents and representatives of the ARLFC to discuss this matter.

Councillor Eaves responded that, as a former rugby league player himself, he would be happy to meet with all concerned.

7) Campaign on Anti-Social Behaviour

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of a resident, Jayde Holmes*

“When are the Council going to announce that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has cut Operation Centurion and what is going to replace it?”

*Response:*

Councillor Clare Pritchard, Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Town Centres, reported that the Council did not make announcements on matters that were the responsibility of the PCC. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) had its own Communications Team.

In any event, funding for Operation Centurion had not been cut in Hyndburn. The PCC had streamlined and focused the funding on specific areas that required intensive targeted work. In Hyndburn, this was Accrington town centre. To complement this, there was an uplift in resources for Community Beat Managers and PCSO's. There was also a multi-agency targeted summer campaign that would commence when schools broke up with both statutory and voluntary agencies working together.

The Council held regular multi-agency meetings with all partners to ensure that everyone was directing the additional resource to the right place and at the right time. Partners included Accrington Stanley FC, Clayton Amateur Boxing Club, youth leaders and Hyndburn and Ribble Valley (HARV) Domestic Abuse Team. Further funding had also been agreed by the OPCC for small charities who were supporting the summer of action. Hyndburn had been successful in the majority of bids available. In addition, Councillor Kimberley Whitehead was the Deputy PCC and was well placed to champion Hyndburn's cause.

The Portfolio Holder also highlighted a 'Nice2Share' event held recently by Lancashire Constabulary. The Police had procured a digital evidence management system, which would allow businesses and members of the public to register their CCTV and other recording devices into a community portal, which would allow faster communication of evidence to the Police.

8) Use of Glyphosate

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of a resident, Jayne Shirtcliffe*

“Are HBC still allowing the widespread spraying of glyphosate in Hyndburn streets? Considering the millions of dollars in lawsuits and since it is considered carcinogenic is

it still being used to spray pavement where animals and children play? Glyphosate is already banned in many local authorities.”

*Response:*

Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, responded that Hyndburn did use glyphosate for weed killing in its parks and on behalf of Lancashire County Council on roads and back streets. The substance remained approved for use by the EU until 2033. Other treatments such as hot foam, steam, acetic acid and mechanical methods were not as effective and took longer to apply.

9) Huncoat Garden Village

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of a resident, Nick Whittaker*

“I would like to know about the link road for the proposed Huncoat Garden Village.... £30 million apparently, although this is to improve junction 8 of M65 and improve the roundabout near the Griffin. How do they propose to do all three with only £30m? It sounds a lot, but knowing roads are very expensive, how is this going to be completed? And with 2,000 homes being built, there will be at least 2,000 more cars, [so] how do the Council and new MP propose to get freight in/out of Huncoat as well?”

*Response:*

Councillor Melissa Fisher, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration, thanked Mr Whittaker and Councillor Heap for the question. She reported that she was happy to reassure the questioners that the cost for the highway infrastructure was fully accommodated within the £30m and from funding by other key stakeholders. A breakdown of the other funding could be provided upon request. For clarity:

- The estimated cost of the proposed relief road was £6.7m, which included improvements to the A56 roundabout.
- The full cost of the improvements to J8 on the M65 were being met by National Highways. The Council, was making a £2.19m contribution towards the cost.

Councillor Fisher was pleased, therefore, to advise that the highway costs were not as onerous as the questioners had imagined.

With regard to the second part of the question, reference was made to the Council Leader’s response to Councillor Khan’s similar question at a recent Cabinet meeting. This Council was promoting the Huncoat Garden Village project, which meant that the freight rail terminal could not proceed at Huncoat. Councillor Fisher advised that she was not in a position to respond on behalf of the MP.

10) Accrington Neighbourhood Board

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of a resident, Alexander Crook*

“On the £20 million for Accrington Centre, our MP Sarah Smith said:

“I’m delighted that up to £20m has been set aside for Accrington.



This investment, part of the Labour Government's Plan for Change, will unlock our local area's potential and bring real benefits to our community.

With this funding, local people will have more control over decisions that affect them, reducing unnecessary interference from central Government.

This is the kind of positive change a Labour Government delivers, and I look forward to working with the Neighbourhood Board to make a real difference for residents."

Now having read this I actually sent an email to Ms Smith asking who would be invited to join this Board, as being born and bred in Accrington and *[having]* been a resident here for almost 64 years I'd like to be a candidate for a position...*[ I]* never got a reply.

So just who decided the board members and when were they elected?"

*Response:*

The Leader thanked Mr Crook and Councillor Heap for their question. He reported that Government guidelines stated that the Neighbourhood Board should be led by an independent Chair. A transparent application process had been followed in Spring 2025, which had resulted in two candidates being interviewed. The person appointed, Andy Tatchell, was the most suitable candidate and had a high level of experience of regeneration and political leadership.

The guidelines also stated that the core Neighbourhood Board must be the following:

- Elected Hyndburn MP
- Elected Lancashire County Councillor
- Elected Hyndburn Borough Councillor
- Senior representative from the Police – this is the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

Those persons were appointed directly to the Board ahead of its first meeting on 4 June 2025.

The addition of further Board representatives had been discussed and agreed at the first meeting, then those persons had also been invited to serve. Initially two representatives of the local business community, two in education and two with links to the community had been asked to join the Board. It was expected that the Board membership could change during the lifetime of the project, depending on the needs of the plan that was ultimately decided upon.

Biographies of the Board members would be published in the coming weeks along with registers of interest, which were currently being obtained.

