
COUNCIL

Thursday, 15th January, 2026

Present: Councillor Josh Allen (Mayor), Councillors Judith Addison, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth, Scott Brerton, Stephen Button, Danny Cassidy, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson MBE, Stewart Eaves, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, David Heap, Zak Khan, Dave Parkins, Clare Pritchard, Steven Smithson, Tina Walker, Kate Walsh, Clare Yates and Mohammed Younis

Apologies: Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Loraine Cox, Paul Cox, Peter Edwards, Marlene Haworth, Clare McKenna, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Ethan Rawcliffe and Kimberley Whitehead

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

264 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Clare McKenna, Loraine Cox, Paul Cox, Peter Edwards, Shabir Fazal OBE, Marlene Haworth, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Ethan Rawcliffe and Kimberley Whitehead.

265 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

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

266 Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcements:

1) The King's New Year's Honours List

Councillor Josh Allen, Mayor, remarked that although no Hyndburn residents had been mentioned in the King's New Year's Honours List, he was very pleased to highlight two awards to Lancashire citizens with a strong Hyndburn connection.

Firstly, Lisa O'Loughlin had received the CBE award. Lisa was Principal and Chief Executive Officer of the East Lancashire Learning Group, which was the umbrella organisation for Accrington and Rossendale College. The award had been granted for her services to Further Education.

Secondly, Lorraine Peake, Director of the Super Slow Way, had been awarded the MBE, for services to the community in Lancashire. Members were reminded that this organisation provided an arts programme shaped by the local community working alongside artists, which was based in East Lancashire along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal corridor.

The Council expressed its congratulations to both recipients.

2) International Conflict and Civil Unrest

The Mayor asked councillors to remember those ordinary people throughout the world who were suffering as a result of conflict, including those had lost their lives due to recent protests and civil unrest in Iran.

3) Alderman Janet Storey

The Mayor mentioned the sad passing of Aldermen and former Mayor Janet Storey, in December 2025. Councillors Dave Parkins, Melissa Fisher, Noordad Aziz and Munsif Dad all spoke of their affection and respect for Janet, who had served as a Conservative councillor for Calyton-le-Moors for eleven years and had latterly joined the Labour party. All present conveyed their deepest condolences to her friends and family.

Councillor Dave Parkins asked and was granted permission from the Mayor to make some brief announcements, as follows:

4) Councillor Marlene Haworth

Councillor Parkins indicated that he had recently spoken on the telephone to Councillor Haworth, who was currently in hospital. She had talked candidly about her recent surgery and hoped to be allowed home next week. Prior to Christmas Councillor Parkins had visited her and presented her with some flowers. She was now in good spirits and was hoping to get back to some home cooking.

5) Personal Thanks

Councillor Parkins thanked councillors for their concern and well-wishes regarding his own health issues. He expressed his appreciation to those who had been able to visit him while in hospital in Blackburn. His consultant at the Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital had referred him to a specialist in Birmingham and he had attended there recently for a scan. He was now awaiting a letter from the specialist about the next steps and would hope to know more by next week.

Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP then made the following announcements:

6) Food Waste Collection

Councillor Dad indicated that the Council was due to commence its weekly food waste collection service from 1st April 2026. The scheme would make recycling simpler and improve local recycling rates, leading to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The Council had now taken delivery of the caddies and councillors were being asked to participate in a pilot scheme to test the new service. The caddies would be delivered to households from March onwards starting in Rishton, then in Oswaldtwistle and across the rest of the Borough over a 4-5 week period. Residents were being advised to mark their house number on their collection caddy. Households would normally receive a 23 litre caddy (outdoors), 7 litre caddy (indoors), bin liners, a calendar with collection dates and some general information. However, flats and sheltered accommodation would not be supplied with the large caddy.

Residents were reminded not to put the caddy out for waste collection until after 1st April 2026.

7) Freedom of the Borough

Councillor Dad commented that Councillors Haworth and Parkins had been in everyone's thoughts and prayers in recent weeks due to their health issues. He added that, with the support of Councillor Khan, it had been decided to offer the awards of Freedmen to both, in recognition of their eminent and long service to the Borough. It was proposed to confirm the awards at the Council meeting on 26th March 2026.

