

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET EXECUTIVE
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL
ON 20th FEBRUARY 2025**

PRESENT –

Councillor A. Mahmood (Chair)

Councillors

*Z. Ali
M. Hanif*

Also in attendance:

*Councillor N. Ahmed
Councillor D. Cockburn-Price
Councillor S. Cockburn-Price
Councillor B. Newman
Councillor A. Sutcliffe
Councillor D. Whipp*

Officers in attendance

<i>Rose Rouse</i>	<i>Chief Executive</i>
<i>Philip Spurr</i>	<i>Director of Place</i>
<i>Karen Spencer</i>	<i>Director of Resources</i>
<i>Neil Watson</i>	<i>Assistant Director, Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services</i>
<i>Gemma-Louise Wells</i>	<i>Head of Finance</i>
<i>Emma Barker</i>	<i>Legal Services Manager</i>
<i>Paul Preston</i>	<i>Democratic Services Manager</i>

Others:

Simon Gwynne, Chief Executive Officer, Pendle Leisure Trust

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M. Iqbal).



114. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the legal requirements concerning the declaration of interests.

115. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

116.

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

117.

PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT: QUARTER 3, 2024/25

The Director of Resources submitted a report on performance monitoring information for the period 1st April to 31st December 2024.

Cllr A. Mahmood commented on the update report and on the Key Performance Indicators in the Appendix and the work the new Recycling Officer was doing on increasing participation rates and the quality of the materials collected (WM 8c KPI). He also commented on BV 12 KPI – Working Days lost due to sickness absence to which the Chief Executive responded on work on-going to support sick employees, such as through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and to address sickness absence.

Cllr D. Whipp commented on KPI CP24 2.03d and felt more should be done to progress EV charging schemes throughout the Borough.

Cllr S. Cockburn-Price responded to Cllr D. Whipp on this matter and reminded about a Full Council resolution on this matter a few years ago. She also reminded the Executive she had previously wrote to them regarding Climate Change and linkages to the Corporate Plan.

Cllr S. Cockburn-Price also referenced HS 9 KPI and that the small number of private rented properties improved was disappointing.

Councillor Z. Ali, who was the portfolio holder for Environment and Climate Change commented on the many on-going initiatives of the Climate Change Working Group and reference car parks in the Borough and Electric Vehicle charging points.

Councillor D. Whipp commented on the need for more electric bike charging points. Councillor S. Cockburn-Price responded that the need for electric bike charging points was included in the Colne Masterplan.

Councillor S. Cockburn-Price commented on the Empty Homes Officer post and added she felt a better title for this position would be “Blighted Homes Officer”.

Councillor B. Newman enquired of the Leader of the Council what his views were regarding the Labour Government’s policy in relation to electric vehicles and charging car tax. Councillor A. Mahmood responded that this was a central government decision in this matter.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

REASON

To inform the Executive of performance monitoring information relating to the Council's services.

118. QUARTER 3 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25

The Director of Resources submitted a report on the Quarter 3 revenue and capital budget monitoring position for 2024/25.

The Head of Finance introduced the report and responded to Members questions and comments. In relation to a question regarding Financial Services overspend of £103k on ICT software arrangements this was due to historical budget setting and would be addressed in the next financial year.

Councillor D. Whipp commented on the both the property Services overspends on both Colne Indoor Market of £238k and the £248k running costs related to the Council's ownership of Pendle Rise Shopping Centre and relocating properties to which the Leader of the Council, Councillor A. Mahmood responded.

Councillors N. Ahmad, Z. Ali and A. Sutcliffe also commented on the report.

The Director of Resources commented on the Central Government rules that you cannot convert capital funding to revenue funding.

It was noted that at the end of Quarter 3, the year-end position was now forecast to be an overspend of £82k. It was acknowledged this was a positive movement of £465k from the Quarter 2 overspend forecast of £547k. The movement was mainly due to increased investment income because of Town Deal grant received in October 2024 being invested until required.

It was moved by Councillor A. Mahmood, seconded by Councillor M. Hanif and:

RESOLVED

That the Quarter 3 positions on the Council's Revenue Budget and the Council's Capital Programme for 2024/25 be noted.

REASON

To inform the Executive of the Quarter 3 position for revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25.

119. GENERAL FUND REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2025/26 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST (2025/26 TO 2027/28)

The Director of Resources submitted a report, the purpose of which was to propose General Fund Revenue and Capital budgets and to consider the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) for 2025/26 to 2027/28; and to enable the Executive to make a recommendation to the Council at its

Executive (20.02.2025)

meeting to be held on 27th February, 2025 on the level of Council Tax to be set for the financial year 2025/26.