*A supplementary question was asked by Councillor Heap on the following:*

He noted that the guidance required an independent Chair to be appointed and asked if the post-holder was a member of the Labour Party.

*The Mayor advised caution when seeking personal information, which might be confidential, but the Chief Executive clarified that the question could be asked, as Board members interests would normally be in the public domain.*

Councillor Dad responded that the Chair had been appointed on merit, as the most suitable candidate, and his political affiliations had not been a consideration.

11) Martholme Viaduct, Great Harwood

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder*

*Submitted by Councillor David Heap on behalf of a resident, Kevin Laycock*

“Where are Hyndburn Council at with the long running project to fully reopen the Read end of the Martholme Viaduct in Great Harwood, for access and egress for walkers.

I have emailed several councillors this question and had no answer.

The reopening of the Viaduct would be a great asset to Hyndburn green space, which could be linked into another long distance walk around Hyndburn to add to the wonderful Hyndburn clog walk.

It would encourage people to get out and exercise, which has been proved to help with physical and mental well-being”

*Response:*

Councillor Scott Brerton, Portfolio Holder for Business, Growth and Sustainability, thanked Mr Laycock and Councillor Heap for their question. As noted, the Great Harwood end of Martholme Viaduct was fully open, in no small measure due to the support of former MP, Graham Jones, and Councillor Noordad Aziz. There remained an on-going campaign by interested groups to secure the opening of the Read side of the viaduct and for the completion of the Martholme Greenway to meet Sustrans Route 685 (The Padiham Greenway). A motion in support of this action had been passed by this Council in June 2023. Netherton ward councillors, Noordad Aziz and Jodi Clements, remained committed to supporting the reopening of the route. The Council had written recently to Lancashire County Council to confirm that commitment.

*There was no supplementary question, but Councillor Heap commented as follows:*

Councillor Heap praised Mr Laycock’s enthusiasm as a keen supporter of the reopening of this walking route.

The Portfolio Holder summarised by indicating that Hyndburn Borough council had done all that it could with regard to the viaduct. The matter lay with Ribble Valley Borough Council in whose area the closed section of the route lay and Lancashire County Council who were responsible for footpaths and cycleways. Furthermore, the land in question was currently in private ownership.

12) Hyndburn Leisure

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP) or relevant Portfolio Holder*  
*Submitted by Councillor Zak Khan on behalf of a resident, Peter Shaw*

“What operational changes has the Council made to Hyndburn Leisure as a result of the monitoring process that the Council set up and what indications are there that these changes will be financially successful?”

*Response:*

Councillor Melissa Fisher, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Regeneration, indicated that the Council and Leisure Trust were working together to develop an aligned vision and a shared plan. Regular financial meetings now took place between Hyndburn Leisure and Councillor Vanessa Alexander, Portfolio Holder for Council Operations, on top of the existing meetings attended by Councillor Fisher herself as relevant Portfolio Holder for leisure in Hyndburn. The format of reporting had been updated to quarterly. The Council had agreed that the Trust model of delivery would continue.

Improvements were already under way. The Trust would buy its own energy supplies, rather than the Council procuring energy on its behalf, which would generate a saving. Overall, the intention was to reduce in the operational subsidy required by the Trust. Additional external investment had already been received by the Trust and further funding had been applied for. As a charity, the Trust was able to access funding not available to the Council. It was also hoped to extend the level of expertise within the Trust's Board.

## **84 Review of Allocation of Seats to Political Groups and Appointments to Committees**

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, together with an addendum circulated at the meeting, which set out the outcome of a review of the allocation of seats to political groups and which sought to approve to a number of amendments to committee sizes and consequential and other proposed changes to the appointment of individual councillors to serve on those committees and their designated chairs or vice-chairs

### 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 8 by members wishing to form a political group on the Council, provided that at least one month had elapsed since the previous review. The previous review had been undertaken on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 ahead of the Annual Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

A notice had now been submitted under Regulation 8, which included the addition of Councillor Joyce Plummer to the Conservative Group, which was a change from the information previously notified to the proper officer. This had automatically triggered 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 across the Council and consequential amendments to the seats available on some committees and the individual councillors appointed to serve on the various committees affected.

### Allocation of Seats

The number of seats currently held on the Council by each political group and others was:-

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Labour and Co-operative Group | 21 |
| Conservative Group            | 13 |
| Green                         | 1  |

The Council comprised 35 elected members.

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: 61.8% (Labour and Co-operative) 38.2% (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 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025, 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, other than to note the removal of the Independent seat, which was now surplus to requirements. Accordingly, the proposal to gift a seat would now apply only to the Green councillor.

The basic calculation to allocate seats to committees of various sizes had altered slightly from that indicated at the Annual Meeting and the new position was as shown in Table 1 below. The changes applied to committees of the following sizes: 7, 10, 12, 13 and 15 (shaded grey in Table 1). At the Annual Council meeting, members 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 and in the light of the practice referred to at paragraph 4.2 in the report about gifting a seat to the Green councillor.

- (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)).

