

<b>REPORT TO:</b>		Cabinet	
<b>DATE:</b>		18 March 2026	
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>		<b>Cllr Kimberley Whitehead – Deputy Leader of the Council Culture Heritage and Sport</b>	
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>		Steve Riley, Executive Director (Environment)	
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>		Sports Development Programme	
<b>EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)</b>	<b>No</b>	Not applicable	
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	<b>No</b>	If yes, date of publication:	

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the creation of a Sports Development Programme in Hyndburn.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees to waive the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to appoint Hyndburn Leisure (HL) to deliver the Sports Development Programme on behalf of the Council for the period 1 April 2026 to 31st March 2028.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Executive Director (Environment) to agree all terms relating to the Sports Development Programme Service Level Agreement with HL, in consultation with the Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services) and Portfolio Holder.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 As part of the budget process, the Council has agreed to provide £45,000 funding per annum (for financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28) for the creation of a new sports development post, together with £100,000 (total funding for financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28) to support healthier communities, youth engagement and long-term participation in sport in the Borough and aligning with the Council's wider commitment to community wellbeing. Hyndburn Council does not have the resources or expertise to deliver the proposed Sports Development Programme in-house and due to the limited timescales before needing to start delivery of the 2026/27 programme, it is not considered possible or sensible to tender the provision for the service or recruit an in-house sports development officer.
- 3.2 This report recommends that the Council waives its Contract Procedure Rules and appoints HL to deliver the Sports Development Programme from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028 for the following reasons:

- HL are ideally placed to start deliver of the programme quickly having already extensive networks with local sports teams and strong relationships with local schools, colleges and national governing bodies for sport, together with a successful record of securing grants from external funders, which could generate additional resources for sports development activity.
- HL holds existing operational infrastructure, safeguarding systems, community partnerships and delivery capacity necessary to mobilise within the required timescales.
- The Council wishes to commence the provision of the programme quickly and there is not time for the Council to run a procurement or recruitment exercise given the short period before the commencement date.
- HL would be better placed than the Council to support the work of the new sports development officer.
- HL would directly employ the sports development officer and would take on full employer responsibility.
- A service's agreement cannot be signed and the funding released to HL unless the Council's Contract Procedure Rules are waived.

3.2 Its is envisaged that HL will create a new post with the overall purpose of providing strategic leadership for the development, sustainability and profile of sport and physical activity across Hyndburn. The new postholder will lead the strengthening of local sport infrastructure, oversee borough-wide club network development, build strong and effective partnerships with national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) and education providers, and take strategic responsibility for marketing and promotion of sport and physical activity opportunities. The new postholder will ensure that opportunities to be active are visible, accessible and inclusive — making sport and physical activity something everyone in Hyndburn can enjoy.

3.3 Key responsibilities of the role will be:

- Strategic Leadership & Infrastructure
- Club Development & Network Leadership
- Strategic Partnerships
- Education & Participation Pathways
- Marketing, Communications & Profile Raising
- Inclusion & Reducing Inequalities
- Funding, Investment & Performance

3.4 The Sports Development Programme to be delivered by HL under the terms of the proposed service's agreement will generate initiatives that deliver the overarching outcomes mentioned below. The final targets and thresholds will be requirements of the service's agreement. Performance will be monitored through quarterly reporting to the Council, supported by narrative case studies where appropriate.

#### 3.4.1 Support delivery of the Active Environment Strategy

The Sports Development Programme will make a direct contribution to the delivery of the Council's Active Environment Strategy by increasing opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to participate in regular physical activity. The role will work across

leisure facilities, parks, open spaces, schools and community venues to ensure that physical activity opportunities are visible, accessible and well-connected across the Borough.

The programme will place a particular emphasis on increasing participation among those who are currently inactive or under-represented in sport and physical activity, supporting the Council's wider ambitions around prevention, health improvement and community wellbeing. Aligning sports development activity with the Active Environment Strategy will help create a coherent, borough-wide approach that embeds physical activity into everyday life and supports healthier, more active communities.

#### 3.4.2 Support grassroots sports teams/clubs

The programme will provide structured and strategic support to grassroots sports teams and clubs operating within Hyndburn, recognising their vital role in delivering local participation opportunities and sustaining long-term engagement in sport. This will include support with club development, funding opportunities, governance, safeguarding, volunteer recruitment and retention, and pathways to accreditation where appropriate.

