COUNCIL (ANNUAL MEETING)

Thursday, 28th May, 2026

Present:	Councillors Judith Addison, Vanessa Alexander, Josh Allen, Heather Anderson, Sohail Asghar, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth, Paul Brown, Stephen Button, Jodi Clements, Loraine Cox, Paul Cox, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Shabir Fazal OBE, Melissa Fisher, Jordan Fox, Andy Gilbert, Gaynor Hargreaves, David Heap, Ashley Joynes, Zak Khan, Clare McKenna, Anthony Mitchell, Dave Parkins, Kath Pratt, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Steven Smithson, Joel Tetlow, Tina Walker, Kate Walsh, Clare Yates and Mohammed Younis
Apologies:	Councillors Lance Parkinson and Miles Parkinson OBE

The Mayor for 2025/26, Councillor Josh Allen, welcomed all to the meeting. A brief statement followed about the filming of proceedings and filming generally within the Town Hall, followed by a fire safety announcement.

1 Election of Mayor 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP and seconded by Councillor Melissa Fisher, that Councillor Noordad Aziz be elected Mayor of the Borough of Hyndburn for the Municipal Year 2026/27.

The nomination was put to the **VOTE** and was **CARRIED**.

Resolved - **That, in pursuance of Section 23 of the Local Government Act 1972, Councillor Noordad Aziz be elected to the Office of Mayor of the Borough of Hyndburn for the Municipal Year 2026/27.**

There was a round of applause from the Chamber and a brief adjournment was called, whereupon the newly-elected Mayor, Councillor Noordad Aziz and the retiring Mayor Josh Allen, along with the Leaders of the political groups present and the Chief Executive, retired to the Mayor’s Parlour.

Following the adjournment, Councillor Aziz took his place in the Mayor’s seat and the former Mayor attached the Mayoral Fob to the Chain of Office. The Mayor then read aloud and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Mayor.

The new Mayor thanked the outgoing Mayor and Mayoresses for their service and commented that they would be a hard act to follow. The Mayor also thanked those councillors and officers who had supported him throughout his years as an elected member, leading up to this honour. He indicated that he would make a more formal acceptance speech at the appropriate item.

2 Election of Deputy Mayor 2026/27

The Mayor invited nominations for the election of Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Hyndburn for the Municipal Year 2026/27. It was proposed by Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP and seconded by Councillor Meissa Fisher that Councillor Stewart Eaves be elected to the Office of Deputy Mayor. It was further proposed by Councillor Gaynor Hargreaves and seconded by Councillor Ashley Joynes that Councillor Joel Tetlow be elected to the Office of Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor decided to take the vote in the order that the individual had been nominated. Accordingly, the nomination of Councillor Eaves was taken first. That nomination was put to the **VOTE** and was **CARRIED**. No vote was, therefore, required on the second nomination.

In response to a point of order raised by Councillor Fazal, the Chief Executive reiterated that it was not now possible to hold a vote on the nomination of Councillor Tetlow. He explained that a majority of more than 50% of the votes cast had been in favour of Councillor Eaves and clarified that in any vote, abstentions did not constitute a vote and should not be counted in the calculation of a majority.

Resolved - **That, in pursuance of Section 24 of the Local Government Act 1972, Councillor Stewart Eaves be elected to the Office of Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Hyndburn for the Municipal Year 2026/27.**

Councillor Eaves then read aloud and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Deputy Mayor.

3 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Lance Parkinson and Miles Parkinson OBE.

4 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations submitted.

5 Announcements

The Mayor announced that during his tenure he would aim to ensure that everyone in the Chamber was treated with respect and dignity. The culture around debate in the Chamber had moved forward in a positive manner in recent times. He acknowledged the role played by the late Councillor Marlene Haworth, in improving members' behaviour at meetings. He encouraged all to fulfil their office with integrity and he undertook to Chair meetings with this objective in mind.

Councillor Dad made the following announcements:

<u>Congratulations</u>

The Leader offered his congratulations to the Mayor on his appointment. He could justifiably be very proud of his 14 years' service as a councillor and he thoroughly deserved the position. Councillor Aziz was a Great Harwood man through and through. Councillor Dad expressed delight both for Councillor Aziz and for his family.

He also paid thanks to Mr Josh Allen, who had been an excellent ambassador for the Borough during his mayoral year.