Accordingly, Table 1 below set out the allocation of seats proposed for the remainder of 2025/26 (see column 5)

Table 1

| <b>No of seats on Committee</b><br>(1) | <b>Lab</b><br>(2) | <b>Cons</b><br>(3) | <b>Green</b><br>(4) | <b>Proposed Ratio</b><br>(5) |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
|  |                   |                    |                     |                              |
| 2 members                              | 1                 | 1                  | 0                   | 1:1:0                        |
| 3 members                              | 2                 | 1                  | 0                   | 2:1:0                        |
| 4 members                              | 3                 | 1                  | 0                   | 3:1:0                        |
| 5 members                              | 3                 | 2                  | 0                   | 3:2:0                        |
| 6 members                              | 4                 | 2                  | 0                   | 4:2:0                        |
| 7 members                              | 4                 | 3                  | 0                   | 4:3:0                        |
| 8 members                              | 5                 | 3                  | 0                   | 5:3:0                        |
| 9 members                              | 6                 | 3                  | 0                   | 6:3:0                        |
| 10 members                             | 6                 | 4                  | 0                   | 6:4:0                        |
| 11 members                             | 7                 | 4                  | 0                   | 7:4:0                        |
| 12 members                             | 7                 | 5                  | 0                   | 7:5:0                        |
| 13 members                             | 8                 | 5                  | 0                   | 8:5:0                        |
| 14 members                             | 9                 | 5                  | 0                   | 8:5:1*                       |
| 15 members                             | 9                 | 6                  | 0                   | 9:6:0                        |

\* NB. Adjusted to provide for 1 Green seat

Following the review, there were two amendments proposed to the size of committees/sub-committees since the Annual Meeting in 2025, in respect of the following Committees:

- Planning Committee (increase from 12 to 13 seats, providing two additional Conservative seats).
- Resources 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 87 to 89 (which took account of the loss of one independent seat and the addition of three Conservative seats on the two committees mentioned above).

The full list of committees and sub-committees, including details of the overall sizes and allocation of seats between political parties for the remainder of 2025/26 are set out in Table 2 below. As indicated above, the changes proposed (highlighted in bold italics in Table 2) apply to the following Committees:

- Planning Committee;
- Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Table 2

| <b>Committee</b>   | <b>Total No. of Seats</b> | <b>No. of seats by political group<br/>(Labour &amp; Co-operative :<br/>Conservative : Green)</b>  |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| Audit Committee  | 6                         | 4:2:0  |
| Communities & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee          | 8                         | 5:3:0  |
| Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing) | 6                         | 4:2:0  |
| Licensing Committee  | 14                        | 8:5:1  |
| Licensing Sub-Committee  | 3                         | 3 from Licensing Committee, one of whom must be the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee<br><br>(2:1:0 where practicable)                    |
| Management Review Committee                                    | 5                         | 3:2:0:0<br><br>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<br><i>(proposed increase from 12 to 13)</i> | 8:5:0<br><i>(A change from 8:3:0:1*<br/>* Independent seat no longer required)</i>   |
| Planning (Trees) Sub-Committee              | 5  | 3:2:0<br><br>(drawn from the parent committee above)   |
| Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee     | 8<br><i>(proposed increase from 7 to 8)</i>    | 5:3:0<br><i>(A change from 5:2:0)</i>  |
| Special Overview & Scrutiny Committee       | 8  | 5:3:0  |
| Standards Committee                         | 8  | 5:3:0  |
| Standards Committee – Hearing Sub-Committee | 5  | For matters relating to Hyndburn Borough Council: 5 members plus 1 non-voting independent person<br><br>For matters relating to Altham Parish Council: 5 members, plus 1 independent person and 1 parish representative<br><br>(3:2:0) where practicable |
| <b>Total</b>                                | 89   | 55 – Lab & Co-op (61.8%)<br>33 – Cons (37.1%)<br>1 – Green (1.1%)  |

#### Changes to Appointments to Committees/Sub-Committees

The Council had duty to give effect to the wishes of a political group in relation to appointments to committees and other bodies in accordance with s16(1) Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

In addition to the consequential changes to individual committees necessitated by the review of political balance, political parties had indicated their intention to make a number of changes to individual appointments to the committees/sub-committees, including chairs/vice-chairs, since the Annual Council meeting. The intention was to deal with these changes within the same item of business.

The proposed membership of Committees/Sub-Committees was tabled at the meeting, as Appendix 1. At the meeting, Councillor Dad also notified members of an alteration to the information circulated in Appendix 1, to provide for the retention of Councillor Booth as a member of the Planning Committee and as Chair of the Planning (Trees) Sub-Committee and the removal of Councillor Noordad Aziz from the Planning Committee.

In the event that further changes were not yet finalised, a delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make the appointments in consultation with the relevant political group leaders was recommended.

The Council was invited to consider and give effect to requests from the various political groups, as follows:

*Labour and Co-operative*

- A change to the membership of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising the removal of the Vice-Chair, Councillor Paul Cox, and the appointment of Councillor Jodi Clements as Vice-Chair
- A change to the membership of the Planning Committee comprising the removal of Councillor Noordad Aziz, the current Vice-Chair Councillor Mike Booth reverting to an ordinary member of that committee and the appointment of Councillor Bernard Dawson as Vice-Chair.
- A change to the membership of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising the current Vice-Chair Councillor Heather Anderson reverting to an ordinary member of that committee, the removal of Councillor Bernard Dawson and the appointment of Councillor Paul Cox as Vice-Chair
- A change to the Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising the removal of Vice-Chair, Councillor Bernard Dawson, and the appointment of Councillor Mike Booth as Vice-Chair

*Conservative*

- A change to the membership of Planning Committee comprising the appointment of Councillor Joyce Plummer (transferring from the defunct Independent seat) and Councillor Josh Allen to the additional two Conservative seats on this committee.
- A change to the membership of the Planning (Trees) Sub-Committee comprising a correction to remove Councillor Peter Edwards (not a member of the Planning Committee) and the appointment Councillor Joyce Plummer.
- A change to the membership of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising the appointment of Councillor Steven Smithson to the additional Conservative seat on this committee.

