PENDLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL PLAN

2026 – 2028



Pendle Borough Council

Contents

	Page
Foreword	1
Introduction	2
All about Pendle	3
Our Vision	4
Our Priorities	5/6
Priority 1: Providing High Quality Services And Facilities	7
Priority 2: Proud And Connected Communities and Places	8
Priority 3: Good Growth	9
Priority 4: Housing and Healthy Communities	10
Priority 5: Preparing for Local Government Reorganisation	11
Ensuring We Deliver	12

Foreword

The Council Plan 2026-2028 sets out the vision and priorities of Pendle Borough Council, particularly as it prepares for Local Government Reorganisation in 2028. It has been built on a strong understanding of what is important to our communities now and in the coming years. We have listened to our residents, businesses and communities and considered the opportunities as well as the challenges facing the borough.

Pendle has a distinctive cultural heritage, astounding natural beauty, and is the home to a number of advanced technology and aerospace businesses. However, many people in our communities face hardship and continue to struggle financially due to global and national events.

The Council's unique place in Pendle means it has an important leadership role to play in providing support to people when they need it. This leadership role is vital to ensure that the needs of local people continue to be recognised as the Council considers the impact of Local Government Reorganisation for the area. For this reason, we will focus on a number of key initiatives such as improving, digital skills in the community with Nelson and Colne College, building key skills for young people through the YES Hub, and regenerating our towns through Nelson Town Deal, Levelling Up in Colne and enhancing public realm and street scape in Barnoldswick, Earby and Brierfield, all of which will contribute to a lasting legacy

Looking ahead to Local Government Reorganisation, we are already starting to prepare for potential changes that may evolve through Local Government Reorganisation and devolution for Lancashire. Work in this area will intensify later in 2026 when the Government decides what form the Unitary Councils will take.

In the meantime, we will strengthen our response to climate change across several areas, ensuring we reduce our own emissions and helping businesses and residents do the same. With health and wellbeing so vital for our people, and despite Local Government Reorganisation, we are committed to preserving leisure centres in our three main townships. This will mean ensuring they provide the right mix of services to be popular and commercially viable into the future and improving their energy use to save money and reduce our carbon emissions. Where there is a willingness to work in partnership, we will also facilitate the transfer of assets to Town and Parish Councils so that they can be sustained for local benefit long after vesting day for any new local authority for the Pendle area.

Everyone has the right to a decent home, so now that we have adopted a new Local Plan that meets community and business needs, we will use it to ensure that the the right housing is provided in the right place and in the right numbers, with a focus on using brownfield sites first wherever possible. We will also work with partners to increase social housing and bring empty properties back into use, particularly those which have been empty for a long time. We also need to improve existing homes and make sure they are safe from dangerous damp and mould and are affordable to heat, whilst reducing harmful emissions into the surrounding area. Our joint ventures through the PEARL and Penbrook companies will continue to be a key delivery tool, with the prospect of new homes coming on stream in Brierfield, Colne, Nelson and Earby during the life of this Council Plan.

Fundamentally, we will prioritise street level issues to ensure our neighbourhoods are great places to live whilst working to maintain frontline local services in the face of continuing funding challenges. We'll continue to work with partners to keep our residents safe through the Community Safety Partnership and by taking an active stance on improving flood defences in parts of our borough where this poses a risk to people and property.

The Plan sets out our priorities and the actions we will be taking to make sure they are delivered. This will help us keep track of our progress and secure those vital improvements we need for the benefit of our communities.



David Whipp

Councillor David Whipp
Leader
Council Leader

Introduction

This Council Plan sets out our ambitions and priorities for the period 2026-28. It outlines what we want to achieve and how we intend to do it. It is an update of our Council Plan for 2025-2028, and recognises that Local Government Reorganisation in Lancashire looks likely to happen in 2028.

This Plan has been developed collectively by Councillors, the Corporate Leadership Team and staff across the Council. In summer/autumn 2022, working with our creative partners, we asked local people for their priorities for the area.

Our survey, *This is Pendle,* reached across Pendle's towns and villages, and built on the findings from the *Life in Pendle* survey of 2021. We also met with key partners, including our business community and community and voluntary organisations, to find out what was important to them.

Engaging with our communities and key partners in a conversation helped to define our overall priorities, as outlined here. The Council Plan is not an exhaustive list of everything we will be doing in the next two years in the run up to Local Government Reorganisation. It sets out the critical activity for the Council and ensures this activity is focused through our governance and performance arrangements.

We have developed and outlined here how we intend to deliver this Plan.



All about Pendle

Pendle is a borough in the far east of Pennine Lancashire, bordering North and West Yorkshire.

Population in Numbers

According to the 2021 Census, 95,757 people live in Pendle:

- **50.5% of the population are female and 49.5% are male**
- **21.4% are children aged under 16**
- **60.7% are adults aged 16 to 64 and 18% are aged 65 and over**
- **5.5% are aged 20 to 24, 12.6% are aged 25 to 34**
- **2.1% of the resident population are aged 85 and over**
- **26.7% of residents are Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh**

Pendle is ranked the 13th most deprived area out of 296 districts and unitary authorities in England (from the 2025 Indices of Deprivation). This is up from 36th in 2019 (out of 317 local authorities). Pendle is the 4th most deprived district in Lancashire (out of its 14 authorities), with 4 of its 12 wards in the top 10% most deprived areas in the country.

Business, Jobs and Pay

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) tells us:

- there are 3,150 businesses in Pendle - 89% of these are micro (up to nine employees) 9% of Pendle businesses are in the manufacturing sector.
- nearly half of Pendle's new businesses are still going after five years and Pendle has a 46.6% five year survival rate - this is higher than the UK (39.1%)
- nearly three in ten jobs in Pendle are in the manufacturing sector, which is significantly higher than the national figure of 8%
- in contrast, there are fewer professional jobs in the area (4% Pendle vs 9% across Great Britain)
- median weekly pay in Pendle is £586 compared with £696 across the North West and £729 for Great Britain
- Over 6% of economically active people in Pendle are considered to be unemployed. This higher than the national figure of 3.8%
- 7 in 10 residents of working age are in employment. This is lower than the North West (73%) and UK (76%).

Health and Wellbeing

According to the Public Health England Local Authority Health Profile 2021:

- life expectancy in Pendle is lower than the national average. Men in Pendle are expected to live to the age of 78, whilst women are expected to live to the age of 81
- cardiovascular disease mortality rates in Pendle are three times higher than England
- 17.7% of Pendle residents have a limiting long term illness or disability compared to 17.3% nationally
- 60% of Pendle adults are physically active compared with 64% nationally; 65% of Pendle adults are classified as overweight or obese.

Living in Pendle

Pendle is the happiest place to live in East Lancashire, according to data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The ONS conducted a survey and asked people to rate their happiness in the 12 months up to March 2022. Those surveyed were asked to rate their life satisfaction, happiness and anxiety levels out of 10. According to the data, Pendle scored a rating of 8.1 out of 10. It also ranked the best for life satisfaction (7.98), a feeling that things are worthwhile (8.17) and anxiety levels (2.28).

Pendle is the happiest place to live in East Lancashire, according to data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).



This is Pendle

This community engagement programme gave us some rich data about the views and priorities of local people. In the survey, the first word residents would use to describe Pendle to a friend was most likely to be about countryside and green spaces. This positivity reflects the findings that:

- 60% of Pendle residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live and they feel countryside and clean streets make somewhere a good place to live

- however, clean streets are also the area residents feel are most in need of improvement and some residents feel people in the community should take more pride in their local area.

From the survey and engagement sessions across Pendle, the top six themes residents suggested as priorities for the Council Plan were:

- **Roads and transport**
- **Business and jobs**
- **Community safety**
- **Planning/ protecting green land**
- **Clean streets**
- **Council organisation related**

These themes have been incorporated into this Council Plan, whilst recognising that other organisations such as Lancashire County Council are responsible for some areas, such as roads and transport.

Our Vision

Pendle: A richly characterful place with ambition, opportunities and strong connections.

Pendle Borough Council: Working to deliver an effective and efficient Council that aims to foster happy communities thriving in an economically ambitious and sustainable way.





Our Priorities

We will deliver the Vision for the borough and the council through five key priorities:



In line with our climate emergency declared in 2019, Pendle Borough Council is committed to tackling climate change and achieving a carbon neutral Pendle.

In delivering all five priorities, we will ensure that climate change and environmental sustainability are key considerations when planning and delivering our actions.

PRIORITIES











Priority 1:
Providing High Quality Services and Facilities

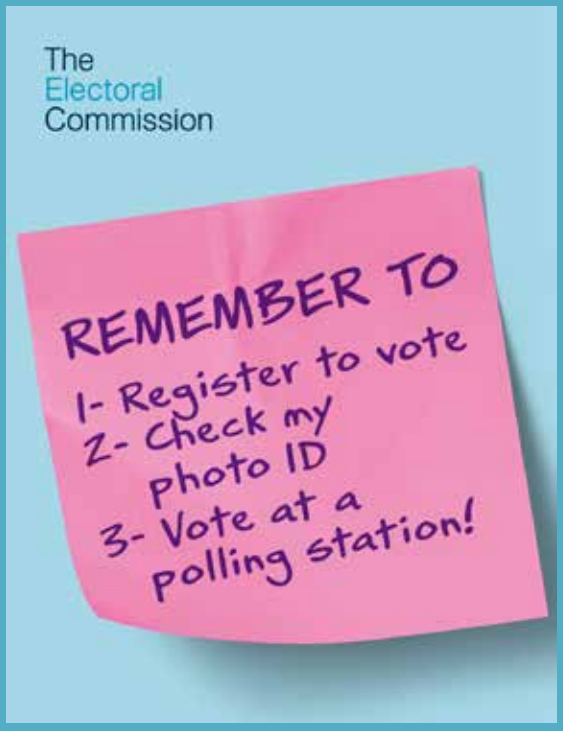
Our ambitions

- A high performing council that is effective and efficient
- Listen to its people and drive a customer-focused ethos throughout the organisation and beyond
- Become digital by default, moving with the technology and bringing our customers on a journey with us
- The Council is fit for purpose and delivers value for money in the services we provide



What we will do

- ✔ Embed continuous improvement in our daily work
- ✔ Implement a customer hub model particularly for our most vulnerable customers
- ✔ Continue to support our residents to access Council services online, whilst delivering good levels of service
- ✔ Strengthen the integrity of the electoral process
- ✔ Our staff will live the organisation's corporate objectives and values and we will recognise their achievements



Priority 2:
Proud and Connected Communities and Places

Our ambitions

- Engage with and support our communities, to foster community cohesion and resilience
- Encourage and foster community pride for a safer, cleaner and greener environment
- Continue to work with our local Community Safety Partnership and communities to tackle issues to keep us safe and feeling safe
- Protect our parks and the local environment by taking pride in our green spaces and surroundings
- Continue to develop our digital connections and increase community confidence in accessing services online

What we will do

- ✔ Deliver our Community Cohesion Strategy
- ✔ Deliver better outcomes in our communities and offer cost of living support, to build independent, confident communities
- ✔ Promote active travel by bike and on foot
- ✔ Deliver a connectivity and accessibility plan including a campaign to actively influence the reopening of the Skipton to Colne railway, working in partnership Skipton East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership (SELRAP).
- ✔ Deliver the Council's Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategies
- ✔ Enhance biodiversity, and Local Nature Reserves for the borough
- ✔ Develop behaviour change campaigns to encourage responsibility and pride in local communities, including picking up litter and taking care of our parks
- ✔ Continue to work with partners in our local Community Safety Partnership to improve the safety, and sense of safety, for our residents through delivery of its strategy
- ✔ Develop a new cemetery site, and existing cemeteries where necessary, to enable key community provision into the coming decades





3

Priority 3:
Good Growth

Our ambitions

- Achieve economic prosperity and development in our local economy
- Facilitate the development of quality new houses, which are well designed and sustainable
- Focus on sustainable, green and inclusive growth across the borough
- Work in partnership with our local education providers to improve education and skills
- Drive campaigns to improve infrastructure and connectivity for transport and roads, by influencing Government organisations and partners
- Work with partners to tackle poverty, low pay and aspiration
- Facilitate the provision of quality jobs and skills



What we will do

- ✔ Use the adopted Local Plan, to guide future development in Pendle using brownfield sites where we can
- ✔ Deliver the investment plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to support local programmes for improvement
- ✔ Strengthen links with our local businesses, signposting to support and bringing businesses together to share challenges and successes
- ✔ Bring together businesses and education skills providers to develop a pipeline of opportunities for young people, aligned to business need
- ✔ Complete the Nelson Town Deal programme to improve perceptions of the town centre, increase footfall and make it a place where people want to shop and spend their leisure time
- ✔ Deliver the Barnoldswick, Colne and Earby Masterplans focusing on the priorities for the three towns for the next 10-15 years
- ✔ Complete the Colne Levelling Up programme, to encourage more use of the town centre during the day and into the evening
- ✔ Complete PEARL and PEARL Together projects to bring ambitious development to different parts of the borough
- ✔ Ensure a co-ordinated approach to delivering economic growth, along with value for money projects

Priority 4:
Housing and Healthy Communities

Our ambitions

- Address homelessness in the borough by facilitating an increasing the supply of suitable housing
- Improve existing housing stock across the borough, by working with our private landlords
- Develop a sustainable leisure offer, to enhance health and wellbeing for those who live, work and study in Pendle
- Support our local health and wellbeing providers to tackle health inequalities and improve outcomes for all



What we will do

- ✔ Maintain accessible local leisure facilities in Pendle's townships
- ✔ Enhance our green spaces to promote health and wellbeing in our communities
- ✔ Incorporate cycleways and footpaths into the wider leisure offer, to improve connectivity, and sustainability and for health and wellbeing
- ✔ Support the delivery of a Health and Wellbeing Plan in partnership with our key providers
- ✔ Improve our Housing Standards Strategy to identify a way forward on the private rented sector and housing standards
- ✔ Support our creative partners to improve and celebrate our local cultures, vibrancy and uniqueness
- ✔ Ensure our taxis are safe

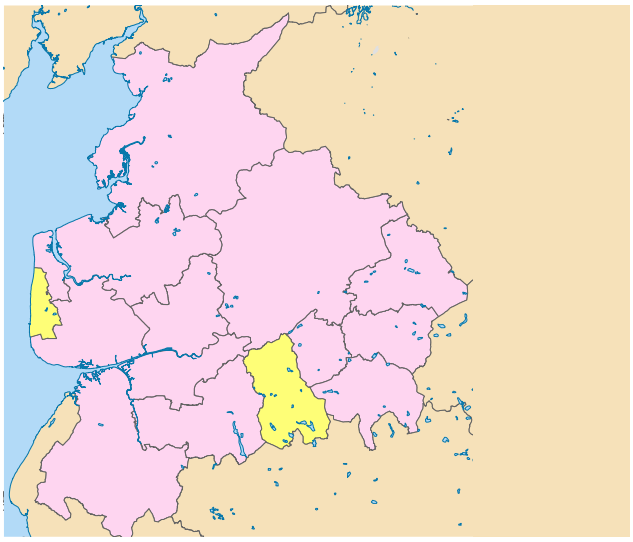


5

Priority 5:
Preparing for Local Government Reorganisation

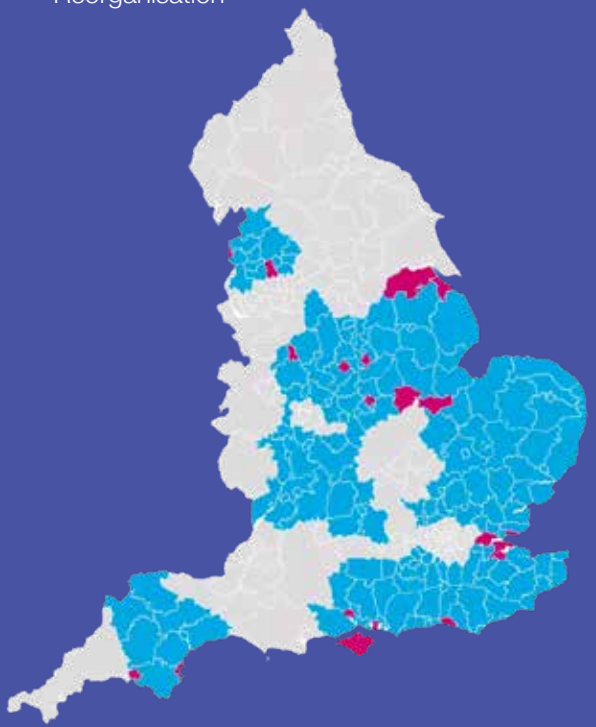
Our ambitions

- Prepare the organisation for whatever form of Unitary Local Government is chosen by Government
- Ensure that senior leaders are able to lead staff effectively through the process
- Ensure that staff have the skills and capacity both to prepare for Local Government Reorganisation and to contribute effectively to the new organisation
- Take action to protect local assets
- Ensure the strategic ambitions of the borough are articulated fully in the development of the new Council



What will we do

- ✔ Undertake 'housekeeping' across the range of Council services to ensure that the organisation is 'ready to reorganise'
- ✔ Accelerate work on local asset transfers
- ✔ Embed a training programme to ensure staff across services have the skills to prepare the organisation to reorganise and to offer the new Council
- ✔ Work with our partners to ensure they are taken on the LGR journey with us
- ✔ Keep residents, partners and other stakeholders informed
- ✔ Ensure the borough's strategic ambitions are recognised by the emerging Strategic Authority
- ✔ Provide a Pendle voice in shaping the future for County devolution and Local Government Reorganisation



District councils and unitary authorities undergoing local government reorganisation.

© institute for government 2025



Ensuring we deliver

The Council uses a Performance Management Framework to ensure it is delivering on its priorities. Every quarter, progress will be reported on how the Council is implementing its actions and milestones using a green-amber-red rating system.

The reports will highlight the progress that is being made and where actions are progressing to plan, whilst setting out the reasons for slower progress and the actions the Council is taking to address this.



Pendle Borough Council
Town Hall, Market Street, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 7LG
Telephone: 01282 661661
www.pendle.gov.uk

Designed by the Communications Team, Pendle Borough Council iJb_12569. Updated 5/2/26.