

## LEADER'S POLICY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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**Thursday, 23rd October, 2025**

**Present:** Councillors Munsif Dad BEM JP (in the Chair), Councillors Vanessa Alexander (substituting for Melissa Fisher), Danny Cassidy (substituting for Zak Khan) and Kimberley Whitehead

**Apologies** Councillors Melissa Fisher, Zak Khan and Kath Pratt

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### **1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Melissa Fisher (Vice-Chair), Zak Khan and Kath Pratt. Apologies were also submitted on behalf of Councillor Button who was not a member of the Board but who had been invited to attend the meeting in respect of Agenda Item 4.

### **2 Minutes of the last meeting**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

### **3 Matters arising (other than those already included on the agenda)**

There were no matters arising.

### **4 Integrity of the Standards Process**

Members considered a verbal report of Jane Ellis, Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), on the integrity of the standards process.

Ms Ellis reported that a discussion had taken place at the Standards Committee, following a number of instances of members not respecting the confidentiality of the standards process. In particular, private information had appeared in the press before cases had even been considered under the relevant procedures. The Committee had requested that Councillor Stephen Button (then Chair of the Committee) attend the Leaders Policy Development Board with Ms Ellis to share the concerns being raised.

It was hoped to obtain the agreement of group leaders that they would raise this matter within their own political groups. Breaches in confidentiality could affect any political party and ultimately, would harm everyone. Any reputational damage caused to an individual would be especially unfair, if the allegations were not proven.

Councillor Whitehead commented on a number of issues, including

- The difficulty in proving the source of any leaks;
- The need for councillors to take personal responsibility for not sharing confidential information;

- The recent appointment of Councillor Noordad Aziz, as new Chair of the Standards Committee, who should be in a position to reinforce the message about confidentiality;
- The importance of councillors treating each other with respect and not allowing political differences to become personal;
- The need for everyone to respect that councillors' might have a family and job and that the release of confidential information could cause significant harm to those relationships;
- That breaches in confidentiality might affect confidence in the standards process by members of the public and staff, who might wish to complain about behaviour.

It was suggested that Ms Ellis could include some wording within the standards rules about the need for councillors to respect the process and to acknowledge their duty to maintain personal accountability for their own actions.

The Chair noted that most councillors were focused on acting solely in the interests of the community, but that times might have changed. In particular, the advent of social media had provided an outlet for tensions to be exploited and for people to behave irresponsibly and with little respect for others. The Government was currently working on revised procedures in relation to standards issues. He suggested that Ms Ellis discuss the matter with the new Standards Chair with a view to bringing some suggestions back to the Board in the new year.

Ms Ellis highlighted that the promotion and maintenance of high standards was everyone's responsibility, including:

- from individual councillors;
- via discipline instilled from within political groups and their procedures; and
- via Government policy (it was noted that possible new sanctions were currently being considered).

Councillor Cassidy commented that was aware of information breaches from both sides of the political spectrum. Councillors should be aware that they needed to behave with integrity at all times. He agreed that political groups could reinforce the message that poor behaviour was unacceptable. He commented that Councillor Khan was already taking this matter forward within the Opposition group.

The Chair then summarised a proposed way forward.

#### **Agreed**

- (1) To note the issues raised about the integrity of the standards process.**
- (2) To request that the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) keeps the matter under review and, if necessary, liaises with Councillor Noordad Aziz (Chair of the Standards Committee) with a view to bringing some proposals back to the Board for consideration in time for any suggested changes to be recommended to the Annual Council meeting in 2026.**

## **5 Update on Mayoral Attendants**

Members considered a verbal report of Julian Joinson, Member Services Manager, regarding the recruitment of additional Mayoral Attendants

The Board was informed that the Council normally operated with a pool of three casual attendants, since the retirement of the previous permanent post-holder. The pool currently comprised two attendants, following the departure of one attendant earlier in the year.

A recruitment exercise had been carried out recently to bring the pool back up to strength. Eight applications had been received and three candidates had been invited for interview, although one did not ultimately attend. An offer had now been made to one candidate and accepted, with appointment being subject to suitable references being received and the individual passing the fleet driver assessment.