Bullough Park – Green Flag Bid

The Council was due shortly to submit a bid for the Green Flag Award for Bullough Park in Accrington. If successful, the award would complete a record-breaking number of such awards in the Borough. Some £50k had been set aside in the budget to carry out a number of improvements at the site. This was in addition to the £200k already spent on improvements to date. Work to date had included the planting of some 3,600 trees, and the creation of a pond and wildflower meadow. Future work included improved accessibility and the provision of some new benches.

The park could soon join the 11 other Green Flag open spaces in the Borough. Judging would take place in April 2027. Improvements across the Borough had ben on-going for around two decades and was a credit to the dedicated staff involved. The aim was to obtain the same recognition for Bullough Park.

Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre

Work had now commenced on the roof repairs, with contractors on site from last week erecting the necessary scaffolding. Around £0.5m had been committed to the renovation of the Civic Theatre since 2025, including £10k from Theatres in Trust. The Leader thanked Councillor Zak Khan for his interest in this project and his support.

David Welsby, Chief Executive, made the following announcement:

Local Elections Outcome

He welcomed new councillors to the authority and to their first formal meeting. New members present tonight comprised Councillor Sohail Asghar (Progressive Hyndburn) and Councillors Paul Brown, Jordan Fox, Gaynor Hargreaves, Ashley Joynes, Anthony Mitchell and Joel Tetlow (Reform UK). The Council now had three main political groups and a fourth smaller group comprising Councillors Shabir Fazal and Sohail Asghar. He also welcomed back Councillors Jodi Clements (Labour and Co-operative) and Steven Smithson (Conservative) who had been re-elected.

6 Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 26th March 2026 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

In respect of Minute 367 – Announcements: Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), Councillor Steven Smithson asked for an update and queried whether it was known if the May 2027 local elections would go ahead. The Leader responded that the Government was committed to LGR and that five different proposals had been submitted by the various councils in Lancashire. A decision was expected in July on the Government's preferred option. The next stage would be to consult upon this option and to consider the details. The question of local elections in 2027 had not yet been raised with local authorities by the Government, but if it did, the Council would provide a response.

Resolved - **That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 26th March 2026 be approved as a correct record.**

7 Appointment of the Council Leader 2026/27

Members were asked to appoint the Leader of the Council for a one year term, from this meeting until the Council's Annual Meeting in 2027, and nominations were invited accordingly.

In December 2010, the Council had adopted the Leader and Cabinet Executive (England) Model, in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This had taken effect from 9th May 2011.

Under this arrangement, the Council had elected the Leader for a four-year term. The Localism Act 2011 had subsequently removed the requirement for the Leader to be elected for a four-year term, leaving the duration of tenure to local choice. In 2024, the Council had reverted to electing the Leader annually. It was proposed that the Council should retain the system of appointing the Leader annually for 2026/27.

The Leader was responsible for –

- determining the size of the Cabinet (which must be a minimum of 3 councillors, up to a maximum of 10, including the Leader);
- appointing the members of the Cabinet and appointing one of the Cabinet to be the statutory Deputy Leader of the Council;
- allocating portfolios or areas of responsibility to the various Cabinet members;
- allocating decision-making powers to the Cabinet and to individual Cabinet members; (although in Hyndburn the Cabinet made all decisions collectively) and
- removing and replacing Cabinet members.

In addition, the Leader was responsible for deciding how the Council's executive functions would be exercised and for making the delegation of executive powers to officers. Council would still approve a scheme of delegation of non-executive functions to officers and this would be considered later in the agenda.

The Leader nominated a statutory Deputy Leader, who would exercise the Leader's powers if the Leader was unable to act, or the post of Leader became vacant.

Council was, therefore, requested to elect a Leader in accordance with those arrangements.

The report included a suggestion that if more than one nomination was received at the meeting, these would be put to the vote in turn and alphabetically by surname, as had happened in previous years. However, the order of voting was at the Mayor's discretion.

A nomination for Councillor Zak Khan was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**, following which a nomination for Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**.

The Mayor considered the order in which to take the votes and, having previously taken votes in the order of receipt of the nomination for the Appointment of Deputy Mayor (Minute 2 refers), he determined to do similarly for this item.

On being put to the **VOTE** the motion to appoint Councillor Zak Khan as Leader of the Council for 2026/27 was **LOST**.

Then, on being put to the **VOTE** the motion to appoint Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP as Leader of the Council for 2026/27 was **CARRIED**.