8) Fair Funding Settlement

In October 2025, the Council had heard that it would be adversely affected by the planned introduction of the Fair Funding Review 2.0. Following a constructive dialogue with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and lobbying by Sarah Smith MP the final financial settlement had been better than initially expected. There were still pressures within the settlement, but the position was significantly better. The Budget currently being developed would reflect this position and further details would be available next month.

9) Waste Transfer Station

Councillor Dad had met recently with Lancashire County Council and other district council leaders to discuss the issue of transferring collected waste from East Lancashire to the County Council as waste disposal authority. A solution had now been agreed. The Leader, Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and relevant officers had been actively involved in this process and the award of the contract was now in its final stages. Further details would be available in the next few weeks.

10) Houses in Multiple Occupation – Article 4 Direction

Members were reminded that over the last 12 months the Council had considered the introduction of an Article 4 Direction, which would be enacted with effect from March 2026. Other wards not included in the original decision had been monitored carefully, following which the Head of Planning and Transportation had been requested to look at increasing the Article 4 Direction coverage to the whole of the Borough. A report on this work was expected in the next few months.

David Welsby, Chief Executive, announced the following:

11) One Minute's Silence

The Chief Executive commented that he had known Janet Storey well and had spoken personally to her sister, Lyn, after her passing to express condolences on behalf of the Council. He added that it was customary for the Council to hold one minute's silence following the death of a former councillor.

The Mayor, councillors, officers and members of the public present then stood to observe one minute's silence, as a mark of respect.

267 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 13th November 2025 were provided.

Regarding Minute 210 – Confirmation of Minutes, on the matter of Declarations of Interest, Councillor Melisa Fisher reminded members that she had explained that no declaration had been necessary at the meeting on 25th September in connection with her husband’s letting of various premises, as these did not meet the definition of an HMO. This was now recorded in the minutes of 13th November 2025. She asked whether Councillor Heap would offer an apology for the statement he had made in leaflets circulated in Baxenden about the matter, which she considered to be untrue. Councillor David Heap responded that he had noted the original declaration which had been made by Councillor Fisher and he had subsequently issued a correction to his statement to confirm that Councillor Fisher’s husband owned the properties in question.

In respect of Minute 213 – Local Government Reorganisation Proposals, Councillor Zak Khan commented that he would still wish to see clarity around the answers to the questions he had asked at the meeting (last paragraph, Page 18 of the Agenda), particularly in relation to the views of Hyndburn residents during the consultation. He asked if any further information was available. Councillor Munsif Dad indicated that the consultation responses had not been broken down into results for individual boroughs but were Lancashire-wide. Accordingly, no further details were available.

In connection with Minute 211 – Question Time: 11) War Memorials, Councillor Steven Smithson reported that he had not yet received the list of war memorials scheduled for restoration and would still like to see this. He noted that some works had already been slipped into 2026/27 but was keen to see progress as the memorials were important. He asked if a reply could be made available to residents. Councillor Munsif Dad responded that the funding available for the maintenance of memorials in the current year had already been spent.

Regarding Minute 211 – Question Time: 6): Community Township Funding, Councillor Steven Smithson, thanked Councillor Clare Pritchard, Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Town Centres, for her written response. He noted that the Budget report had identified £80k of funding and that a separate report had subsequently been provided to Cabinet about the Cabinet Action Fund. He clarified that he was not seeking information about the Cabinet Action Fund, which the Leader of the Council had announced would distribute some £20k in grants. He expressed the view that the controlling group was not clear about what funding was available. Councillor Munsif Dad responded noting that that Township Fund and Cabinet Action Fund had originally been separate concepts and the initial advice received had been to establish two separate application procedures, one for each funding stream. However, the two funding streams had ultimately been amalgamated. A working group had been established to recommend the award of the grants, which would then be signed off by the Leader of the Council.

In respect of Minute 210 – Confirmation of Minutes, on the matter of Question Time (King George V Playing Fields), Councillor David Heap noted that recent poor weather had impacted upon the programme of works. He asked for an update as to progress. The Mayor reminded all members that this item was not a question and answer session, but that councillors were welcome to respond if they so wished. Councillor Stewart Eaves, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, indicated that he had recently discussed progress with the Head of Environmental Services. Freezing conditions and heavy rainfall had slowed the drainage works in recent weeks, however works were due to recommence shortly.