It was envisaged that the new attendant would easily settle into the role with the appropriate training and support.

**Agreed** - **To note the recruitment of an additional casual Mayoral Attendant.**

## **6 Replacement Mayoral Car**

Members considered a report of Jane Ellis, Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), on the replacement of the mayoral car.

The current budget provision for the lease of the mayoral car was £4,600.00 per annum and the lease cost for the current vehicle was £4,369 per annum. That lease was due to expire in March 2026 and the Council would, therefore, need to start looking for a replacement vehicle given possible lengthy order periods. The current vehicle was over 4 years old, with the Council taking delivery of the same in March 2021. The lease company had confirmed that it was not possible to extend the vehicle lease any further and the car would have to be returned by March 2026 at the very latest.

Members considered an Appendix which set out indicative quotes for both 2 and 3 year leases for vehicles that seemed to be appropriate in terms of:

- dignity / prestige
- ability to comfortably carry the mayor and guest(s) whilst robed, wearing hats etc
- green credentials, all being low emission hybrid or electric vehicles.

A summary of the list of vehicles considered is as follows, although the quotes obtained are not reproduced below:

<b>Make/Model</b>	<b>Emissions (g/km CO<sub>2</sub>)</b>
BWM 5 series saloon 530e M Sport 4dr Auto	14
BMW i5 saloon eDrive40 M Sport 84kWh 4dr Auto	0
Hyundai Ioniq 6 168kW Premium 77kWh 4dr auto	0
Mercedes C Class C300e AMG Line Premium Plus 4dr 9G-Tronic	13
Mercedes E Class E300E AMG Line Premium Plus 4dr 9G-Tronic	13
Mercedes EQE 350+ 235kW Sport Edition 96kWh 4dr auto	0
Lexus 300h 2.5 Premium 4dr CVT	120
Audi A6 e-tron sportback 210kW 83kWh sport 5dr auto	0

Members were asked to note that the lease cost of a new vehicle was likely to exceed the current budgetary provision by some margin. This could be attributed to:

- the comparatively high cost of hybrid and electric vehicles; and
- car costs generally outstripping the inflationary increases made to the budget.

Previously when the Council had replaced the mayoral car, the Board had agreed a shortlist of possible vehicles and then officers had arranged for the mayor, mayor's attendant and a senior officer to inspect and test drive the same, prior to a final recommendation for purchase being made. It was suggested that this approach be taken again if members were minded to replace the current car.

Ms Ellis commented that, in general, shorter leases tended to be more expensive. She also indicated that new vehicles in the lower bands for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, eg. 0 g/km or 1–50 g/km, paid lower than the standard amount of Vehicle Excise Duty (in the first year only). In response to a question by Councillor Kimberley Whitehead, she advised that the termination of any lease beyond the life of the Borough Council following Local Government Reorganisation, would be a matter for the new unitary authority to consider. In response to a question by Councillor Vanessa Alexander, she indicated that an increased budget had been requested as part of the budget process for 2026/27.

Members considered whether a two or three year lease would be preferable and noted that penalties for early termination of a cheaper 3 year lease should be evaluated against the higher cost of a 2 year lease. Members undertook to consider this further when a preferred model had been identified.

Councillors discussed the relative merits of the cars identified in the long list based upon the criteria described in the report. A number of vehicles were discounted based on factors relating to their overall size, styling, prestige or environmental impact.

Members identified three cars to view and test drive.

**Agreed**

- (1) To note the list of vehicles provided in the Appendix to the report and to approve the following cars for further investigation:**
  - BMW i5 saloon eDrive40 M Sport 84kWh 4dr Auto;
  - Mercedes C Class C300e AMG Line Premium Plus 4dr 9G-Tronic; and
  - Audi A6 e-tron sportback 210kW 83kWh sport 5dr auto.
- (2) Subject to a final decision being taken on the preferred make and model of new car, to seek to procure that vehicle on the basis of a two year lease, unless a three year lease would be more economically advantageous, having regard to possible penalties arising from the early termination of a longer lease.**
- (3) To note that the current budgetary provision for the mayoral car appears to be inadequate and that officers have submitted a growth bid as part of the**

**2026/27 budget setting process to bring the budget into line with current vehicle lease costs.**

**7 Annual Review of Members Expenses**

Members considered a report of Jane Ellis, Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), on the annual review of members allowances.