The Mayor gave his congratulations to Councillor Dad. The Leader then thanked the Council for supporting his appointment to this role for a third consecutive year and also thanked the members of his own group for supporting his leadership of the Labour group for a fourth year. He undertook to do his best in these roles and indicated that he wished to work constructively with all of the Opposition groups. He intended operate an 'open door' policy in support of his duty to work for the benefit of the residents of Hyndburn.

The Council had developed an ambitious Capital Programme of £36m, the delivery of which would be a huge task. The Council wanted to progress these schemes before LGR and a Member Group had been established to monitor and oversee delivery of the programme.

The new Local Plan had been given the green light by the Inspector and should be available for approval at the next Council meeting. This would set out the authority's 15 year vison for the development of housing and employment sites. The Planning Committee now had more say in the use of premises as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the whole Borough, following the recent implementation of an Article 4 Direction.

Further investment in the Borough was available via £1.5m Pride in Place funding, which would provide 6 play areas across the various townships. Work was already taking place to renovate the Civic Theatre, in Oswaldtwistle. Accrington Town Hall would return the Council's control from 1st April 2027 and some investment would follow. Some £0.5m had already been invested in Mercer Hall to bring it back into use.

It was likely that LGR would be fully implemented. Councillor Dad confirmed that he was working across Lancashire with the other council leaders. Hyndburn had supported the three unitary authority model and had set out a case for Accrington as the most appropriate location for the headquarters any new East Lancashire authority.

In summary, he was committed to delivering the controlling group's Budget promises and would also listen to ideas from Opposition group leaders. He reiterated his thanks to councillors for their support and the opportunity to take the Council forward.

Councillor Khan delivered a short speech about the leadership challenge. He had prepared two speeches, one in the event that he was elected as Leader of the Council and second if that was not the case. He explained why some members of his group had abstained from the second vote on this matter. In effect, if an alternative administration had not been installed, then a minority administration would appear to be the most viable option. The only options available were as follows:

(a) A Conservative, Reform UK and Progressive Hyndburn collaboration - This did not appear to be viable, as there were significant differences in political ideology between the parties, notwithstanding the fact the group leaders got on well personally.

(b) The Conservative group could have all voted against Councillor Dad's nomination and the installation of a minority Labour administration - However, the absence of a Council Leader could damage inward investment, would bring the Council's work to a standstill and might lead to unproductive wrangling in the Council Camber.

(c) Accepting a minority Labour administration - The responsible and most pragmatic approach would be to acknowledge that Labour was still the largest group on the Council by a significant margin. The Conservative group recognised that a minority administration was the only workable route forward.

In view of (c) above, the Conservative and Reform UK groups could provide a strong but constructive Opposition and it was requested that the new Leader of the Council should work cross-party by engaging with all political groups on the Council. The following actions would help to cement this relationship:

- Opposition representation on the Accrington Town Centre Board (for example, by the continuation of Councillor Ashley Joynes' LCC appointment);
- Opposition involvement in business growth;
- Opposition involvement in the renovation of the Civic Theatre, Oswaldtwistle;
- Opposition involvement in capital expenditure decisions, to drive forward investment; and
- Opposition involvement in the appropriate use of Reserves.

The above list represented key Conservative principles. The Conservative group would remain opposed to socialist values while in opposition, but did wish to be constructive.

On a personal level, Councillor Khan commented that he had been born and bred in the area and had been elected to represent its residents. He believed that this was the right way forward under the circumstances. He expressed the view that local government was not about national politics, but about providing quality local services. All councillors had a duty to make this work and to distribute improvements fairly across the whole Borough. During the election campaign, a clear message had emerged that residents were tired of 'toxic politics'.