By strengthening club networks and improving connectivity between clubs, schools, education providers and NGB's, the programme will help to build capacity, resilience and sustainability within the local sporting infrastructure. This support will enable clubs to grow participation, improve quality of provision and respond more effectively to local need, ensuring that grassroots sport continues to thrive across the Borough.

#### 3.4.3 Establish a benevolent fund

As part of the Programme, HL will establish and oversee a benevolent fund designed to reduce financial barriers to participation in sport and physical activity. The fund will be used to provide targeted support to individuals, clubs or community groups where cost would otherwise prevent engagement, such as assistance with membership fees, equipment, kit or access to facilities.

The benevolent fund will be aligned with the Council's equality and participation objectives and will support inclusive access to sport, particularly for children and young people, those from low-income households and other under-represented groups. By addressing affordability and access challenges, the fund will help ensure that opportunities to be active are genuinely open to all residents, regardless of background or circumstance.

#### 3.4.4 Secure long-term sports legacy

The Sports Development Programme is designed to deliver sustainable, long-term benefits rather than short-term interventions. By investing in strategic leadership, partnership development and local capacity-building, the programme will help create a strong foundation for sport and physical activity that endures beyond the life of the initial funding period.

Through strengthened infrastructure, enhanced club networks, improved participation pathways and the pursuit of external funding opportunities, the Programme will support the creation of a lasting sports legacy for Hyndburn. This legacy will be characterised by increased participation, stronger community organisations, improved health and wellbeing outcomes, and a higher profile for sport and physical activity across the Borough.

**4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 Cabinet could decide not to waive the Contract Procedure Rules to appoint HL to deliver the Sports Development Programme. This is not recommended for the reasons highlighted in paragraph 3.1 and 3.2 of the report.

**5. Consultations**

5.1 HL, the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder and Executive Director (Resources) have been consulted.

**6. Implications**

<p><b>Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)</b></p>	<p>At its budget setting meeting in February 2026, the Council approved a budget of £45,000 per annum (for financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28) for the creation of a new post, together with an additional £100,000 of funding for use by the new sports development officer in delivering the programme of initiatives. It is proposed that this money will be paid to HL under the terms of a service’s agreement and, as such, the proposed service is fully funded.</p> <p>HL have agreed to employ the sports development officer directly and will pick up all employer costs as part of the proposed contract.</p>
<p><b>Legal and human rights implications</b></p>	<p>The total value of the proposed contract is £190,000.00. As this falls below the applicable threshold for services contracts under the Procurement Act 2023, the full above threshold procurement procedures do not apply. Cabinet is able to waive the Council’s Contracts Procedure Rules if satisfied that this is justified and reasonable in all the circumstances. The justification for waiver in this instance is set out in section 3 of this report.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the Council</p>

	<p>remains subject to the procurement objectives and transparency requirements set out in the Act and must ensure that the proposed approach is proportionate and represents value for money. This has been duly considered and will be achieved through a clear justification for HLs appointment, oversight by the relevant officers and publication of the contract details in line with transparency requirements.</p> <p>The Council will enter into a service level agreement (i.e. a contract) with HL for the provision of the Sports Development Programme, which will set out the conditions and requirements for service delivery by HL.</p> <p>The fee paid to HL will cover the cost to HL of employing the new post, with the remainder of the funding being used to deliver sports development activity in the Borough. As such there is not considered to be any element of subsidy to HL and the Subsidy Control Act 2022 does not apply.</p> <p>There are no human rights implications for this report.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of risk</b></p>	<p>There is a risk that the outcomes/outputs will not be delivered. This will be reduced as far as possible by agreeing upfront key performance indicators to be reported on a quarterly basis.</p>
<p><b>Equality and diversity implications</b>  <i>A <a href="#">Customer First Analysis</a> should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i></p>	<p>The Council is subject to the public sector equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010. When making a decision in respect of the recommendations in this report Cabinet must have regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and</li> <li>• advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.</li> </ul>

	<p>For these purposes, the relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.</p> <p>In this case there are no direct equality or diversity issues arising from this report. However, the Council will liaise with HL to ensure that delivery of the proposed activity meets the Council's equality and participation objectives.</p>
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**7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:**

**List of Background Papers**

N/A

**8. Freedom of Information**

8.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.