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 governed the payment of members expenses.

Payment of the following allowances was permitted:

Basic	This was compulsory. The same amount had to be paid to all councillors.
Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)	This was discretionary. There was a list of duties and responsibilities for which SRA's could be paid.
Dependant Carer Allowance	This was discretionary. This could be made in respect of attendance at specific meetings or duties.
Travel Allowance	This was discretionary and was payable in respect of attendance at approved duties
Subsistence Allowance	This was discretionary and was payable in respect of attendance at approved duties for specific periods of time.

Any changes to the allowances scheme had to be approved at full Council. When making changes to the allowances scheme the Council had to have regard to the recommendations of its independent remuneration panel, although the Council was not required to accept the panel's recommendations in whole or part, but it had to consider them before a decision was made.

The allowances scheme could provide for allowances to be reviewed annually by reference to an index (such as RPI) without the need to consult the remuneration panel, but this could only be done for 4 years and, after which, the panel would have to be reconvened if allowances were to be changed.

Current Allowances

A copy of the Council's current scheme was provided as Appendix 1 to the report.

The scheme had been reviewed and updated by the Council last year. As such, an inflationary increase had been made to the basic allowance and SRAs in 2025/26 and it was possible for the Council to apply an inflationary increase again in 2026/27, without the need for a further report from the remuneration panel.

Review Process

Members were asked to consider if they wished to make other changes to the current allowances scheme. If so, the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) would arrange to convene the remuneration panel and would provide them with a written brief. The panel might review the scheme as a whole, if it so chose, but the Board could propose specific issues, for inclusion in the written brief, requesting that the panel consider these

and make recommendations about them. As part of the review process the panel might wish to speak to a range of councillors to gather evidence about relevant factors, such as time commitment, costs incurred, etc. The panel would then make its findings and recommendations and would set these out in a written report. This was the report that would be presented to full Council should members wish to implement changes to the allowances scheme.

Councillor Whitehead indicated that she would be uncomfortable recommending an increase in allowances given the financial challenge currently facing the Council. She also raised the issue of SRAs for Group Secretaries and Chief Whips given that these were primarily roles which supported the functioning of the political groups and could be paid for by the groups themselves. On the latter point Ms Ellis indicated that a number of councils did provide allowances for those roles, but this was rare. The authority to pay an allowance for those roles was potentially challengeable, but had not yet been tested by the courts. Councillor Whitehead added that, in practice, those allowances were not always taken, as the office-holders often held a second position for which a higher allowance was payable.

Councillor Alexander commented that members often utilised their allowances to cover additional travel costs. She was minded to recommend an inflationary rise only. Mr Joinson indicated that, if the index for inflation was to be applied from 1 April 2026, the maximum increase would be 3.2% in line with the staff pay award for 2025/26. Ms Ellis confirmed that, if adopted, the exact inflationary figure would be checked with the Finance Department before being applied. In response to a query by Councillor Whitehead, Ms Ellis confirmed that the remuneration panel had recommended the application of the inflationary index for the maximum four year period with effect from April 2025. She added that prior to 2025 the Council had not taken any increases for a period of around 10 years, with the aim of normalising Hyndburn's allowances with those of its peer authorities. A table of allowance across all Lancashire authorities had been provided last year, which showed that Hyndburn was still at the upper end of the spectrum, but that the gap had narrowed.

Councillor Cassidy indicated that he had not discussed this matter with the Leader of the Opposition, but he was minded to freeze the allowance for this year and to delete the allowances for the Group Secretaries and Chief Whips. Councillor Dad added that he was of a similar view. He also reminded members that last year the Concill had reduced the level of allowance for the Vice-Chairs of the overview and scrutiny committees, to bring this into line with peer authorities.