**Resolved**

- (1) To note the outcome of a review of the allocation of seats to political groups.**
- (2) To approve the political composition of committees and sub-committees of the Council, as set out in Paragraph 4.6 of the report (as updated by the Addendum document), and the amendments**

**proposed to committee sizes (also updated by the Addendum), including any consequential changes to Appendix 1 of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council's Constitution.**

- (3) To approve the changes to the membership of any committees, sub-committees, and any office holders as submitted both before and at the Council meeting by the political group leaders (as set out above), and to agree that where any such details are not available at the meeting or where consequential and minor changes are proposed within a period of one month following the meeting, the Chief Executive be authorised to approve the updated membership following receipt in writing of the wishes of the relevant group leader.**

## **85 Corporate Strategy 2025-2030**

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, presenting a new Corporate Strategy for approval.

Councillor Dad provided a brief introduction to the report and outlined the consultations which had taken place. He reported that the review process had begun with a discussion at Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2025. Further feedback from Cabinet Members had then informed the rewrite, along with updates from the Council's Service Managers. Group leaders of other political groups on the Council had also had the opportunity to put forward any comments and suggestions.

The current Corporate Strategy had been agreed in 2023. The key factors which had led to the proposed revision included:

- changes in the political administration of the Council, with some shifts in priorities; and
- significant announcements from Government around devolution and local government organisation within Lancashire.

While many of the priorities and actions outlined were a continuation, others were new. In particular, a fourth priority had been added. The four priorities and their supporting themes were as follows:

- Sustainable Growth
  - Employment and Business Growth
  - Revitalise our Townships
  - Housing Growth
- Environment and Climate Change
  - Reduce Fuel Poverty
  - Make the Council's Activities Net Zero by 2030
  - Green Spaces and the Natural Environment
- A Thriving and Cohesive Community
  - Partnership Working
  - Health and Wellbeing



- Culture, Heritage and Arts
- Embrace the Opportunities of Devolution
  - Local Partnerships and Shared Working
  - Workforce Planning and Organisational Readiness
  - Building a Stronger Place Identity

The strategy formed part of the Council's Policy Framework as defined in the Constitution and as such needed to be adopted by the Council.

Councillor Zak Khan commented that the 2023 version of the Strategy had been developed under the previous political administration, however, most of its priorities remained relevant. He was particularly pleased to see that the commitment to Sustainable Growth had been retained, as this reflected long-term thinking. He also understood the need to include Devolution as a new priority. He expressed the view that the document should be regularly checked to ensure that relevant actions were taking place. He was, therefore, happy to support the latest version of the Strategy.

Councillor Sabir Fazal welcomed the priority on a Thriving and Cohesive Community. Residents were living in a time when people were being set against one another. The prevailing situation in Hyndburn had always been one of cohesion. He hoped that inclusion of this as a priority would lead to meaningful action and demonstrate that Britain was not an 'island of strangers' (*from a quote by the Prime Minister on 12 May 2025*).

The Leader thanked Councillors Khan and Fazal for their contributions. He added that the strategy was a working document and commented that it belonged to the whole Council, not just the controlling political group. He also provided some examples of actions underway including the following:

- Place Strategy - due to be launched in the autumn 2025;
- Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan - partially completed, but currently paused;
- Dome Project - consultants appointed to develop plans by the end of the year;
- Climate Strategy - due to be launched in October 2025; and
- Digital Transformation Strategy - draft submitted to Corporate Peer Challenge Working Group.

The Leader agreed with Councillor Fazal's view on cohesion and cited the strong cross-party response to the heightened sensitivities, following the stabbing incident in Southport in July 2024. Hyndburn had recently received a significant grant sum from the Government to aid community cohesion and the various projects had all now been successfully delivered. The Council was proactive in addressing its priorities.

**Resolved**

- (1) That Council agrees to adopt the draft Corporate Strategy, as appended to the report.**
- (2) That the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be given delegated authority to make revisions to the strategy, as necessary, over its life.**

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, updating the Council in respect of recent executive decisions taken as a matter of urgency where the decision had been exempted from the Call-In Procedure.

Rule C14 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out the provisions allowing for a period of call-in by members of a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in respect of certain executive decisions. That Paragraph included the detailed procedures which supported this arrangement.

Paragraph C14(i) stated that the call-in procedure should not apply where the decision being taken by the executive was urgent. A decision would be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public interest. The record of the decision and notice by which it was made public should state whether in the opinion of the decision making person or body, the decision was an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in and the reason for that opinion. The Mayor had to agree both that the decision proposed was reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency prior to the decision being taken. Provision was also made for consent to be obtained otherwise in the absence of the Mayor.

In addition to the above, Paragraph C14(i) stated that decisions taken as a matter of urgency had to be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

Recent urgent executive decisions, or Cabinet decisions where the Call-In procedure had been suspended, were as summarised below.

#### Urgent Executive Decisions Taken

The following urgent executive decisions had been taken within the last reporting period:

(a) Procurement of Work for Great Harwood High Street Accelerator Fund Greening Project

The decision and reason for urgency was as summarised below:

*Decision (taken by the Chief Officer/Head of Service on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025)*

Appointment of Clark & Kent to undertake works to install a pump track at Game Street, Great Harwood using High Street Accelerator funding.