Resolved

- **That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13th November 2025 be approved as a correct record.**

268 Question Time

Four eligible questions had been received, which were set out in the report. The Mayor read out the questions as submitted.

1) Local Election Costs

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

“How much does it cost this Council to run the local borough elections?”

Response: Councillor Munsif Dad thanked Councillor Smithson for his question. By way of background, he indicated that the total cost for the elections for Lancashire County Council in May 2025, based on 53 polling stations for all divisions (comprising 60417 electors, 11765 of which were postal voters) was £171,061.00. The cost of elections was dependent on:

- the number of contested wards;
- numbers and locations of polling stations;
- the length and timing of the count and number of registered electors; and
- the proportion of the electorate registered for postal votes.

Based on the above figure and by just using a simple calculation to get an estimated cost for the scheduled 2026 elections for the 11 wards of Hyndburn, it would cost approximately £105,000.00.

Councillor Smithson thanked the Leader for his reply and asked a supplementary question as follows. As the Government was removing electors' right to vote in May and in view of the cost of living crisis, would the Leader consider giving any savings to the residents of Hyndburn via a reduction in the Council Tax for 2026/27. Councillor Dad responded that councillors could suggest any financial proposals as part of the Budget-setting process. He added that the previous Conservative Government had postponed all local elections in 2020.

2) 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

“What process will be being undertaken for the selection of teams wanting to apply for a lease on King George's playing fields?”

Response: Councillor Stewart Eaves indicated that the Council was currently giving careful consideration to the potential lease arrangements. He would be happy to come back to Councillor Heap with more information later in the year.

Councillor Heap asked a supplementary question as follows. Could the Portfolio Holder confirm that only Hyndburn teams would be considered for inclusion in those arrangements. Councillor Eaves responded that this had not yet been determined, but that he would provide the answer when known.

3) Rationale for Seeking Postponement of Local Elections

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

“What criteria is the Council basing their decision on with regards to writing to the Government Minister asking for May’s elections in Hyndburn to be cancelled?”

Response: Councillor Dad indicated that the question about the possible postponement of local elections in 2026 had been raised at the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the previous Council meeting and the recent Special Cabinet meeting. The rationale for postponement had been provided at the last Council meeting. Hyndburn did not have the authority to postpone the elections. The Government would make the final decision but had asked the Council for its opinion. The discussions held about this matter were recorded in the various minutes.

4) Selection of Preferred Market Hall Operator

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

“What process did the Council undertake to find a 3rd party to run the Market Hall?”

Councillor Clare Pritchard indicated that the reply available was somewhat lengthy. She asked if Councillor Heap would prefer a written response, or if an immediate verbal answer was desired. Councillor Heap asked for a verbal response.

Response: Councillor Pritchard stated that reports on the process of appointing a preferred operator for the Market Hall had been presented to Cabinet on the 13th September 2023 and 26th March 2025, but a brief summary was as follows.

The Council had appointed CBRE through the Crown Commercial Service Framework as lead consultant for the procurement of operators for the Market Hall and Burtons Chambers. CBRE had a specialist and very experienced commercial property team and were supported by Barker Proudlove who had a very experienced team on market redevelopments. Additional legal and specialist support had been provided by Womble Bond Dickinson.

The work procured from CBRE had included:

- Reviewing and identifying any key issues or concerns;
- Providing an initial assessment on the state of the market and competition;
- Summarising the optimum models that could be considered;
- Setting out the delivery method that was most likely to be suitable;
- Presenting findings in a report that clearly set out recommendations for the operating model and procurement process; and
- Undertaking a compliant process to identify a preferred operator for the Market Hall.

Both CBRE and Barker Proudlove had reviewed the proposed designs and requirements for the Market Hall to identify the optimum contracting model which would most likely attract a strong operator interest and had recommended this should be a property lease.