**Agreed**

- (1) To agree not to propose an inflationary increase to the basic allowance and SRAs for 2026/27**
- (2) To request the independent remuneration panel to review the members allowances scheme, with a view to recommending deletion of the SRAs for the Group Secretary and Group Chief Whip**

## **8 Update on Member Training and review of the NW Charter for Elected Member Development Progress**

Members considered a joint report of the Democratic Services Officer and Learning and Development Officer providing an update on Member Development issues, including the uptake of training by members for the 2025/26 period and consideration of the Council's commitment to re-joining the North West Charter for Elected Member Development, particularly in the light of Local Government Reorganisation.

### **Mandatory Training**

Training was offered to new and existing members every year, usually commencing in May after the elections. Multiple sessions were offered, both in person and virtually, over the following months until all members who were due to receive the training had attended or until it became apparent that all members who intend to take up the training had done so.

Every year there were some members who declined attendance at the mandatory training, but officers tried to minimise this number and encourage both long-standing and new councillors to attend.

The training figures this year for mandatory training were much improved on the 2024/25 figures, which was encouraging. The figures for 2025/26 training were as follows:

**Code of Conduct Training-** 2 sessions offered on TEAMS

7<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 – 22 attendees

28<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 – 4 attendees

Totalling – 26 out of 35

**Decision Making Training-** 1 session offered on TEAMS

20<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 – 16 attendees

Totalling – 16 out of 35

**Licensing Training-** 1 session offered on TEAMS

3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2024 – 11 attendees

Totalling – 11 out of 35

*Note: 8 members of the committee out of 14 still needed to attend a training session before they were eligible to sit on the committee. A decision was made to halt further training sessions until a committee was called, and training would be provided closer to the time.*

**Judicial Training-** 2 sessions offered on TEAMS

9<sup>th</sup> of June 2025 – 15 attendees

14<sup>th</sup> of July 2025 – 2 attendees

Totalling – 17 out of 35

*Note: All members of the Judicial Committee had received the mandatory training.*

**Planning Training-** 4 sessions offered, a mix of in person and TEAMS

16<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 (in person) – 5 attendees

19<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 – 18 attendees

4<sup>th</sup> of June (in person) – 2 attendees

15<sup>th</sup> of August 2025 (in person) -1 attendee

Totalling – 27 out of 35

*Note: As the Planning Committee met frequently mop up sessions had been offered to remaining members of the committee to allow them to sit on the committee. The membership of this committee had then changed, meaning an extra session had been required for the additional member added. All members of planning committee had now received training.*

**Standards Training-** No training had been offered yet this year as the items brought to committee were often quite specific, leading to officers deciding that bespoke training should be offered closer to the time if a committee meeting was called.

Learning and Development Panel

The Learning and Development Panel had been revived in October 2023 by the previous political administration who had expressed a desire to increase the development

opportunities and support offered to councillors.

Meetings of the Panel had subsequently been arranged in January 2025, April 2025 and July 2025 with the next meeting scheduled for November 2025.

The Panel had decided at the January 2025 meeting to commence with the joining of the North West Employers Charter for Elected Member Development and signed the declaration in the same month. This had been presented at the April meeting.

Attendance at the panel meetings had been poor after the initial meeting in 2023 when 4 members out of 5 attended. The January 2025 meeting only had 2 attendees out of 5 members. The April 2025 meeting only had 1 attendee out of 5 members, as did the July 2025 meeting and these were not therefore quorate. Hence, both the April and July meetings were cancelled, with the single councillor in attendance being briefed informally.

### Charter Progress

Officers had continued to work on completing the criteria for the North West Employers Charter for Elected Member Development since the January 2025 meeting of the Learning and Development Panel. Feedback had been prepared for members at each meeting as to the progress made and outstanding items but, given the low number of quorate Panel meetings, member oversight of officers' work on the Charter had been limited.

