

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL
ON 18th DECEMBER, 2025**

PRESENT –

His Worship the Mayor (Councillor M. Ammer – in the Chair)

Councillors

<i>M. Adnan</i>	<i>M. Hanif</i>
<i>F. Ahmad</i>	<i>B. Hartley</i>
<i>N. Ahmed</i>	<i>D. Hartley</i>
<i>S. Ahmed</i>	<i>M. Iqbal</i>
<i>N. Ashraf</i>	<i>S. Land</i>
<i>M. Aslam</i>	<i>D. Lord</i>
<i>Z. Ali</i>	<i>A. Mahmood</i>
<i>R. Anwar</i>	<i>B. Newman</i>
<i>M. Atkinson</i>	<i>R. O'Connor</i>
<i>A. Bell</i>	<i>M. Stone</i>
<i>C. Church</i>	<i>A. Sutcliffe</i>
<i>D. Cockburn-Price</i>	<i>Y. Tennant</i>
<i>S. Cockburn-Price</i>	<i>D. Whipp</i>
<i>D. Gallear</i>	<i>L. Whipp</i>

Public: 7

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N. Butterworth, M. Kaleem and K. Salter).



54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the legal requirements concerning the declaration of interests and other registrable interests.

Councillors M. Hanif and R. O'Connor (who made is declaration during the item's consideration) declared disclosable pecuniary interests in minute number 63, Fees and Charges 2026/27, as they rented Council garages and left the meeting whilst the matter was being considered.

Councillors N. Ahmed, C. Church, A. Mahmood and D. Whipp declared an Other Registrable Interests (ORI) as Pendle Borough Councillors on the Council's Joint Ventures.

55. MINUTES

It was moved by Cllr D Whipp and seconded by Cllr A. Mahmood that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25th September, 2025 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 17th November 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by His Worship the Mayor.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the of the Council meeting held on 25th September, 2025 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 17th November, 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by His Worship the Mayor.

56. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

His Worship the Mayor had circulated his Mayoral update since the Annual Council meeting (reproduced below for information purposes) by e-mail to all Members of the Council prior to this meeting.

“Colleagues

I’ve continued to work hard as an ambassador for this Council and for our Borough.

I was delighted to highlight the success of Detectronic, whose head office is in Brierfield, by attending the presentation of The King’s Award for Enterprise: Innovation plaque by The Lord Lieutenant.

I felt the same pride when I attended the DFN Graduation Ceremony the following day at Nelson and Colne College. It was great to see the results of this fantastic supported internship programme. It was an example of brilliant partnership working by DFN Project Search, Asda Colne and the East Lancashire Learning Group (aka Nelson and Colne College). I congratulated the young adults there who had done work experience and skills training at Asda Colne and who were now graduating.

Again at Nelson and Colne College, it was a pleasure to attend Pendle Volleyball Club’s Volleyball tournament, a great community gathering and way of promoting sport.

The following week I was interested to attend Samaritans AGM, one of my chosen charities, along with Derian House Children’s Hospice. We would really appreciate your support for these important causes by joining us at the Mayor’s Charity Ball on Friday 27th March 2026 at Fence Gate.

I’m pleased to have been able to continue to support young people taking part in the King’s Trust programme with Lancashire Fire & Rescue. I presented the young people with certificates to say a big “Well done” to them at the end of their 12 week programme for unemployed and employed young people in Pendle aged 16 – 25.

Moving from young people to older members of the Pendle community, I enjoyed attending Age UK Lancashire’s Older People’s Day Celebration at Walton Lane Community Centre.

I visited one of the Pendleside villages, Newchurch in Pendle, to attend the Pendleside Community Wellbeing Event at St. Mary’s Church. This event provided the opportunity for support, signposting and socialising.

It was an honour to lay wreaths at Remembrance Sunday services across Pendle, to go to The Duke of Lancaster’s Regimental Remembrance Service, and to attend the Armistice Day service at the Nelson Cenotaph.

These are just some of the engagements I have undertaken in recent months. At every event I have felt such pride in Pendle. “

Councillor Bryony Hartley

His Worship the Mayor and Members of the Council welcomed Councillor Bryony Hartley, who had recently been elected as a Liberal Democrat Member of the Council at the recent Barnoldswick by-election to Pendle Borough Council and her first meeting of Full Council.