Resolved - **That Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP be elected Leader of the Council for a one year period, with his term of office ending at the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2027.**

8 Declaration of the Returning Officer for the Local Elections on 7th May 2026

The following list of persons elected at the Borough Council elections on 7th May 2026 was provided:

Electoral Ward	Name and Address of Elected Councillor	Party
Clayton-le-Moors	Councillor Miles PARKINSON	Reform UK
Huncoat	Councillor Anthony David MITCHELL	Reform UK
Immanuel	Councillor Steven SMITHSON	Conservative

Milnshaw	Councillor Joel Michael TETLOW	Reform UK
Netherton	Councillor Jodi CLEMENTS	Labour & Co-operative
Overton	Councillor Jordan John FOX	Reform UK
Peel	Councillor Ashley JOYNES	Reform UK
Rishton	Councillor Lance Miles Lee PARKINSON	Reform UK
Spring Hill	Councillor Sohail ASGHAR	Independent
St Andrews	Councillor Gaynor Louise HARGREAVES	Reform UK
St Oswalds	Councillor Paul BROWN	Reform UK

Resolved - **That the list of persons elected at the Borough Council elections on 7th May 2026 be noted.**

9 Appointment of Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Working Groups

The Leader of the Council submitted proposals for the appointment of Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Working Groups for the Municipal Year 2026/27, including the terms of reference for those bodies. In accordance with paragraphs 3.2, 4.5, 5.1 and 5.3 of the report, Appendices 1, 2 and 3 comprising the terms of reference and the proposed membership of the various bodies were tabled at the meeting, by way of an addendum to the main report. The addendum also included updated political balance information and revised committee sizes, following the formation of a fourth political group on the Council.

The annual meeting of Council was required to establish Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Working Groups and to determine their terms of reference.

The current terms of reference for the various constituted bodies were set out in Part 3 of the Constitution - Responsibility for Functions and were reproduced in the addendum to the report:-

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of Council, Cabinet and Committees.
Appendix 2: Terms of Reference of Panels and Working Groups.

Where appropriate, any minor and consequential amendments had been made to the existing terms of reference, to incorporate revised legislation and changes to national policies.

Allocation of Seats

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 required that the number of seats on committees and sub-committees reflected the overall political balance of the Council. Section 15(1)(b) of the Act required the Council to review the representation of different political groups on those bodies at the Annual Council meeting (or as soon as practicable after that meeting).

The overall political balance on the Council had changed following the local elections on 7th May 2026. There were now four political groups across the Council and the number of seats held by each political group for the 2026/27 Municipal Year was as follows:-

Table 1

Labour & Cooperative	17 seats	48% of seats
Conservative	8 seats	23% of seats
Reform UK	8 seats	23% of sates
Progressive Hyndburn	2 seats	6% of seats

The Council comprised 35 elected members.

The total seats available across the Council was 87, which should, in so far as was practicable, be divided between the political parties in the ratios as set out above.

It should be noted that some adjustment to the ratios shown above might be required in the final allocation of seats across the Council to take into account the following principles as required by the legislation:

(a) Not all seats to go to the same group;
(b) If a group has 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 (ie. Committee, sub-committee etc) must be proportionate (subject to (a) to (c)).

Details of the Council's proposed committees and sub-committees, the number of seats available and allocation of seats were set out in Table 2 below. There were several proposed amendments to the current committees, as follows:

- Communities & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Reduce from 8 to 6
- Management Review Committee - Increase from 5 to 6
- Planning (Trees) Sub-Committee - Reduce from 5 to 4
- Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Reduce from 8 to 7
- Standards Committee - Increase from 8 to 9
- Judicial Committee (Private Hire & Hackney Carriage Licensing) will now be known as the Taxi Licensing Committee

Table 2

Committee	Size	Labour	Conservative	Reform UK	Progressive Hyndburn
Communities O&S	6	3	1	2	-
Resources O&S	7	4	2	1	-
Special O&S	8	3	2	2	1
Standards	9	5	2	2	-
Planning	13	7	3	3	-
Trees Sub-committee	4	2	1	1	-
Taxi Licensing	6	3	1	1	1
Licensing	14	4	4	5	1
Licensing Sub-committee	3	2	1	0	-
Audit	6	3	1	1	1
Management Review	6	3	1	1	1
Standards Sub-committee	5	3	1	1	-
Total seats	87	42	20	20	5
% of seats	100%	48%	23%	23%	6%

The proposed membership of each committee forming Appendix 3(a) to the report was set out in the addendum to the report. Where there were any gaps in the allocation of seats to councillors, a delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make the appointments in consultation with the relevant political group leaders was proposed.

Establishment and Membership of Panels and Working Groups

The membership of Panels and Working Groups did not need to be politically balanced. A schedule of these bodies, including the number of seats available was set out in the addendum to the report as Appendix 3(b). There were several proposed amendments to the current bodies, as follows:

- Leaders Policy Development Board - Increase from 5 to 6
- Local Joint Negotiating/ Consultative Committee - Increase from 3 to 5
- Disestablishment of the Learning and Development Panel
- Disestablishment of the Local Plan Working Group

The proposed terms of reference and composition of the Panels and Working Groups were set out in the addendum to the report as Appendix 2.