Currently officers had completed all of criteria they could at this stage, resulting in 4 out of 12 stages being completed. Officers were finding the remaining 8 criteria difficult to progress, as they emphasised an evidence-based approach, showcasing member engagement with training opportunities and progression which was councillor led. At this point in time officers could not provide sufficient evidence that this was the case as the optional additional training organised by the Learning and Development Officer had been poorly subscribed to.

Officers had tried to provide training opportunities which addressed member aspirations and concerns highlighted in their yearly 1 to 1s, but attendance at these training sessions in 2025 had been low or not attended at all. The training sessions arranged were as follows:

- Personal Safety for Councillors – January 2025 – *Unattended*
- Code of Conduct for Councillors using Social Media – March 2025 – *Unattended*
- Intro to Inspire – April 2025 – *Unattended*
- Drug Awareness – May 2025 – *Not enough attendees to run the session*
- Drug Awareness Rearranged – June 2025 – *Unattended*
- Lancaster University Local Government Continuing Professional Development – June 2025 – *Unattended*
- Gov Bond 2 (women in local government) – June/July 2025 – *Unattended*
- Naloxone – July 2025 – *Not enough attendees to run the session*
- North West Employers Life as a Councillor – July 2025 – *Unattended*
- LGA – Introduction to Council Governance – July 2025 – *Unattended*

The Council had undergone a change in political control since the 2023 decision to re-join the Charter and, in 2024, the new Government had commenced a programme of Local Government Reorganisation, which might have shifted the Council's priorities. Officers were unsure if this had impacted the drive to see the Charter completed.

### 1 to 1s for 2025/26



The 1 to 1s were designed to enable members to reflect upon their achievements to date and what learning and development support they might need to fulfil their councillor roles effectively and meet their future aspirations. The 1 to 1s were a key source of information in the planning of the member development programme for the coming year.

Take up of 1 to 1s for 2025/26 had been low, with only a small number of councillors participating in the personalised discussions.

Ms Ellis outlined the decision taken two years ago to reinvigorate member development, leading to the approval of a new Strategy, signing up to the Charter and the revitalisation of the Panel. However, the landscape had changed considerably since then. With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, it was probably no longer worth pursuing the award of the Charter. The lack of quorate Panel meetings could simply be a result of inconvenient dates and times of meetings, or might be a symptom of councillors no longer being engaged in this work stream. Solutions might include changing the dates and times of meetings to better suit the current Panel members, or alternatively refreshing the membership of the Panel.

In response to a query from Councillor Alexander, officers indicated that the Panel's membership from May 2025 had comprised Councillors Alexander (Chair), Addison, Anderson, Haworth and McKenna. Councillor Alexander reported that she had not received details of the last meeting. Mr Joinson undertook to ensure that the Agenda distribution list was up to date. It was suggested that there would be less demand for discretionary training in years where there were no elections planned.

Members proposed to cease work on the Charter. Ms Ellis confirmed that the mandatory training would still be delivered and following any election some induction training and broader development sessions would still be needed.

Councillor Dad indicated that the Panel should be retained to maintain some oversight. Ms Ellis agreed that its role was still important and suggested that officers could contact the political group leaders to ask them to review their appointments to the Panel.

Councillor Alexander commented that the training delivered was usually of a high standard, but that sometimes individuals found it difficult to commit the time required to attend. Ms Ellis noted that attendance had improved due to the facility to offer hybrid training.

**Agreed**

- (1) To note the training sessions provided and the attendance figures for the 2025/26 period.**
- (2) To agree to the continuation of the Learning and Development Panel and to reschedule the November 2025 meeting for early in the New Year.**
- (3) To cease the work on reaccreditation under the North West Employers Charter for Elected Member Development, in light of the approaching Local Government Reorganisation, and to request that the Panel consider, at its next meeting, a refocusing of its work priorities.**

## **9 Update on Microphones Provision for Council and Cabinet Meetings**

Members considered a report of the Member Services Manager, giving an update on the provision of Microphones for use in the Council and Cabinet.