Notice of the passing of former Councillor Ken Turner

His Worship the Mayor informed Council that former Pendle Borough Councillor Ken Turner had passed away following a long battle with cancer.

Ken Turner had started his political career in Pendle as a Parish Councillor for Barrowford in 2015, after being a Councillor elsewhere in the country prior to that.

Then, in 2016, at his first attempt, he was elected to represent Barrowford as a Pendle Councillor for the Conservative Party. He remained as a Councillor until May 2021.

All present stood for a minute's silence in memory of former Councillor Turner.

Councillors D. Whipp, A. Mahmood, A. Sutcliffe, B. Newman and N. Ahmed spoke and paid tribute to former Councillor Ken Turner.

Councillor David Whipp, Leader of the Council had three announcements. The first related to the provisional financial settlement for Pendle Borough Council, which he commented was a disappointing settlement. The second matter was correspondence received from Alison McGovern, MP, Minister of State for Local Government and Housing – December 2025 which sought the Council's view, should it wish to do so, on the postponement or otherwise of the local elections scheduled to take place on 7th May 2026. He added that this was a Full Council matter, and with the agreement of his Worship the Mayor, an Extraordinary meeting of Council would be held at 6.30pm on Monday 12th January, 2026 to consider this matter. The third announcement that Councillor David Whipp raised was that as Leader of the Council he sat on the Lancashire Pension Fund Committee and he commented on issues around the levels of contributions made by local authorities to the fund, budgetary and funding pressures of local Councils and the potential use of some of this funding to protect services.

57. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM THE PUBLIC TO THE LEADER

There were no questions from members of the public.

58. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS TO THE LEADER, A COMMITTEE CHAIR OR A REPRESENTATIVE ON AN OUTSIDE BODY ON MATTERS NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA

There were no questions from Members of the Council.

59. REPORT BY THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the work of the Executive.

Councillor D. Cockburn-Price asked a question on Minute 81 – Update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan which was considered at the 20th November, 2025 meeting of Executive. At that meeting Executive was informed that the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/29 showed a funding deficit of £3.043m. Councillor D. Cockburn-Price expressed the view that the figure should be closer to £7.25m.

The Leader of the Council responded to Councillor D. Cockburn-Price reiterating Executive's response to this matter at the meeting. He also offered Councillor D. Cockburn-Price the opportunity to meet with the Council's Chief Executive and Director of Resources to discuss this matter in more detail at a future date.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

60. REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Councillor Chris Church, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted a report on the work of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the reports be noted.

61. ADOPTION OF THE PENDLE LOCAL PLAN FOURTH EDITION 2021-2040

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Local Planning and Infrastructure presented a report which recommended that Full Council adopt the Local Plan in accordance with the recommendations as set out in Inspector's report (dated 20th November, 2025) and its accompanying appendices.

Councillors A. Sutcliffe and S. Cockburn-Price spoke and welcomed the proposed adoption of the Pendle Local Plan Fourth Edition 2021-2040.

It was moved by Councillor L. Whipp and seconded by Councillor D. Whipp, and:

RESOLVED: That Council

(a) adopt the Local Plan in accordance with the recommendations as set out in the Inspector's report (dated 20th November, 2025) and its accompanying appendices as attached to the submitted report

(b) That the Statement of Reasons, a set out at Appendix 3 to the submitted report, be agreed and sent to the Secretary of State as part of the notification of adoption.

62 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING FUNCTION

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which presented the outcome of an independent review of the Council's Planning function.

Attached to the report at Appendix A was the independent review report of the planning function by Anthony Collins Solicitors.

The Leader of the Council noted that the independent review had been requested by the Council's auditors some time ago and he welcomed the various recommendations that had been made following the review and requested that Council accept those recommendations and ask Officers to implement them, with any decisions necessary on matters raised being subject to the Council's normal governance processes.

Councillor A Sutcliffe commented and raised a friendly amendment regarding recommendation 2 regarding legal advisers at meetings and the deletion of recommendation 7 in the independent review report. The leader of the Council responded that he did not accept this as a friendly amendment and encouraged Council to accept the reports findings and recommendations in full. He added there was a Working Party chaired by Councillor L. Whipp which would look further into the detail of the recommendations and their implementation if the Independent review report was accepted.