Barker Proudlove had managed the process to identify a preferred operator which had commenced in October 2023. A brochure setting out the opportunity had been circulated

via press releases, social media channels, and LinkedIn. It had been uploaded to the Accrington Town Square and main Council websites, circulated through existing market traders, the Council's e-newsletter and emailed to all Councillors. Finally, public notices had been displayed on the market pavilions. Following the period to express an interest, Barker Proudlove had engaged directly with ten parties, having a number of 1 to 1 discussions and accompanied site visits between November 2023 and January 2024. A closing date of the first week in February 2024 had been set for submissions to be returned.

Four submissions had been received and the information provided had been reviewed to establish a shortlist. Barker Proudlove and the Council had concluded that there was sufficient merit in the submissions to warrant a face-to-face meeting with all four organisations.

Individual meetings had taken place on 9th and 23rd April 2024, involving the Council's Chief Executive, Executive Director (Environment) and Barker Proudlove. These had not been formal interviews but an opportunity to understand the submissions further and for the Council to assess whether they could have a productive relationship with the organisations/owners.

The outcome had confirmed there were no concerns around the potential for working with any of the organisations, thereby allowing Barker Proudlove to progress further discussions and confirmation on the final submission. Three proposals were received.

269 Appointment of Co-optee

Members considered a report of Councillor Noordad Aziz, Chair of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, requesting that the Council give consideration to the Committee's recommendations for the appointment of a co-optee.

Councillor Aziz provided a brief introduction to the report in which he reminded members that the Committee had one available seat for the co-option of a young person. An application had been received recently which met the criteria. The Committee believed that the applicant would bring a fresh perspective to the debate and had unanimously supported a recommendation in favour of appointing the current candidate.

The report indicated that the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee could appoint up to four co-optees to the Committee. Three co-optees had been appointed, Christine Heys, Tim O'Kane and Richard Downie and one vacancy remained.

The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had felt that a young person would provide greater balance to discussion and be more representative of the community and therefore, a recommendation to reserve the remaining co-optee position for an 18–25 year old was approved by Full Council on 16th January 2025.

An application for the vacant co-optee position had been received from a member of the public and this had been considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11th November 2025. The Committee felt that the applicant would bring new experiences, skills and an extra dynamic to the Committee. They had, therefore, determined that the applicant would be a valued asset to the Committee. The application had been submitted from Mr. Wesley Davitt. Details supporting his application had been circulated to Members separately.

The Mayor and Councillors Zak Khan, Stephen Button and Noordad Aziz all spoke in favour of the applicant and more generally about positive engagement with young people and the cross-party approach to overview and scrutiny, which looked at how to improve services.

A correction to the report was noted in that references to the 'Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee', which had been included in error, should in fact have stated the 'Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee'.

- Resolved**
- **That Council approves the appointment of Wesley Davitt as a co-optee on the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee until the end of the 2025-26 municipal year in line with the vacant co-optee position having been reserved for a young person between 18-25 years of age.**

270 Local Plan - Main Modifications Consultation

Members considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, presenting the Main Modifications to the Council's Publication Draft Local Plan which the appointed independent Inspector had identified as necessary in order for the Plan to be found sound and legally compliant. The report also sought Council approval for the Main Modifications and accompanying documents to be published for public consultation, together with approval of the proposed consultation arrangements.

Councillor Dad provided a brief introduction to the report including a summary of the chronology so far and the main purpose of the Local Plan, which would help to define the location of developments to provide jobs and homes for the future. He also outlined the Main Modifications proposed and the timetable for consultations.

The report indicated that preparation of a new Local Plan had commenced in 2017. The Local Plan (Strategic Policies and Site Allocations) had set out the strategic vision, objectives, and spatial strategy for the Borough, including the strategic planning policies that would guide future development. It established a framework to ensure that development accorded with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Covering the period 2021 to 2040, the Plan identified the main locations for growth, including site allocations to meet development requirements of 194 dwellings per annum (3,686 dwellings in total) and 70 hectares of employment land.

Once adopted, the new Plan would replace the saved elements of the 1996 Local Plan, and the 2012 Core Strategy. The two key documents representing the full Development Plan for Hyndburn would then be the new Local Plan (the subject of the current report), and the existing Development Management DPD 2018, which contained local (non-strategic) policies. The Accrington Area Action Plan would also remain in force as part of the development plan for Hyndburn.