## Overview

In 2022, officers had sought quotes for a webcasting system for the Council Chamber. Quotes had been received from two specialist providers (Auditel and Public-i), who had both provided a number of costed options. The overall quotes were similar and in the range £93k to £130k for initial set up costs, with annual fees of between 12k and £15.5k depending on the options chosen.

The Board had considered the options at its meeting in January 2023. However, there had been a consensus among councillors that webcasting was not a priority in that year due to the indicative costs, but that the project should be reconsidered if it shifted to a higher priority in the future.

In July 2024, the Board considered the issue again and agreed to request officers to carry out further work to investigate the possibility of providing webcasting in the Council Chamber and/or in Scaitcliffe House with a reduced specification and to ascertain the likely costs of this work. Officers had invited both companies to undertake a site visit to gain a better understanding of the Council's needs and its financial constraints and to provide updated quotes.

In February 2025, further information had been provided to the Board about potential low cost solutions, comprising a stand-alone conference microphone/speaker system and a basic webcasting system using portable equipment. Some indicative figures for a microphone/speaker system were provided to the Board based upon the core audio equipment within the original webcasting quotes. These sums were within the range 24.5k to £33.3k (2022 prices) depending on the options selected. The Board approved, in principle, the purchase of conference equipment only, on the basis of shared units between two or three users (with a number of spare units) and requested officers to seek quotes for a suitable system. It was agreed not to pursue webcasting, as a basic solution would appear very amateurish, place additional demands of staff time and deliver no better service than amateur journalists were already providing.

Only Public-i responded to the invitation to requote and a site visit had been undertaken on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Figures had been received from Public-i for various options, but in view of the limited resources available and uncertainty around the future need for meetings in the Council Chamber following Local Government Reorganisation, it was proposed to consider a basic system only. The report included details of the latest quote from Public-i for an entry-level wireless system and a service/maintenance package.

## Wireless Operation

The conference delegate units proposed were battery powered and were not permanently fixed in position. Staff time would be required to set up the conference base units in the Council Chamber and to remove these for storage at the end of each meeting. It was estimated that this would take around 20-30 minutes for each meeting. A suitable storage location would need to be identified in the Council Chamber or Mayor's Parlour when the units were not in use.

There would also be additional time required for the charging of batteries prior to programmed meetings, which could amount to 1 – 2 hours in the week before the meeting, including time taken to walk to/from the Town Hall. The quote provided for 2 chargers with a total capacity to charge 10 units, meaning that the charging of battery packs for 25 units

would need to be rotated. The batteries would receive a full charge within 2 hours and, after a full charge, would last for approximately 20 hours. A suitable location for the charger units would also need to be identified.

### Portability

The above equipment would allow the microphone/speaker units to be used in the QER, if required. A single transport case had capacity to carry one Chair's delegate microphone unit, 9 dual user units and the Wireless Access Point (WAP), to support a meeting of up to 19 persons in the QER. A carry case was also available for the WAP stand.

### Connectivity

The basic conference equipment included in the quote was for a stand-alone system, which was not compatible with bespoke voting and webcasting systems from the supplier. It could not, therefore, be upgraded at a later date and any future permanent webcasting solution would require an entirely new audio conference system to be purchased.

### Budget

Finance Officers had indicated that there was no slack within the Capital Programme 2025/26 for the addition of a new project in the sum proposed. Similarly, there was no dedicated provision within the Member Services Budget 2025/26 to fund this wholly from revenue. The forecast outturn variance across the total Member Services Budget was currently showing a surplus of £12,185, which would be insufficient to fund the project. Use of the anticipated variance would also present a risk in that there would be no contingency for any unforeseen costs up to the end of March 2026. Remembrance Sunday events, which were a substantial cost to the service, had not yet been delivered and remained a medium level risk.

Discussions were on-going with the Executive Director (Resources) to identify possible sources of funding for this project, including the submission of a Revenue underspends bid and, alternatively, a bid for inclusion of the project in the Capital Programme 2026/27.

Members expressed concern that the funding for the project had not yet been identified.