Councillor A. Sutcliffe subsequently withdrew and rescinded his friendly amendment following the above response.

Councillor A. Mahmood also spoke in favour of accepting the outcome and recommendations of the report.

It was moved by Councillor D. Whipp and seconded by Councillor M. Iqbal and –

RESOLVED: That Council

(1) accepts the recommendations made in the Independent review of the Council's Planning function as set out in the submitted report at Appendix A; and

(2) That Officers be requested to implement the recommendations, with any decisions necessary on the matters raised being subject to the Council's normal governance processes.

(Councillors M. Adnan and M. Hanif left the meeting at this juncture).

63. FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW (2026/27 BUDGET SETTING AND MTFP)

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which presented the Fees and Charges review (2026/27) Budget Setting and MTFP.

Councillor D. Whipp moved the report with the following additional amendments, which was seconded by Councillor A. Mahmood:

1. That garage sites increase be raised to 20% (original proposal was 12.6%); and
2. That the cost of a pavement Licence renewal be set at £200 (originally proposed £350) for a two year licence.

RESOLVED: That Council

That the Fees and Charges, as outlined at Appendix A to the submitted report, incorporating the changes to the fees for garage sites and a two-year pavement licence approval as detailed above, be approved.

(Councillor R. O'Connor left the meeting when it became apparent he had a declarable pecuniary interest in this item and took no part in the debate. Councillors D. Cockburn-Price and S. Cockburn-Price left the meeting at the conclusion of this item).

64. NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) Care Homes Closures

(Note: Before the matter was discussed, Cllr D. Whipp moved a friendly amendment to the original motion that had been included on the agenda papers, which was accepted. The revised motion, as discussed, as moved, seconded and voted on at the meeting is reproduced below).

It was moved by Councillor A. Bell, and seconded by Councillor D. Lord that:-

Council notes that, following Reform-run Lancashire County Council's consultation on the closure of care homes, as part of a wider review of the county council's in-house care services, with Favordale on the initial closure list, (together with four other care homes and five day centres, including Byron View at Colne), that Reform are deferring a decision indefinitely.

Council further notes that these care home closures are being driven by a cuts-at-any-cost culture at County Hall that's putting £s before people. Council condemns the county council's administration for treating some of the most vulnerable people in our community inhumanely, considering care homes as a 'market', placing little or no value on care itself, and considering capital receipts above residents.

Council expresses particular concern at:

- the affect these closure proposals have had on residents, their families, care staff and the wider community;
- the fundamentally flawed basis of the closure plans using out-of-date condition surveys;
- the deceit of saying it's about improving conditions -when no funding is earmarked for work;
- the tactics of gagging staff and stifling protest;
- and closing care homes to new residents.

Council endorses the Leader's response strongly opposing: the closure of Favordale and linked Byron View day centre; the inadequacies of the Evaluation Framework proposed as the ground rules for the wider review; and the underlying basis of the county council's strategy.

In addition, Council notes that the chronic national underfunding of Adult Social Care, cost shunting from Health Services, the care-workforce crisis, together with the failure of successive Governments to address these issues have left social care authorities at the heart of an impossible equation with inexorably rising costs and massive underfunding.

Council resolves that:

1. The Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care at Lancashire County Council be informed of the terms of this resolution;
2. The county council make a decision without further delay and agree to keep Favordale open and re-opened to new residents;
3. County councillors representing Pendle be asked to oppose the closure of Favordale, the adoption of the Evaluation Framework for the wider review, and support lifting the ban on new residents at the home;
4. The Prime Minister and Secretary of State be requested to address underfunding of social care as a matter of extreme urgency;
5. Members of Parliament representing Pendle be requested to support this council's request for adequate Government funding for adult social care.

Several Members spoke in support of this Motion.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED

Accordingly.

(Councillors F. Ahmad, Z Ali, N. Ashraf and M. Kaleem left the meeting at this juncture).

(b) GP Waiting Times and Neighbourhood Health Services

It was moved by Councillor C. Church and seconded by Councillor B. Hartley that:–

Council notes new national research that shows GP waits over two and four weeks will hit a record high in 2025. Since 2020, there has been a 50% rise in patients waiting over 14 days – from 19.7 to 43 million appointments – and a 67% increase in those waiting over 28 days – from 5.8 to 12.9 million.