The Plan had been subject to several stages of public consultation between 2018 and 2024. Following approval by Council, it had been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in March 2025. An independent Inspector had been appointed to examine the Plan, and Public Hearing Sessions had been held between 16th and 25th September 2025.

Following the Hearing Sessions, officers had prepared a Schedule of Actions and submitted additional evidence to address matters of soundness raised by the Inspector. On 27th November 2025, the Inspector had issued a post-hearings letter setting out the next steps and identifying any remaining concerns, a copy of which was provided at Appendix 1 to the report. The principal matters arising from that letter were as summarised below:

- The Inspector had confirmed that the Council had met the statutory Duty to Cooperate, demonstrating effective and constructive engagement with relevant bodies on strategic planning matters.
- The Inspector was satisfied that there was no need to pause the examination pending the outcome of National Highways' funding bid for improvements to M65 Junction 8, which were required to support growth in the Huncoat area, including the Huncoat Garden Village strategic housing site.
- The Inspector had concluded that three sites proposed for addition to the Green Belt (land north of Blackburn Road, Oswaldtwistle; John Street and Tinker Brook Allotments, Oswaldtwistle; and land south of Moorfield Industrial Estate, Clayton le Moors) should not be designated as Green Belt, as exceptional circumstances had not been demonstrated.
- The Inspector had recommended the removal of housing allocation H4 (Land at Hopwood Street) due to concerns regarding deliverability and the absence of a realistic prospect of development within the plan period.
- Amendments were required to Policy SP6 (Centre Hierarchy, Strategy and Retail Provision) to more accurately reflect the role of Hyndburn Retail Park as a predominantly large-scale retail and leisure destination.
- An amendment was required to Policy SP10 (Housing Provision) to reduce the affordable housing requirement on brownfield sites from 20% to 10%, reflecting viability evidence indicating that the higher requirement would be unviable.

Main Modifications

The above modifications, as well as those put forward by the Council during the Examination, those put forward in response to representations made by objectors to the Plan and those in response to questions put to the Council by the Inspector during the Public Hearing Sessions, were set out in full in a Main Modifications Schedule at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Main Modifications covered a wide range of matters and varied in their extent, some amending or replacing a single word, and others replacing an entire policy or section of text. All of the Main Modifications were necessary to ensure that the Plan was sound and legally compliant.

Proposals Map

The Proposals Map illustrated the spatial application of policies within the Local Plan. While it was not subject to consultation in its own right, where Main Modifications necessitated changes to the Proposals Map, these were illustrated in a separate schedule for clarity (Appendix 3 to the report).

Additional Modifications

Alongside the Main Modifications that were deemed necessary by the Inspector, there were a number of other minor changes to the Plan, called 'Additional Modifications'. These changes included the correction of typographical errors and updating of matters of fact.

These Additional Modifications had no material impacts on the policies of the Plan and did not fall within the scope of the Inspector during the Examination of the Local Plan.

It was however, proposed that the Additional Modifications and associated changes to the Proposals Map were published alongside the Main Modifications. The proposed Additional Modifications were included at Appendix 4 to the report.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) processes were two of the key legal tests for plan making. They were an integral and iterative part of Local Plan preparation and helped to inform each stage of the process.

The Main Modifications and Policies Map Changes at Appendices 2 and 3 of the report had been subject to SA and HRA by the Council and no significant adverse impacts had been found. SA and HRA addendums would be published alongside the Main Modifications.

Consultation Arrangements

Public consultation on the necessary Main Modifications was required for the Inspector to be satisfied that all interested parties, not just those who had participated during the Hearing Sessions, had had a chance to comment on them. Comments were only invited on Main Modifications, which were put forward without prejudice to the Inspector's final conclusions on the Plan. This was not an opportunity to re-open matters that had been addressed or could have been addressed during the Hearing Sessions.

The proposed consultation would run for a six-week period and would include the issuing of a press release, notification of all consultees on the Local Plan consultation database and statutory bodies, and the publication of consultation materials online and at local libraries, in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

It was proposed that the consultation should commence on Friday 23rd January 2026 and close on Friday 6th March 2026, although this might be subject to change.