The proposed membership was also included within Appendix 3(b). Where no names had been submitted in advance and these were not subsequently provided at the meeting, a delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make the appointments in consultation with the relevant political group leaders was proposed.

Cabinet

Cabinet membership and allocation of portfolio responsibilities was within the power of the Leader. The Cabinet membership and positions for 2026/27 would be determined as soon as practicable and circulated for information. The details were not available in time for the Annual Council meeting on this occasion.

Appointment of Co-opted Members to Overview and Scrutiny Committees

All appointments of co-opted members had been reviewed during 2025 and successful applicants had been appointed until the Annual Council Meeting in 2026. Co-optees were normally appointed for a two year period. A report on any nominations received for 2026 to 2028 would be provided to a future Council meeting.

Appointment of Substitute Members

A member of the Council who could not attend a meeting could appoint a reserve member not serving on that particular Committee, Sub-Committee, Panel or Working Group to act as a substitute, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A26.8.

Members were reminded that no substitute members could be appointed in respect of the Standards Committee.

It was also reported that members of the Licensing Committee, Taxi Licensing Committee (formerly the Judicial Committee (Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing)) and Planning Committee and their substitutes were required to undertake specific training because of the quasi-judicial nature of the decisions taken.

As in previous years, it was proposed to widen the scope of the substitution arrangements to allow for any member, rather than just a reserve member, to be appointed, subject to the limitations described in paragraphs 8.2 – 8.3 of the report.

The Leader of the Council reported the following amendments the membership of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as currently set out in Appendix 3(a) of the addendum:

- the removal of Councillor Jodi Clements and the addition of Councillor Stewart Eaves; and
- the appointment of Councillor Stewart Eaves as Chair of the committee.

Resolved

(1) That the terms of reference of Council, Cabinet and other constituted bodies, as outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of the addendum to the report be approved.

(2) That the political composition of Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council, as set out in the addendum to the report, be approved.

(3) That, subject to the amendments identified in the final paragraph of Minute 9 (immediately above this resolution), the membership of those Committees and Sub-Committees and the proposed Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as set out in Appendix 3(a) of the addendum to the report, be approved, and in the case of those details which are not available in time

for the meeting, that the Chief Executive be authorised to approve the membership in consultation with the leaders of the relevant political groups.

(4) That the membership of Panels and Working Groups, together with the proposed Chairs, as set out in Appendix 3(b) of the addendum to the report, be approved, and in the case of those details which are not available in time for the meeting, that the Chief Executive be authorised to approve the membership in consultation with the leaders of the relevant political groups.

(5) That a councillor unable to attend a meeting, of which he/she is a member, be authorised to appoint a councillor not serving on that particular Committee, Sub-Committee, Panel or Working Group to act as a substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule A26.8.

10 Appointments to Outside Bodies

A report relating to the appointment of Council representatives to outside bodies and organisations for the Municipal Year 2026/27 was submitted for approval. In accordance with paragraph 1.1 of the report, Appendix A comprising the list of outside bodies and the proposed appointments, was tabled at the meeting in an addendum to the main report.

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rule A1.2(x), the Council was required to receive nominations and make appointments to outside bodies and organisations, except where appointment to those bodies had been delegated by the Council or was exercisable only by the Executive.

An exercise was carried out by Member Services during 2020 to ascertain the status of all outside bodies to which members might be appointed and to obtain copies of their key governance documents, so that members could better understand their responsibilities and prepare for their role. The outside bodies list had been comprehensively updated in 2021/22 to take account of feedback obtained during that exercise and other reported changes. Minor updates had been included in subsequent years.

There were no changes proposed to the list of outside bodies for 2026/27. The proposed councillor appointments were set out at Appendix A, included in the addendum to the report. Where no names had been submitted in advance and these had not subsequently been provided at the meeting, a delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make the appointments in consultation with the relevant political group leaders was proposed.

Councillor Khan indicated that where any vacancy had been identified as a Conservative position, he would be happy to consider sharing the seat across the Opposition groups.