### **Agreed**

- (1) To note the quote received for a basic level conference system.**
- (2) Subject to suitable funding being identified, to approve the purchase of the conference equipment and support services from Public-i, as outlined in the report, in the sum identified.**
- (3) In consultation with Hyndburn Leisure, to seek to agree suitable dates with the provider for the installation of the necessary equipment at the Town Hall.**
- (4) To request officers to pursue the question of funding, as a matter of urgency.**
- (5) To note that the quotes for a professional webcasting system were currently unaffordable and**

**to reaffirm that a basic webcasting offer would not be suitable.**

*Note: Later during the meeting Councillor Alexander received information from Martin Dyson, Executive Director (Resources), that the funding request was being proposed for inclusion in the draft Capital Programme 2026/27. Ms Ellis undertook to speak directly to Mr Dyson to ascertain whether, or not, the Revenue underspends bid had also been considered.*

## **10 Other Business**

### **1) Question Time at Council Meetings**

The Leader of the Council reported that concerns had been raised about the operation of Question Time at Council meetings, which the controlling group had agreed to take on board. An extract from the Council Procedure Rule 2.2, which set out some draft changes was circulated at the meeting. Councillor Dad outlined the proposals as follows:

- (a) To change the deadline for the submission of questions from 2 clear days to 5 clear days in advance of the meeting. This would provide sufficient time for members and officers to look into the matter and to draft a response;
- (b) To disapply the Rule about hearing questions in order of the date and time of receipt in the case of councillors submitting more than one question. In that case their second, third and subsequent questions would be dealt with after all other first questions had been put; and
- (c) To clarify that multiple questions will not be permitted.

A proposal to limit the number of questions put per councillor was withdrawn.

Councillor Whitehead made the point that, at the last few meetings, the questions being asked on behalf of members of the public were basic case work and could easily have been answered by the councillors submitting the question, rather than awaiting a public meeting.

Councillor Alexander requested that councillors submitting questions on behalf of a member of the public should obtain their contact details (preferably an e-mail address), so that the person replying to any question in writing would be able to send their response directly to the questioner. Councillor Whitehead suggested that a postal address should also be required as a minimum to ensure that the person resided within the Borough. Councillor Cassidy indicated that contact details were essential to ensure that responses were sent within the prescribed 10 working days. Ms Ellis considered that the necessary contact details should be supplied to Member Services at the time of submission of the question.

The Chair commented that the controlling group had changed the policy in good faith at the Annual Council meeting, by adopting similar arrangements to those in place at Lancashire County Council. However, the new rules had proved susceptible to abuse. Councillor Whitehead noted that persons asking a public question at County Hall had to be present at the meeting.

Councillor Dad summarised the changes proposed, including the additional proposal to require the submission of contact details.

Ms Ellis drew attention to the existing Rule allowing the rejection of a question in similar terms to one submitted previously. This Rule was currently expressed along similar lines to the six months rule applicable to motions.

**Agreed**

**(1) To endorse the proposals to amend the Question Time Rules as follows:**

- (a) To change the deadline for the submission of questions from 2 clear days to 5 clear days in advance of the meeting.**
- (b) To disapply the Rule about hearing questions in order of the date and time of receipt in the case of councillors submitting more than one question. In that case their second, third, and subsequent questions would be dealt with after all other first questions have been put.**
- (c) To clarify that multiple questions will not be permitted.**
- (d) To require that contact details of a member of the public submitting a question should be provided to Member Services prior to the deadline for the submission of questions.**

**(2) To request the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) and Member Services Manager to provide a revised draft of Council Procedure Rule 2.2 to the Leader of the Council for his consideration prior to forwarding an agreed draft to the Leader of the Opposition.**

**(3) Subject to any further changes proposed as a result of the above consultations, the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services), be requested to prepare a report for the next Council meeting on any changes required to the Constitution.**

## **11 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The date of the next Leader's Policy Development Board meeting was not yet confirmed, but was anticipated to be early in the New Year.

Signed:.....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
At which the minutes were confirmed