The report set out the MTF for Pendle Borough Council (PBC) for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28, the revenue and capital budget position for 2025/26 and highlighted the existing revenue position.

Councillor D. Cockburn-Price commented on both the Leisure Review and the Admin Building reviews undertaken during 2024/25. He also mentioned it would be more helpful if budgeting was done over a 3 year rolling period rather than a one year budget.

Councillor S. Cockburn-Price commented on the cost and size of the Liberata Contract as detailed in the report and the length of contracts.

The Director of Place provided a more detailed overview of what a Housing Stock Modelling Survey entailed in response to a member's question for clarity on the matter.

It was moved by Councillor A. Mahmood, seconded by Councillor M. Hanif and:

RESOLVED:

That Executive notes the Medium-term Forecast position for 2025/26 to 2027/28 and the savings required over the period of the forecast.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

That Council consider and determine the matters contained in this report at the Special Council (Budget) meeting to be held on 27th February, 2025.

REASON

To comply with statutory requirements to determine a balanced budget and council tax for the forthcoming financial year.

120. COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS FOR EMPTY HOMES AND SECOND HOMES

The Director of Resources submitted a report which recommended the implementation of the premium for empty homes and second homes, changes provided by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

It was moved by Councillor M. Hanif and seconded by Councillor Z. Ali and:

RESOLVED

- (1) That the minimum period for the implementation of a 100% Council Tax premium for empty and substantially unfurnished dwellings be reduced from 2 years to 1 year from April 2025; and
- (2) That a Council Tax premium of 100% on dwellings classed as second homes that are empty and substantially furnished from April 2026 be introduced.

REASONS

- (1) To encourage all owners of domestic premises to occupy homes and not leave them vacant in the long term.***
- (2) The new legislation for second homes premiums will encourage the use of dwellings as primary residences;***
- (3) To raise additional revenue to support the delivery of local services.***

121. INSURANCE TENDER PROCUREMENT RESULTS

The Director of Resources submitted a report on insurance tender procurement results.

It was moved by Councillor M. Hanif and seconded by Councillor Z. Ali and:

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

122. LANCASHIRE LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

The Assistant Director, Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services submitted a report which informed the Executive of the pre-consultation draft of the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and to determine if the Executive agreed to it proceeding to public consultation.

Several Members commented, welcoming this pre-consultation draft of the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Cllr D. Whipp added that Cllr T. Whipp, who was not present at the meeting, would be supportive of the re-introduction of beavers locally and would feed this back into the consultation document in due course.

It was moved by Councillor A. Mahmood and seconded by Councillor Z. Ali and:

RESOLVED

That the Executive endorses the pre-consultation draft LNRS that would form the basis of the formal public consultation.

REASONS

- (1) The LNRS is an appropriate document for the ecological needs of Pendle and is an acceptable form to proceed to public consultation.***

123. FORWARD PLAN

The Executive's draft Work Programme and Forward Plan of key decisions for the four-month period commencing 1st March, 2025 was submitted for information.

124. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Members agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during the following two items of business in pursuance of the power contained in Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended, in relation to exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

125. COLNE MARKET HALL – PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST FLOOR

The Director of Place submitted a report which provided an update as to progress on the redevelopment of Colne Market Hall and to obtain key decisions to enable the next phases of the project to progress.

It was moved by Councillor A. Mahmood and seconded by Councillor M. Hanif and:

RESOLVED

- (1) That the procurement brief for the opportunity for a commercial operator to lease and operate Colne Market Hall be approved, and that delegated authority be given to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Conservative Group and Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and to determine the appropriate management arrangement going forward; and
- (2) The change of intended usage to the Colne Market Hall first floor area and to proceed with limited construction works be approved.

REASONS

- (1) To agree the parameters for the potential appointment of a commercial operator for Colne Market Hall as an alternative to keeping post-refurbishment management of the Market Hall in-house, to include topping up pre-let rentals for approximately 20 months;***
- (2) To allow for construction works to continue unabated and leave the first floor safe and in a suitable condition for future conversion to employment use.***

126. MARSDEN PARK GOLF COURSE UPDATE

The Chief Executive Officer, Pendle Leisure Trust submitted a report which outlined the current situation with the Marsden Park Golf Course and to sought agreement from the Executive on the way forward for the course from April 1st, 2025.

It was moved by Councillor A. Mahmood and seconded by Councillor M. Hanif and:

RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL

That Full Council determine the way forward for the Marsden Park Golf Course at its meeting to be held on 27th February, 2025.

REASONS

(1) The current financial position of the golf course at Marsden Park makes it unsustainable within its current guise.

(2) Without a long-term financial plan for the area the course will continue to need a subsidy

Chair _____