Resolved - **That the appointments to outside bodies and organisations for the Municipal Year 2026/27, as set out in Appendix A of the addendum to the report, be approved, and in the case of those details which are not available in time for the meeting, that the Chief**

Executive be authorised to approve the membership in consultation with the leaders of the relevant political groups.

11 Scheme of Delegation to Officers 2026/27

The Council considered a report of Executive Director (Legal & Democratic Services) seeking approval for the scheme of delegation to officers for the 2026/27 municipal year.

It was good practice to review the Council's scheme of delegation to officers regularly to keep it up to date. This helped to ensure that the Council's decision-making processes operated as effectively as possible and in accordance with legal requirements. The scheme was therefore updated each year at the Council's Annual Meeting.

The scheme of delegation set out both the executive and non-executive functions that were delegated to chief officers. The non-executive delegations related to the legal functions of the full Council and its various committees, and these were the delegations that legally required approval by the Council. As a matter of law, the delegations relating to the functions of the Council's Cabinet would be delegated to chief officers by the Leader of the Council and this would formally be done in writing and as soon as possible after this meeting.

The proposed scheme of delegation for 2026/27 was set out in Schedule 1 to the report. There had been no changes that increased or decreased the delegations to chief officers. Instead, the scheme had been updated as follows:

- to reflect the outcome of the recent organisational review, which had led to changes to the responsibilities of some chief officers and some changes to job titles;
- the layout of the scheme had been changed to make it easier to use and, in particular, the executive and non-executive delegations to each chief officer had been grouped together rather that set out in different sections of the scheme as previously;
- the delegations to the Head of Environmental Health had been simplified to refer to the various environmental health functions in more general terms, rather than including a very long list of environmental health legislation as previously. This was considered to be easier to understand and more comprehensive, as it avoided the risk of specific pieces of legislation or regulations being omitted by accident.

Resolved - **That the Council agrees the scheme of delegation to officers, as set out in Schedule 1 to the report.**

12 Annual Review of the Constitution

The Council considered a report of Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, proposing a number of updates to the Council's written constitution following the annual review of the same.

The Council was required by law to have a written constitution. The Council's written constitution was reviewed regularly, and a copy of the constitution was available on the Council's website. The constitution set out the following:

- the terms of reference and size of each committee and working group;

- the rules that applied to Council meetings (e.g. re quorum, motions, ways of voting, length of speeches etc);
- the rules that applied to Cabinet meetings;
- the rules that applied to overview and scrutiny committee's (e.g. call-in of Cabinet decisions, appointment of co-optees, formation of annual work programme, calling officers and members to give account);
- the Council's code of conduct for councillors, plus the code of conduct for members of the Planning Committee and Licensing Committee, and the member / officer relations protocol; and
- the rules relating to procurement by the Council (i.e. the purchase of works, goods and services), the Council's financial procedures and the rules relating to access to meetings, reports and background papers.

A review of the constitution was undertaken annually to:

(i) ensure the constitution accurately reflected the Council's political management arrangements; and
(ii) ensure the constitution reflected changes to the law, staffing structures and best practice guidance.

Member Training

Members would shortly be offered training on the Council's decision-making processes. This would cover constitutional requirements (such as the rules for voting, motions, call-in etc), as well as legal requirements for sound and lawful decision making. This training was especially useful for newly or recently elected councillors.

Officers would also offer training to any newly appointed committee chairs and vice chairs, to assist them in their new role.

Local authorities were recommended, as a matter of good practice, to supplement their member code of conduct with specific codes of practice to assist councillors involved in the planning and licensing processes. These were complex areas, involving quasi-judicial decision-making and where there was a real risk of legal challenge, whether on appeal or via judicial review. The Council's Planning and Licensing codes of practice were designed to give members guidance about dealing with the difficult issues that could arise – such as conflicts of interest, dealing with applicants, possible bias and predetermination etc. In accordance with the Council's Member Development Strategy 2020-2027, councillors sitting on the Planning, Licensing and Taxi Licensing Committees were required to have undergone training each year before they served on their respective Committees and took part in decision making. It is therefore intended that all members serving on the Planning, Licensing and Taxi Licensing Committees would receive training in respect of their respective code of practice as soon as possible in the new municipal year. These sessions would be as short and informal as possible and would be delivered by Legal Services staff and their Planning and Licensing colleagues at no additional cost to the Council.