In 2025, nationally, almost one in five people have waited over two weeks, and one in 20 over four. Locally, it appears that the situation is much worse.

Council believes years of neglect by the previous Government broke our NHS and now the current Government is failing to grasp this spiralling-out-of-control crisis. General Practice is on the brink, with fewer and fewer GPs and surgeries closing every week nationwide. Family doctors are becoming responsible for hundreds more patients who are having greater and greater difficulties to get help.

According to the Royal College of GPs, nearly three-quarters of GPs now say patient safety is compromised by their workload.

Council believes the Government should implement an emergency package to ensure every patient can be seen within 7 days, or 24 hours if urgent. This could be achieved through a strategic fund for a recruitment and retention drive to secure 8,000 more GPs.

Council also expresses grave concern that neighbourhood health services in West Craven are virtually non-existent, with people requiring health checks, attending clinics or needing treatment having to routinely travel out of area to access services, while the so-called Newtown 'Clinic' in Barnoldswick remains virtually empty, and general practices are stretched beyond breaking point.

Council resolves to:

- Formally endorse the principal that residents in Pendle should not have to wait more than 7 days for a GP appointment, and be able to see a GP in 24 hours in cases of an emergency;
- Write to the Secretary of State for Health to convey the Council's position on this matter;
- Request Pendle's MPs to support an emergency package of measures, together with comprehensive neighbourhood health services serving the whole of Pendle;
- Refer this issue to the Pendle Health and Wellbeing Board requesting that a report is provided to all councillors about GP waiting times in the borough.
- Develop a questionnaire to distribute to all GPs in Pendle to give Council their insight into the pressures GP surgeries and patients are under with historically high waiting times and demands on service;
- Reaffirm Council's previous demands for a proper Health Centre in Barnoldswick, with the capacity to provide comprehensive neighbourhood health services under one roof;
- Request the Executive to pursue the Council's request for a Health Centre with NHS providers and other relevant parties.

Several Members spoke in support on this Motion.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED

Accordingly

(Councillor M. Aslam left the meeting at this juncture).

(c) Cost-of-Living Criss, Energy Costs and Council Tax

It was moved by Councillor D. Whipp, and seconded by Councillor S. Land :–

Council notes:

- the continuing crisis with the cost-of-living, with more households falling into debt and fewer families having enough money for discretionary spending as remorseless increases in food and essentials prices consume greater and greater shares of incomes;
- wealth and income inequalities are now off the scale and growing still further;
- freezing tax allowances will drag more low-income households into taxation;
- increases in the regressive Council Tax demanded by the Government will disproportionately impact people less able to afford this back-door taxation;
- Investment in national energy infrastructure totally £28bn will be paid for by hard-pressed consumers.

Council further notes:

- the effect of the Government's 'fair funding' review on Pendle and Lancashire;
- the imposition of new burdens on councils like Pendle, such as weekly food waste collections costing £1.6m;
- Cost-shunting from Lancashire County Council for waste transfer, estimated to cost Pendle residents £560,000;
- and loss of business rates income.

Council resolves that:

1. The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Energy be requested to uncouple energy costs from global gas prices and allow cheap renewable supplies to bring down household bills;
2. The Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer be requested to urgently consider alternatives to the unfair Council Tax;
3. The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government be requested to fully fund new burdens falling on local councils;
4. The Leader of the County Council be requested once again to review LCC's cost-shunting onto Pendle Borough Council, and meet with the Leader and Chief Executive to discuss this and other issues affecting the borough;
5. Pendle's Members of Parliament be asked to support the above requests on behalf of the residents that they represent.

Several Members spoke in support of this Motion.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED

Accordingly

(d) Inaccessible Nelson and the M65

It was moved by Councillor D. Hartley, and seconded by Councillor B. Newman :-

This Council notes:

1. Electricity, gas and county council roadworks around Nelson 'co-ordinated' in such a way as to virtually cut the town off.
2. Continuing, persistent, flooding on the M65 causing serious safety concerns.

Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to Lancashire County Council requesting an immediate improvement in disruption on the road network around Nelson with a guarantee of better co-ordination in future, and that the county council takes urgent effective action to prevent flooding on the M65.

Several Members spoke in support of this Motion.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED

Accordingly.

His Worship the Mayor _____