*Reason for Urgency*

All work relating to the High Street Accelerator funding had to be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

(b) Leisure Transformation Project - Wilson Playing Fields Site - s.278 Agreement

The decision and reason for urgency was as summarised below:

*Decision (taken by the Chief Officer/Head of Service on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025)*

To seek approval to enter into an agreement, pursuant to Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980, with Lancashire County Council (LCC) to carry out highways works to complete the construction of the new leisure facility at the Wilson Playing Field site.

### *Reason for Urgency*

Since Universal Civils and Build Limited (Universal) had been appointed as the replacement Contractor in December 2024, the construction of the new leisure facility at Wilson Playing Fields was progressing very well and Universal were ready to start off-site highways works as part of the development plans.

Whilst LCC required Universal to enter into a licence to work on the highway, this was dependent on the Council entering into the s.278 Agreement with LCC.

The highways works were due to commence in May and, as such, time was of the essence to seek Cabinet's approval and for the Council to enter into the s.278 Agreement with LCC to avoid delays which may lead to significant additional costs for the Council. To wait until the next formal Cabinet meeting would result in delays of this vital work and the Council would be liable for costs of the delay.

#### (c) Huncoat Garden Village Residential Relief Road – Appointment of Preferred Contractor

The decision and reason for urgency was as summarised below:

*Decision (taken by the Chief Officer/Head of Service on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025)*

To seek approval to enter into a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with the preferred contractor to begin delivery of the Huncoat Garden Village Residential Relief Road.

### *Reason for Urgency*

The delivery of the Residential Relief Road was fundamental to the success of the Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan, the timing of which had been agreed with Homes England pursuant to the terms of the grant funding agreement the Council entered into with them. The pre-construction process had already been delayed and Eric Wright Civil Engineering Ltd (EWCE) and their supply chain had already done some work at risk to mitigate the delays. The Council now required the PCSA to formalise these arrangements to enable EWCE to appoint their sub-contractors and suppliers (in particular to enable the carrying out of site investigations, which were planned to take place over the next few weeks when the weather was drier and the land was firmer).

#### (d) Lease of Wilson Playing Field site to Hyndburn Leisure

The decision and reason for urgency was as summarised below:

*Decision (taken by the Chief Officer/Head of Service on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025)*

To seek approval to grant a short-term lease of the Wilson Playing Field site, Clayton le Moors, to Hyndburn Leisure.

### *Reason for Urgency*

A decision about the grant of a lease to Hyndburn Leisure was required urgently given that the works to construct the new leisure centre were due to be completed in September 2025. Hyndburn Leisure needed the certainty of a lease of the premises to begin preparing to operate the facility upon its completion, especially as much of the required activity would involve the incurring of up-front cost. The grant of the lease should ensure that the new

leisure facility could be immediately handed over to Hyndburn Leisure as operator, once the construction had reached practical completion. If the lease was not in place, then the Council would take possession of the facility and, as no-one in the Council had the appropriate skills and expertise to run the facility, it would remain closed until a lease had been completed or a commercial operator had been procured and appointed.. This would result in loss of income and potentially significant empty property costs (for example in insuring the building and in keeping it secure).

In addition to contract delays, Hyndburn Leisure needed a lease in place to formally complete the required staffing appointments and to enter into their own contracts for procurement of gym equipment, ICT, supplies and services. Further delays to Hyndburn Leisure's ability to commence such arrangements could result in a delay to practical completion which would incur costs which were additional to the empty property costs described above.

Copies of the full reports relating to the above decisions could be viewed on the Council's website within the Cabinet Agenda for 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025. (A link to that Agenda was provided within the report).

In respect of decision (d) above - Lease of Wilson Playing Field, Councillor Zak Khan asked why the Council had not followed its usual procurement procedure. Councillor Dad responded that this was due to the short timescale involved, with a proposed opening date in October 2025 and having regard to the needs of the operator of the facility to recruit staff, etc.

On the same matter, Councillor Paul Cox indicated that he was an ardent supporter of Hyndburn Leisure and it was pleasing to hear of the contract being awarded to them. However, as Vice-Chair of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 2024/25 onwards, he made a renewed call for a representative of the Leisure Trust to attend that Committee when requested under the work programme.

**Resolved** - **That Council notes the report on recent executive decisions taken as a matter of urgency.**

## **87 Minutes of Cabinet**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were submitted.

The following matters were raised:

In connection with Minute 46 - Waste Transfer Station, Councillor Steven Smithson sought clarification around information published recently by Lancashire County Council (LCC). LCC had announced that the Whinney Hill landfill site was closing and that their contract with Suez was not being extended beyond March 2026, but this information had already been released previously. However, it was understood that landfill operations would continue at this site, which was owned by Suez. He asked if the Council was aware of any plans in place for the future of LCC's Altham Household Waste Recycling Centre based at Whinney Hill.

Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, responded that, following the end of the waste disposal contract at Whinney Hill, his preference was for the use of a waste transfer station for collected waste in Hyndburn. Other options included use of the landfill site at Fleetwood or the waste transfer station in Bacup, but the preferred solution was use of the Suez waste transfer facility at Darwen. He indicated that he was working hard to secure this option.

In respect of Minute 46 – Accrington Stanley FC, Councillor David Heap expressed the view that there had been no progress in recent weeks, despite councillors reporting that meetings were taking place with the club. The issues had been on-going for over 12 months and residents were frustrated by the apparent lack of progress. He called for the Leader of the Council to resign over this matter.

The Leader responded that the above comments were disingenuous and inappropriate. The Council leadership's first meeting with the club's representatives had taken place 3 months ago and there had been much progress since then. It was hoped that there would be some positive news within the next few weeks. Councillor Dad indicated that a complex situation was not being helped by comments being circulated which were untrue. He retorted that the councillor concerned might consider his own resignation.

A lengthy debate then ensued.

Councillors Steven Smithson and Zak Khan raised concerns about the following:

- Limited updates as to progress;
- The closure of the club's leisure venue and football academy;
- The impact on businesses such as ASFC of Government policies on employer's national insurance contributions and the national minimum wage; and
- An apparent unwillingness by the Council to listen to suggestions proposed by the Opposition to provide financial support to the club.

Councillors Andrew Clegg, Clare Pritchard, Paul Cox, Vanessa Alexander, Melissa Fisher, Stewart Eaves and Dave Parkins raised the following issues in response:

- A lack of compliance by the club with both planning and licensing rules;
- The club needing to take responsibility for their actions and needing to propose solutions to the situation;
- The minimal impact of national business policies on the club's situation;
- A pattern of lack of engagement by the club with the Council, typified by a history of the club submitting retrospective planning applications;
- The academy closure being due to a business decision by the club, unrelated to the entertainment venue issues;
- Noise emissions from Coley's Bar and the 1968 Lounge impacting negatively on residents' lives for two years;
- Applauding a more collaborative approach by the club's new Chief Executive Officer, Warren Eastham, with the Council and the local community;
- Noting the value added to the Borough by the club and its Community Trust;
- Thanking the Environmental Health Team for their work to record the evidence of noise breaches for consideration by the appropriate regulatory body; and
- Highlighting the Council's restraint in not prosecuting the club for any regulatory breaches, preferring instead to work with them and others to find solutions.

Councillor Dad thanked all for their contributions to this debate. He commented that the Opposition proposal to loan money to the club to make the necessary improvements to the roof sound insulation was not viable, as the Council could not justify using public money for this purpose. When the Council learned that the academy was at risk it had offered financial support from within funds available for this type of activity, however, the club had

not accepted the money, as continuation of the academy did not meet its business model. The Council remained keen to discuss a way forward with the club.

With regard to Minute 49 – Appointment of Cabinet Committees, etc, Councillor Steven Smithson noted that the Cabinet Waste and Recycling Group had been re-established for 2025/26 and was pleased to have been appointed to serve on this body. The group had not met in 2024/25. He asked if this group would meet in the current year. Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, undertook to revive this working group.

In respect of Minutes 50 and 51 – Huncoat Garden Village, Councillor Steven Smithson commented that he had been shocked to hear from the Portfolio Holder at the meeting that she had not read one of the reports and sought her assurance that all future reports would be read. Councillor Melissa Fisher, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport, responded that her recollection of the meeting was entirely different and that she had never made a statement to that effect. Her actual comments about the detail of the report had been taken out of context. Councillors Pritchard, Khan and Dad all commented on the demands upon members' time when trying to digest information contained in lengthy reports.

In connection with Minute 48 – Portfolio Responsibilities 2025/26, the Leader of the Council reported that he was the relevant Portfolio Holder for asset management and would report back on any issues arising from the Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre Working Group.

In connection with Minute 52 – Draft Culture and Heritage Strategy, Councillor Judith Addison asked about the Culture and Heritage Investment Panel (CHIP), who served on this body and what was its remit. Councillor Dad undertook to request Kirsten Burnett, Head of Policy and Organisational Development, to send the information to Councillor Addison.

Regarding Minute 57 – Coach Road Solar Meadow Project, she asked why William Blyth Ltd had been selected to purchase the electricity generated from the site. The original proposal had envisaged the electricity being sold to CVMU and/or to Hyndburn Sports Centre. Councillor Dad suggested that this question should be directed to Prospects Community Energy Limited, who were the recipient of a grant from the Council to support this project.

With regard to Minute 46 – Accrington Neighbourhoods Board, Councillor Zak Khan, Leader of the Opposition, reminded members that he had asked for further information about the process for the appointment of the Chair of the Board. No information had yet been received. Councillor Dad reiterated that the appointment process had been transparent and the MP and officers had followed a clear selection process. The person selected was the most suitable candidate for the role. He was unclear about what further information was required.

In connection with Minute 54 – Provisional Financial Outturn Position, Councillor Zak Khan, Leader of the Opposition, reminded members that he had asked about utilising reserves for new projects and had been informed that the Cabinet was looking at its priorities. He expressed a wish for the Opposition to contribute some suggestions to the proposed list of projects. Councillor Dad responded that there was a long list of projects to be considered for the underspends budget. The projects ultimately selected would serve the residents of Hyndburn and would not be politically motivated.

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

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

| <b>Meeting (Municipal Year 2024/25)</b>                        | <b>Date</b>                    |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Special Scrutiny Committee                                     | 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2025  |
| Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee                      | 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2025 |
| Audit Committee  | 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2025 |
| Licensing Sub-Committee  | 27 <sup>th</sup> February 2025 |
| Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee      | 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2025     |
| Licensing Sub-Committee  | 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2025     |
| Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee                      | 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2025    |
| Planning Committee   | 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2025    |
| Planning (Trees) Sub-Committee                                 | 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2025    |
| Planning Committee   | 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2025    |
| <b>Meeting (Municipal Year 2025/26)</b>                        | <b>Date</b>                    |
| Cabinet Committee (Street Naming)                              | 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2025      |
| Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing) | 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2025      |
| Planning Committee   | 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2025     |
| Audit Committee  | 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2025     |

Councillor Zak Khan asked if it would be possible to record all Cabinet and Committee meetings. The Leader of the Council responded that this matter could be discussed at the next Leader's Policy Development Board.

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

## 89 Motion(s) submitted on Notice

Councillor Khan indicated that the Opposition group did not wish to engage in the debate on motions and would abstain from any vote taken. The group had submitted two of its own motions for tonight's meeting, which had been directly relevant to Hyndburn issues, on the subjects of a local member grants scheme and the extension of Article 4 Directions for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the Borough. However, these motions had not been accepted for inclusion on the Agenda.

### 1) Standing Up for Working People and Defending Fair Terms and Conditions

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Scott Brerton and seconded by Councillor Vanessa Alexander, with support from signatories Councillors Munsif Dad and Stewart Eaves, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A9:

"This Council recognises and commends the vital role that trade unions have played—and continue to play - in defending and advancing the rights of working people across the United Kingdom.

Thanks to the tireless work of unions and their members, we now have core protections that many take for granted:

- Equal pay for women
- Paid holidays
- Maternity pay

- Two day weekends
- Minimum wage
- Health and safety at work
- Equal opportunities
- Flexible working
- Better rates of pay
- Better sickness and pension benefits

These were not gifts from above—they were won through collective action, determination, and solidarity.

This Council further notes with concern the recent proposals by Reform UK at Lancashire County Council, which risk creating a two-tier workforce by limiting access to the Local Government Pension Scheme for new employees and imposing poor pay increases on existing staff.

Such measures undermine long-standing terms and conditions and represent an unjustifiable attack on those who deliver essential public services.

We believe all workers deserve fair pay, secure pensions, and dignity at work. Undermining staff morale and widening inequality will damage recruitment, retention, and the quality of services our communities rely on.

This Council therefore:

1. Praises the vital role of trade unions in securing and protecting workplace rights.
2. Condemns any attempts to roll back these rights through attacks on pensions, pay, and conditions—whether nationally or within Lancashire County Council.
3. Urges all staff across Lancashire County Council—and beyond—to join a recognised union as a practical step to protect themselves and their colleagues.
4. Resolves to write to the leadership of Lancashire County Council expressing this Council's opposition to any such changes to access to the Local Government Pension Scheme or employee pay progression."

Councillors Andy Gilbert, Shabir Fazal, Clare Pritchard, Vanessa Alexander, Jodie Clements, Paul Cox, Stewart Eaves, Clare McKenna, Noordad Aziz and Munsif Dad spoke in support of the motion and a number of those councillors spoke about their own positive experiences of working with or being supported by trades unions.

**Resolved**

**- This Council therefore:**

- (1) **Praises the vital role of trade unions in securing and protecting workplace rights.**
- (2) **Condemns any attempts to roll back these rights through attacks on pensions, pay, and conditions—whether nationally or within Lancashire County Council.**
- (3) **Urges all staff across Lancashire County Council—and beyond—to join a recognised**



**union as a practical step to protect themselves and their colleagues.**

- (4) Resolves to write to the leadership of Lancashire County Council expressing this Council's opposition to any such changes to access to the Local Government Pension Scheme or employee pay progression.**

## 2) Reforming UK Maternity Services

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Clare Yates and seconded by Councillor Kate Walsh, with support from signatories Councillors Munsif Dad, Stewart Eaves and Scott Brerton, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A9:

"A recent National Review of Maternity Services conducted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) evaluated 131 maternity units across England, revealing significant areas for improvement:

- Nearly half of the units were rated as 'requires improvement' (36%) or 'inadequate' (12%).
- None achieved an 'outstanding' rating for safety; 47% required improvements while 18% were deemed inadequate.
- Key issues identified included weak leadership, inconsistent safety protocols, and a failure to learn from past incidents.
- However, the potential for meaningful change exists—through fostering the right culture and making the right investments.

The National Inquiry into Birth Trauma (2024) highlighted distressing statistics:

- One in three women experiences birth trauma, with approximately 30,000 developing PTSD each year.
- Common concerns included a lack of informed consent, poor communication, and insufficient postnatal care.
- A staggering 84% of women felt inadequately informed about birth injuries, with 53% reconsidering future pregnancies as a result.

It is essential to address the workforce crisis and midwifery shortages that continue to compromise maternity service outcomes:

- Chronic understaffing contributes directly to poor outcomes and staff burnout.
- Midwives are experiencing emotional distress, overwhelming workloads, and a lack of adequate support.

While the Care Quality Commission recently rated maternity services at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust as 'Good' overall—including Burnley, Blackburn, and Rossendale sites—staffing challenges persist. Despite the dedication of teams on the ground, services are often stretched to breaking point. In order to maintain coverage across birth centres,

hospitals, and community teams, the escalation procedure regularly pulls specialist midwives from their vital roles. This creates a domino effect, increasing risk in areas such as continuity of care, safeguarding, and maternal mental health and trauma.

In light of these findings, this Council resolves to write to the Health Secretary, Wes Streeting MP, to:

- Express gratitude for initiating an inquiry into UK maternity services.
- Request increased investment in midwifery training, recruitment, and retention using meaningful data and benchmarking tools.
- Support a national rollout of initiatives such as the OASI Care Bundle to reduce severe perineal trauma.
- Promote the establishment of fully integrated care models that combine mental health, pelvic health, and continuity of care.
- Advocate for the inclusion of fathers and co-parents—who are often overlooked under current policies—including access to paid time off for antenatal and educational appointments.
- Call for greater investment in specialist support for parents affected by birth trauma during and after the perinatal period, as current services are overstretched and many women are not receiving the care they need in a timely manner.

Additionally, the Council will liaise with the Integrated Care Board to reaffirm the need for sustained support for community midwifery services in Hyndburn and across East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust Maternity Services.

The Solution is Clear: Invest in midwives. Invest in families. Invest in the future.”

Councillors Noordad Aziz, Andrew Clegg, Shabir Fazal, Melissa Fisher, Clare Pritchard, Heather Anderson, Kate Walsh, Steven Button and Munsif Dad spoke in support of the motion.

*In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.5, six members called for a recorded vote on the motion.*

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

*For the Motion (20)*

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brereton, Steven Button, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson, Stewart Eaves, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh and Clare Yates.

*Against the Motion (0)*

Nil

*Abstentions (10)*

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen (Mayor), Danny Cassidy, Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer and Steven Smithson.

**Resolved**

- (1) This Council resolves to write to the Health Secretary, Wes Streeting MP, to:**
- **Express gratitude for initiating an inquiry into UK maternity services.**
  - **Request increased investment in midwifery training, recruitment, and retention using meaningful data and benchmarking tools.**
  - **Support a national rollout of initiatives such as the OASI Care Bundle to reduce severe perineal trauma.**
  - **Promote the establishment of fully integrated care models that combine mental health, pelvic health, and continuity of care.**
  - **Advocate for the inclusion of fathers and co-parents—who are often overlooked under current policies—including access to paid time off for antenatal and educational appointments.**
  - **Call for greater investment in specialist support for parents affected by birth trauma during and after the perinatal period, as current services are overstretched and many women are not receiving the care they need in a timely manner.**
- (2) This Council will liaise with the Integrated Care Board to reaffirm the need for sustained support for community midwifery services in Hyndburn and across East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust Maternity Services.**
- (3) This Council believes that the solution is clear: Invest in midwives - Invest in families - Invest in the future.”**

**3) Welfare Motion**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Melissa Fisher and seconded by Councillor Jodi Clements, with support from signatories Councillors Munsif Dad and Scott Brerton, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A9:

“This Council believes that the welfare system must be built on the principles of dignity, fairness, and respect for all.

This Council further believes that over a decade of austerity imposed by previous governments has caused severe and lasting damage to public services and welfare provision, leaving many Hyndburn residents facing exceptional hardship. In particular, people with health-related conditions have borne the brunt of these cuts over time and continue to experience disproportionate levels of poverty and insecurity.

Whilst this Council recognises the need to manage public finances responsibly, it holds grave concerns about the direction of current welfare reform proposals. It cannot be stressed enough that disability benefits are vital to help disabled people remain in work.

However, this Council was pleased to learn that the Government have listened to concerns and will implement concessions, so existing claimants of PIP and Universal Credit do have some 'peace of mind'.

This Council therefore calls on the Government to continue to support the most vulnerable without further reductions to essential welfare support. Instead, it urges a focus on tackling the root causes of rising welfare demand—such as the imbalance in the tax system, housing insecurity, low-paid and insecure employment, soaring mental health issues, and deepening inequality.

This Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP, and the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Keir Starmer MP, to express our serious concerns about the potential impact of any forthcoming welfare reforms.
2. Request that the Government pauses its current welfare review and instead prioritises solutions that protect those in greatest need.
3. Reaffirm our commitment to supporting residents in Hyndburn through strong local welfare provision and continued advocacy for a just and compassionate welfare system."

Councillor Shabir Fazal OBE expressed the view that the Government was prioritising defence spending over welfare and that the motion did not go far enough. He considered that the motion should request the Government to raise the necessary funds for welfare through the introduction of a wealth tax.

Councillors Paul Cox, Andy Gilbert, Clare Pritchard, Andrew Clegg, Heather Anderson, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Jodi Clements, spoke in support of the motion and outlined the negative impacts of possible changes to welfare support on some the most disadvantaged in society.

Councillor Zak Khan, Leader of the Opposition, commented that his group would ordinarily have supported, in principle, the motions put today. Accordingly, they would not vote against them. However, he expressed concern that motions being put were often about national and international issues and that writing letters to Government ministers and other agencies did not usually result in a response being received. He stated that the Opposition group intended to focus on motions affecting Hyndburn.

Councillor Fisher summed up by indicating that the motion highlighted an imbalance in the tax system. She refuted suggestions that the welfare provision was not a local issue and made the case for raising concerns with the Government whether, or not, a reply was ultimately received.

*In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.5, six members called for a recorded vote on the motion.*

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

*For the Motion (20)*

Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brereton, Steven Button, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson,

Stewart Eaves, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh and Clare Yates.

*Against the Motion (0)*

Nil

*Abstentions (10)*

Councillors Judith Addison, Josh Allen (Mayor), Danny Cassidy, Loraine Cox, Peter Edwards, Marlene Haworth, David Heap, Zak Khan, Joyce Plummer and Steven Smithson.

**Resolved**

**- This Council resolves to:**

- (1) Write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP, and the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Keir Starmer MP, to express our serious concerns about the potential impact of any forthcoming welfare reforms.**
- (2) Request that the Government pauses its current welfare review and instead prioritises solutions that protect those in greatest need.**
- (3) Reaffirm our commitment to supporting residents in Hyndburn through strong local welfare provision and continued advocacy for a just and compassionate welfare system.**

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