Next Steps

All representations received on the Main Modifications would be collated by the Council and sent to the Inspector for her consideration. Once the Inspector had considered the representations, she would set out her recommendations in her Report, which the Planning Inspectorate would send to the Council for publication. The Council was then obliged by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 to publish the Report as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Local Plan would then be prepared for adoption, implementing the recommendations set out in the Inspector's Report. The Council would then need to take a decision on whether to adopt the Local Plan.

Councillor Dave Parkins reminded members of his lengthy involvement in opposing the Huncoat Garden Village proposal. He remained concerned that the highways infrastructure was not sufficient for a development of the scale proposed and commented that his suggestion of a one-way road system had not been taken up. He was also concerned that the proposed development would not provide a new school and that allotments would be lost. Overall, he was not against housing development, but he believed that this proposal was ill thought out, given that the former power station site was effectively land locked.

Councillor Zak Khan commented that the Local Plan and its final consultation stage was still within the remit of Hyndburn councillors to agree. It was the last chance for local representatives to get this process right, as the Borough would cease to exist in 2028. He expressed some concerns about the changes proposed to the areas no longer identified for inclusion in the Green Belt, particularly land north of Blackburn Road, Oswaldtwistle. He envisaged that many residents would wish to comment on the changes and, therefore, requested:

- That those directly affected be re-consulted;
- That the consultation period be extended, if possible;
- That every effort be made by the Council to draw the proposed changes to the attention of Hyndburn residents.

Councillor Judith Addison sought clarification about how elected members should comment on the proposed Main Modifications and whether this should be by direct e-mail or as part of the public consultation process. She also spoke about the modification proposed in connection with land at Hopwood Street. The land had originally been included in the Derelict Land Programme, but had subsequently been allocated for housing in the 1996 Local Plan. Nearby residents had not been in favour of that type of development. Now it was proposed that the land should be withdrawn as a housing site. She asked if the Council could turn this site into a nature reserve or if any other plans were being considered.

Councillor Munsif Dad summed up the debate, responding as follows:

- He acknowledged that Councillor Parkins had consistently made his views known about the Huncoat Garden Village proposal throughout the Local Plan process;
- He undertook to ask about a possible extension to the consultation period for the Main Modifications, as he also considered that the time period was too short;
- He commented that he was in favour of the extension of the Green Belt and that he would encourage officers to make the case for this, where realistically possible;
- He noted that the Planning Department would arrange for the formal consultation, but he encouraged elected members also to spread the word;
- He would be happy to meet the Head of Planning and Transportation, together with Councillor Khan, to discuss the consultation process;
- He was familiar with the Hopwood Street site and would prefer this to be developed for housing. The land was privately owned. Local residents currently wanted it the land left open, but it was not currently in a good state. The trees had been removed from the site, but it seemed unlikely that this land would be developed for housing in the foreseeable future.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council notes the Inspector's recommendations regarding the Main Modifications required to the Publication Draft Local Plan, as set out in the Inspector's post-hearing letter dated 27th November 2025 (Appendix 1) and detailed in the Main Modifications Schedule (Appendix 2).**
- (2) That the Head of Planning and Transportation is granted delegated authority to make any necessary amendments to the Main Modifications and associated documents in order to correct errors**

and/or improve clarity prior to the commencement of the consultation period.

- (3) That the Main Modifications and associated documents are approved for the purposes of public consultation.**
- (4) That all representations received during the consultation period are reviewed by officers and submitted to the Inspector for her consideration prior to the publication of her final report.**

271 Review of the Members Allowances Scheme for the Municipal Year 2026/27

Councillors considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, informing members of the recent annual review of the members allowances scheme and the recommendations of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

Councillor Dad provided a brief introduction to the report which recommended the deletion of special responsibility allowances for group whips and group secretaries from 1st April 2026 and the freezing of all other allowances for 2026/27. These proposals had been considered and recommended for approval at a recent meeting of the Leader's Policy Development Board.

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

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

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

The Council's members allowances scheme permitted basic and special responsibility allowances to be increased on 1st April each year in line with the NJC local government pay award provided such "inflation only" increases had been sanctioned by the Council's independent remuneration panel within the last 4 years. An inflationary increase could be made to the allowances scheme for 2026/27 as such increases had been sanctioned by the remuneration panel in 2024. However, the members allowances scheme had recently been reviewed by the Leader's Policy Development Board which had recommended that allowances should not be increased in respect of the 2026/27 municipal year and should instead be frozen at the current level.

The Leader's Policy Development Board had also recommended that the special responsibility allowances payable to each political group whip and secretary should be removed with effect from 1st April 2026. In making this recommendation the Board was

mindful that no other local authority in Lancashire paid such special responsibility allowances and that these particular allowances had been considered to be anomalous by the LGA Peer Review Team when they had returned for their review visit in the Autumn 2025. Each such allowance was currently £784.00.

To assist members, a copy of the revised members allowances scheme was included in the report at Appendix 1.

Councillor Khan indicated that Conservative Group supported the freezing of allowances and added that members generally did not become a councillor for monetary gain. The allowances available went some way to covering associated costs, such as for time off work.

Councillor Judith Addison remarked that the list of special responsibility allowances still included an amount for Chair of Area Council, a role which no longer existed. She suggested that this allowance should be removed at the next available opportunity to update the scheme.

Resolved

- That the Council:

- (1) Having considered the views of its independent remuneration panel as set out in paragraph 4 of the report, agrees to amend the members allowances scheme to remove the special responsibility allowance payable to each political group whip and group secretary, with effect from 1st April 2026.**
- (2) Accepts the recommendation of the Leader's Policy Development Board and agrees to freeze members allowances, keeping them at the 2025/26 level.**

272 Minutes of Cabinet

The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 19th November (Special Meeting) and 3rd December 2025 were submitted.

The following matters were raised:

In connection with Minute 225 (19th November 2025 at Page 7, Paragraph 2) – Accrington Neighbourhoods Board, Councillor Zak Khan clarified that his point about independence had related to the appointment of the original Chair of the Board, who he did not believe met the definition of independent.

With regard to Minute 227 (19th November 2025 at Page 20 Bullet 1) – Revenue Budget Monitoring 2025/26, Councillor Zak Khan noted that the Council had no control over the contractual issues relating to the Waste Disposal Site / Transfer Station.

In respect of Minute 228 (19th November 2025 at Page 21, Paragraph 3) – Capital Programme Monitoring 2025/26-2027/28, Councillor Zak Khan reminded members that he had asked about the anticipated £0.428m underspend, he recalled that the Leader had previously indicated that there was a list of potential schemes being drawn up. Councillor

Khan expressed his hope that any surplus money would be spent in Hyndburn before Local Government Reorganisation.

In connection with Minute 243 (3rd December 2025 at Page 19) – Sale of Land at Albert Street/Hartley Street, Oswaldtwistle, Councillor Steven Smithson expressed disappointment that the land had been put up for sale. This was not the option he would have preferred and would lead to a loss of green space. He enquired if the proceeds from the sale of the land could be invested into an alternative green space.

Councillor Munsif Dad summed up the debate, responding as follows:

- Members were aware that a new Chair of the Neighbourhood Board had been appointed;
- In respect of underspends, the Council had only recently received the Government's Provisional Financial Settlement. Accordingly, the Cabinet was now in a position to look at some possible new initiatives. Further information should be available at the February or March Cabinet meeting;
- It was pleasing to be able to announce that the waste transfer issue was approaching a solution;
- The comments of both ward councillors had been taken into account when making a decision about the land at Albert Street/Hartley Street. Its previous use as a green space had attracted anti-social behaviour. The sale of the land was considered to be the most effective way forward. The proceeds would be spent Hyndburn as appropriate.

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

273 Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

Meeting (Municipal Year 2025/26)	Date
Communities and Wellbeing O&S Committee	13 th October 2025
Special Scrutiny Committee	14 th October 2025
Resources O&S Committee	11 th November 2025
Planning Committee	12 th November 2025
Audit Committee	8 th December 2025
Planning Committee	17 th December 2025

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

The Mayor thanked all for their attendance tonight and reported that the next meeting of the Council would be the Budget Meeting and would be held on Thursday 26th February 2026 at 7:00pm.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed