MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL
ON 2nd MARCH 2026

PRESENT –

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

Councillors

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

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

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67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor D. Whipp declared Other Registrable Interests in the following: Lancashire County Council, Barnoldswick Town Council, Growth Lancashire, PEARL Joint Ventures and PENBROOK Joint Venture.

All other Members present who were also Members of Town and/or Parish Councils in the Borough or appointed members to the Council's Joint Ventures also declared these as Other Registrable Interests.

68. MINUTES OF COUNCIL

It was moved by Cllr D Whipp and seconded by Cllr A. Mahmood that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18th December, 2025 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 12th January 2026 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 18th December, 2025 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 12th January, 2026 be agreed as a correct record and signed by His Worship the Mayor.

69. RECORDED VOTES FOR ALL BUDGET / COUNCIL TAX ITEMS

Members were reminded that in accordance with Rule 19.4 of the Procedure at Full Council all votes on budget issues would be recorded. This included all motions and amendments.

70. STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION FOR LEADER/GROUP LEADER SPEECHES TO BE MORE THAN 5 MINUTES

In accordance with normal practice the Council suspended Rule 15.3 of the Procedure at Full Council to allow Group Leaders to speak on minute numbers 75 and 76 for longer than five minutes.

71. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL PLAN 2026-2028

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which asked Council to consider feedback and recommendations from the Executive and to approve and adopt the draft updated Council Plan 2026-28.

As a background to the report, Executive was informed that at its meeting held on 15th May, 2025, Council had agreed the Council Plan for 2025-2028, which was an update on the previous Corporate Plan 2023-2027. The revisions included reference to the Transfer of Assets to Town and Parish Councils within the context of Local Government Reorganisation LGR) and Devolution.

The report now submitted brought a further update on the Council Plan for 2026-2028, which now included an additional fifth priority: preparing for LGR, recognising that this matter was now progressing at pace and the Council would need to consider prioritising its resources accordingly

Council was informed that at a meeting of the Executive held on 19th February, 2026, the following recommendation was made to Council:

That Executive recommends to Council the adoption of the new draft Council Plan 2026-2028, to include a fifth priority in its own right: preparing for Local Government Reorganisation, together with the rephrasing for clarity of the fifth ticked bullet point in the “What we will do” section as now outlined.

It was moved by Councillor D. Whipp and seconded by Councillor A. Mahmood to approve the Council Plan 2026-28

Councillor D. Cockburn- Price referenced a slight correction to the wording the Business Jobs and Pay section on page 3, first bullet point.

Councillor L. Whipp moved a friendly amendment, seconded by Councillor A. Bell, which was accepted, that Priority 3, Good Growth in; What we will do’ section, add:

Support our apprentices by paying them the National Living Wage, in recognition of the affordability crisis.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the inclusion of the amendment to Priority 3 as outlined above, Council approves and adopts the draft updated Council Plan 2026-2028 as now submitted.

72. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026

In accordance with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 the annual Pay Policy Statement for 2026 was submitted for approval.

It was moved by Councillor D. Whipp, seconded by Councillor A. Mahmood to approve the 2026 Pay Policy Statement.

Councillor L. Whipp moved a friendly amendment, seconded by Councillor A. Bell, which was accepted, referencing paragraphs 41 and 42 of the Pay Policy Statement (Lowest Paid Employees)

Councillor L Whipp requested that in line with the update to the Council Plan just agreed (Reference Minute 71 above) a report be brought to the next meeting of Executive on the implications of bringing Apprenticeship wages in line with the National Living Wage

RESOLVED

(1) That the Council's Pay Policy Statement for the 2026 financial year be approved and that it be published on the Council's website; and

(2) That a report be brought to the next meeting of Executive on the implications of bringing Apprenticeship wages in line with the National Living Wage

73. LOCALISATION OF SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX AND OTHER POLICIES FOR 2026/27

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Localised Scheme of Support for Council Tax and other Collection Fund Policies for 2026/27.

MOTION

It was moved by Councillor D. Whipp and seconded by Councillor A. Mahmood –

That the Council Tax Support Scheme (attached to the report as Appendix A); the Reduction in Council Tax Liability Policy (attached to the report as Appendix B); and the Housing Benefit War Pension Disregard (attached to the report as Appendix C) be approved for implementation from 1st April 2026.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED

Accordingly.

74. STATEMENT OF ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES 2026/27

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Statement of Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves for 2026/27.

Attached to the submitted report at Appendices A and B respectively were:

Appendix A – Draft Statement on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves 2026/27; and

Appendix B – Assessment of Funding (Fair Funding Review 2.0)

Councillor D. Cockburn-Price commented on the report and supported the recommendations relating thereto.

MOTION

It was moved by Councillor D. Whipp and seconded by Councillor A. Mahmood –

(1) That Council notes the significant amount of uncertainty with future funding allocations having considered and having regard to the Statements from the Director of Resources (as the Council's Statutory Finance Officer) as provided at Appendices A and B to the submitted report when determining the Budget (Revenue Budget and Capital Programme) (minute 75 below); and the level of Council Tax for 2026/27 (minute 76 below); and

(2) That Council notes the position on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and the uncertainty with future funding allocations and request the Executive to take actions as appropriate to ensure the Council's budget remains sustainable over the medium term.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED

Accordingly.

(Councillor M. Aslam left the meeting before the undermentioned matters were considered).

75. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2026/27 AND GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27

The Leader of the Council presented two reports, one of which recommended that Council accepted the Corporate Leadership's Team's proposed General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026/27 and level of Council Tax for 2026/27, the other report recommended to Council the Corporate Leadership Team's proposed Capital Programme for 2026/27. Both these reports had been considered by Executive at its meeting held on 19th February, 2026.

Attached at Appendices A to G inclusive of the General Fund Revenue report were the following:

Appendix A – "Firming Up" Adjustments for Base Budget 2026/27;

Appendix B – Proposed savings from the Leisure Trust;
Appendix C – estimates of Reserves and Balances 2026/29;
Appendix D – Council Tax Exemplifications;
Appendix E – Corporate Leadership's Team's proposed budget for 2026/27;
Appendix F – Budget Consultation Outcome;
Appendix G – Town and Parish Council Precepts 2026/27.

Attached at Appendices A to C inclusive of the General Fund Capital Programme report were the following:

Appendix A – Draft Capital Strategy 2026/29;
Appendix B – Proposed Capital Programme 2026/27 (with indicative programmes for 2027/28 and 2028/29;
Appendix C – Prudential Indicators 2026/27.

Councillor D. Whipp, Leader of the Council and the Liberal Democrats then introduced and put forward the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Shared Administration's Group's budget proposals (copies of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting to all Group Leaders and the Reform UK Councillor, with further copies tabled to all Members of the Council at the meeting).

Councillor D Whipp then gave his budget speech and moved that Budget Council approve the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Shared Administration's Group's budget proposals (refer Appendix 1(a) attached to these minutes).

Councillor A. Mahmood, Deputy Leader of the Council and the Independent Group Leader then gave his budget speech and seconded the motion proposed that Budget Council approve the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Shared Administration's Group's budget proposals.

Councillor A Sutcliffe then gave his budget speech introduced and put forward the Conservative group's budget proposals, (refer Appendix 1(b) attached to these minutes). which he moved as an amendment. The amendment was seconded by Councillor D. Cockburn-Price.

Councillor D. Whipp responded to the amendment of the Conservative group's budget proposals. He added that the Shared Administration would however give further consideration following this meeting the Conservative proposal to increase the number of Environmental Services Officers to tackle cleanliness in the Borough

Upon the amendment to approve the Conservative Group's budget proposals being put to the vote the motion was lost.

For: 5	Councillors D. Cockburn-Price, S. Cockburn-Price, D. Gallear, R. O'Connor, A. Sutcliffe
Against: 18	His Worship, the Mayor, Councillor M Ammer and Councillors M. Adnan, F. Ahmad, S Ahmed, Z Ali, R. Anwar, M. Atkinson, A. Bell, C. Church, M. Hanif, M. Iqbal, S. Land, D. Lord, A. Mahmood, B. Newman, Y Tennant, D. Whipp, L. Whipp
Abstentions: 1	Councillor D. Hartley

In accordance with minute 69 above a recorded vote was taken on this issue.

The original motion that had been moved by Councillor D. Whipp and seconded by Councillor A. Mahmood to approve the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Shared Administration budget became the substantive motion and was voted on.

MOTION

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

For: 18	His Worship, the Mayor, Councillor M Ammer and Councillors M. Adnan, F. Ahmad, S Ahmed, Z Ali, R. Anwar, A. Bell, C. Church, M. Hanif, D. Hartley, M. Iqbal, S. Land, D. Lord, A. Mahmood, B. Newman, Y Tennant, D. Whipp, L. Whipp
Against: 6	Councillors M. Atkinson, D. Cockburn-Price, S. Cockburn-Price, D. Gallear, R. O'Connor, A. Sutcliffe

In accordance with minute 69 above a recorded vote was taken on this issue.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Medium-Term Forecast position for 2026/27 to 2028/29 and the savings required over the period of the forecast be approved.

(2) That the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group's Shared Administration General Fund Revenue Budget for 2026/27, as submitted be approved, attached as Appendix 2(a) to these minutes.

(3) That a Band D Council Tax for 2026/27 of £316.71 be approved, being an increase of £9.19 (2.99%) on the current level of Council Tax.

(4) That each Service be required to operate within its budget for 2026/27 once approved and be subject to regular monitoring and control.

(5) That the use of reserves to support the 2026/27 revenue budget be approved. The approved budget amendments increased the use of reserves to balance the budget to £982,440 from reserves to balance the budget.

(6) That the proposed Capital Programme for 2026/27 as shown in Appendix 2(b), attached to these minutes, being the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group's Shared Administration budget proposal as submitted, be approved.

(7) That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Resources, to determine the most appropriate method of financing the capital programme for 2026/27 to ensure the use of resources is optimised by the Council.

76. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the Council Tax Resolution.

MOTION

It was moved by Councillor D. Whipp and seconded by Councillor A. Mahmood:

That the Council Tax calculations 2026/27 and the Council Declaration, as set out in Appendix 3 attached to these Minutes be approved.
Upon being put to the vote it was carried –

For: 22	His Worship, the Mayor, Councillor M Ammer and Councillors M. Adnan, F. Ahmad, S Ahmed, Z Ali, R. Anwar, A. Bell, C. Church, D Cockburn-Price, S. Cockburn-Price, D. Gallear, D. Hartley, M. Hanif, M. Iqbal, S. Land, D. Lord, A. Mahmood, B. Newman, R. O'Connor, A. Sutcliffe, D. Whipp, L. Whipp
Against: 1	M. Atkinson

In accordance with minute 69 above a recorded vote was taken on this issue.

(Note: For information purposes only: Councillor Y. Tennant had left the Council Chamber before the vote was taken on the Council Tax resolution motion and returned to the meeting after the vote had been taken in this matter).

RESOLVED

Accordingly.

(Councillors D. Cockburn-Price, S. Cockburn-Price and R. O'Connor left the meeting at this juncture).

77. NOTICE OF MOTION – DANGEROUS STATE OF ROADS ACROSS PENDLE LEADING TO HUGE POTHOLES ACROSS THE BOROUGH

It was moved by Councillor S. Ahmed and seconded by Councillor R. Anwar, that:

Council notes the dangerous state of roads across Pendle leading to huge potholes across the Borough.

Council expresses dissatisfaction at the Reform led Lancashire Council lack of priority in dealing with the potholes.

Council resolves to

Ask for an urgent Officer/member meeting between Pendle council and Lancashire County Council to discuss urgent repairs to the road network.

Ask for Lancashire County Council to allocate additional funding for Pendle for future repairs to the roads.

Councillor L. Whipp put forward the following friendly amendment at meeting which was accepted and agreed and seconded by the mover of the original motion as follows:

Delete all above wording in the original motion and replace with-

Council notes the dangerous state of roads across Pendle and the increasing proliferation of road defects. In Pendle, Collisions (all severities) were recorded as **116** in '22, **143** in '23, and **139** in 2024. It's estimated that nationally, **11%** of collisions are caused by road defects. In 2024:

- **70%** of all casualties were involved in collisions on roads with speed limits of 30mph or less.
- 62% of all casualties were male, 38% female.
- The peak age groups (5-year range) for casualties were 15-19, and 20-24 years.
- **39% (n=16)** of KSI casualties in Pendle were pedestrians.
- **50% (n=4)** of child KSI casualties in 2024 were pedestrians.

Council notes that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority has adopted a **Vision Zero Strategy**, refuting the traffic engineering philosophy of accident 'costs' being unavoidable, focussing on safe roads, safe behaviours, safe speeds, safe vehicles, and post-collision response.

Council believes that **no death or serious injury is acceptable on our roads**; Lancashire must adopt a Vision Zero approach to road safety to eliminate all traffic fatalities and serious injuries to support safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for everyone in our community. This council believes the highway authority has a moral duty to act when a collision occurs, to ensure that tragic loss of life is not reduced to a statistic.

Council expresses dissatisfaction that the Reform-led Lancashire Council does not have a strategic Vision Zero plan, and notes that at its budget meeting on the 27th of February Reform voted against more funding to address road defects despite a backlog of 50,000+ across Lancashire.

Council also notes the campaign by the **Walk Wheel Cycle Trust** for local authorities to embed public health outcomes in transport, public realm, and planning. WWCT has developed tools, already in use across the country, for local authorities to engage with communities that wish to make their local environment safe, healthy, and enjoyable.

Council resolves to:

Write to Lancashire County Council and Leaders across Lancashire, promoting the adoption of a strategic **Vision Zero** plan to address road safety, and to adopt a **Healthy Street Approach**, with emphasis on local communities having a voice through **Healthy Street Design Checks**.

Request an urgent Officer/Member meeting between Pendle Council and Lancashire County Council to discuss urgent repairs to the road network.

Demand that Lancashire County Council allocates equitable funding to Pendle to address defects including potholes and road design that pose a risk to the health, safety, and wellbeing of residents.

Several Members spoke in support of this Motion.

Councillor M. Atkinson commented on the backlog of pothole cases that Reform UK had inherited from the former administration at Lancashire County Council (LCC). Councillor Atkinson added that LCC had 47,000 fewer potholes as just before December 2025 that it did at the same point 12 months earlier. There was a maintenance backlog across the whole network of £650m. She added that the only funding received towards these works from Central Government last year amounted to only £20m.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED

Accordingly.

His Worship the Mayor _____

Appendix 1(a) – Liberal Democrat / Independent Group Shared Administration's Budget proposals
Appendix 1(b) – Conservative Budget proposals
Appendix 2(a) – Council Agreed Budget – Revenue
Appendix 2(b) – Council Agreed Budget – Capital
Appendix 3 – Council Tax Resolution