Updated policies re fraud, corruption and money laundering

Minor amendments had been made to the Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy. These principally related to the appointment of a new external audit partner for the Council. The substance of the policy remained the same. Similarly, minor changes had been made to the Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Guidance Notes. The changes principally related to changes in personnel and job roles within the Council since the policy was last updated. The substance of the policy remained the same.

Member Officer Relations Protocol

This policy had not been reviewed or updated for some years, and had become out of date. An updated version has been prepared, although best practice suggested that members should be consulted about the draft before it was presented to Council for approval.

Councillor Joel Tetlow commented that the Council Procedure Rules did not provide for the submission of a Motion on Notice to the Annual Council Meeting, but that at the next ordinary meeting, the Reform UK group intended to submit a motion on public participation at Council meetings. He noted that at present members of the public could not speak or ask questions of the Council, but could only raise issues by submitting questions in advance via a councillor. This risked creating a barrier to public engagement. His view was that the Council should be more accessible. It might even be possible to allow a limited number of spontaneous questions from the public, at the Mayor's discretion. Accordingly, the Reform UK group would bring a Motion to the next meeting about public questions.

Councillor Khan indicated that this issue had been discussed in the Council Chamber on several occasions. The Conservative group were in favour of reinstating the previous rules about public speaking. He asked if the Motion could be taken now. The Chier Executive indicated that it would be preferrable for Councillor Tetlow to put the proposal in writing to enable officers and councillors to gain a better understanding of the details of what was being proposed in advance of formally considering the matter. The Mayor concurred that the motion should be in writing to avoid it being misinterpreted.

Councillor Tetlow replied that, since members of the public took the time to attend Council meetings, they should be able to ask a question. However, he accepted the reasons for seeking a written Motion on this proposal and would submit this at the appropriate time.

The Leader of the Council reminded members that the public could ask questions of the Cabinet or councillors generally at any time. There was no need to await a formal Council meeting to find out about the Council's work. He added that he had also served on Lancashire County Council for 12 years and their procedure was not dissimilar to this Council's question time. In reality, there was no barrier to public questions in Hyndburn, as recent Council meetings had dealt with questions numbering in the mid to late teens. The Leader confirmed that he would be happy to consider and discuss the proposal from the Reform UK group.

Councillor Mohammed Younis commented that the proposals seemed sensible, but that it would be prudent to consider these through the established channels. Councillor Judith Addison noted that it would not be good practice to open up meetings to live questioning by the public, as it was likely that the technical officers who would have the specialist knowledge to repsond were unlikely to be present at the meeting.

Resolved

(1) That Council notes that training will be arranged for all members of the Planning, Licensing and Taxi Licensing Committees in respect of their respective code of practice as soon as possible in the new municipal year and requires all members of those Committees to attend training prior to serving on the relevant Committee in the new municipal year.

(2) The Council agrees to review and update the Member Officer Relations Protocol and requests that

a further report be presented to Council as soon as possible in respect of the same, following consultation with the Leaders Policy Development Board in respect of the updated protocol.**

(3) That Council approves the updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

(4) That Council approves the updated Anti-Money Laundering Policy attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

13 Timetable of Meetings 2026/27

The proposed Timetable of Meetings for 2026/27 was submitted for approval. As in previous years, it was anticipated that there was some flexibility around agreed dates, subject to consultation with Chairs, Vice-Chairs and the political party leaders about any in-year changes.

Councillor Dad highlighted that the most up to date version of the timetable indicated that date of next Council meeting was 25th June (not 9th July) and that the next Cabinet would be held on 24th June (not 17th June).

Resolved - That the Timetable of Meetings for 2026/27 be approved.

14 Record of Attendance at Council Meetings 2025/26

A report relating to the annual attendance of Members at Council meetings held in 2025/26 was submitted for information. The report, detailing the attendance of Councillors at eligible meetings of the Council, was submitted each year to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Councillor Walsh reported that she had been present at the both the Annual and Special Council meetings on 15th May 2025, but attendance at Annual Council was for part of the meeting only due to travel issues.

Resolved - That the report be noted and that the attendance of Councillor Kate Walsh at the Annual Council Meeting on 15th May 2025 be formally recorded.

15 Non Attendance by Councillor for 6 Months

This item was withdrawn, as the elected member concerned was present at this meeting and such attendance remained within the 6 months' timeframe permitted.

Signed:……………………………………………

Date: ………….…………………………………………

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed