

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET EXECUTIVE
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL
ON 19TH FEBRUARY 2026**

PRESENT –

Councillor D. Whipp (Chair)

Councillors

*Z. Ali
A. Bell
D. Hartley
A. Mahmood
L. Whipp*

Also in attendance:

Councillors A. Sutcliffe, D. Cockburn-Price and S. Cockburn-Price

Officers in attendance

<i>Dean Langton</i>	<i>Chief Executive</i>
<i>Phillip Spurr</i>	<i>Director of Place</i>
<i>Karen Spencer</i>	<i>Director of Resources</i>
<i>Howard Culshaw</i>	<i>Head of Legal and Democratic Services</i>
<i>John Halton</i>	<i>Principal Planning Officer (Policy)</i>
<i>Paul Preston</i>	<i>Democratic Services Manager</i>

*Public: None
Press: None*

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M. Hanif



118. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Members' attention was also drawn to the requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct relating to the disclosure of Other Registrable Interests and Non-Registrable Interests.

Councillor D. Whipp declared an Other Registrable Interest in Minute 123 below (Triennial Actuarial Valuation of the Lancashire County Pension Fund) as he was a Lancashire County Councillor and served as a member on the Pensions Committee.

119.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

120.

MINUTES

The minutes of the under-mentioned meeting were moved and seconded as a correct record.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

121.

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL PLAN 2026-28

The Leader of the Council introduced the report.

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.

Councillor S. Cockburn-Price commented on the wording of the fifth ticked bullet point on the “What we will do” section on page 7 of the report which currently read “Our staff will live the organisation’s corporate objectives, and we will recognise their achievements” and felt this sentence needed better clarity and rewording. Executive agreed that this sentence should be reworded in the document.

RECOMMENDATION TO FULL 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.

122. PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT – QUARTER 3, 2025/26

The Executive Member for Community and Performance introduced the report which provided Executive with performance monitoring information for the period 1st April, 2025 to 31st December 2025.

He added he had regular monthly meetings with the Executive Member for Corporate and Human Resources and Performance Officers in the on-going monitoring of performance.

Executive (19.02.2026)

A question was asked about handling complaints (flagged red) as detailed in paragraph 3.13 of the submitted report. It was noted that complaints handled within timescales (DIR 1) had previously been untargeted for data collection purposes only whilst processes and systems were reviewed and improved. Future actions and targets from Quarter 3, 2025/26 were detailed in the submitted report.

Concerns were raised about the high levels of sickness absence (flagged Red) in the Council, paragraph 3.14 of the submitted report, which continued to be above the desired target (4.8 days for the year) and was showing at the end of November at just over 7.8 days. The Chief Executive responded that the high figure was due to a small number of staff on long term sickness absence, for long term ill-health conditions, such as cancer, which were being monitored and managed by managers and Human Resources.

Shorter term absences were also being actively managed and the Chief Executive also referred to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and other measures available through the consistent application of sickness absence measures by managers throughout the Council, such as the use of welfare meetings, formal improvement notices and attendance capability hearings.

Cllr A. Sutcliffe commented on the PLT Wetside Attendance (flagged red). As outlined in the submitted report, Paragraph 3.17, this was due to the expected seasonal decrease and a two-week closure in December which reduced the number of attendees by over 10,000.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

123. TRIENNIAL ACTUARIAL VALUATION OF THE LANCASHIRE COUNTY PENSION FUND

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which provided Executive with details of the outcome of the latest actuarial valuation of the Lancashire County Pension Fund.

All Local Government pension funds were subject to a triennial review, the outcome of which was used to inform the amount of pension contributions that Employers should make to the fund.

Cllr D. Whipp added that following lobbying by himself, and with the Pension Fund performing well, the Pension Fund Strategy had been adjusted and this had resulted in Pendle Borough Council's required contribution to the Pension Fund being reduced substantially.

Cllr D. Cockburn-Price commented on and welcomed the report.

RESOLVED: That Executive

(1) notes the outcome of the 2025 actuarial valuation of the Lancashire County Pension Fund and the implications for Pendle Borough Council;

(2) for the reasons set out in the report, agree to create an allowance for pension strain payments as part of the determination of the Employers Contribution Rate for 2026/27 to 2028/29; and

(3) note that further to resolution (2) above, that the Employers Contribution Rate would be 12.0% for each year, 2026/27 to 2028/29.

124. QUARTER 3 – REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING 2025/26

The Leader of the Council introduced a report the purpose of which was to provide a revenue and capital outturn, as at Quarter 3, 2025/26.

The position at Quarter 3 indicated a projected overspend on revenue budgets of £78k, which increased 2025/26 use of reserves of £575k. The Capital update included details of adjustments to the programme. The Capital Programme forecast outturn was £18.521m, with prudential borrowing required to fund the capital programme for this financial year being £4.874m

Cllr D. Whipp placed on record his thanks for the work of the staff in Finance in managing the Council's finances and also commented on paragraph 3.11 of the submitted report, welcoming the work of staff involved in the increase in the take up of the trade waste service which had resulted in a forecast increase in net income of c£109k.

Cllr A. Sutcliffe commented on paragraph 3.9 of the submitted report and expressed disappointment that progress in returning stall holders to the Market Building at Colne had been delayed and that the costs of running temporary sites were set to exceed the budget in this area by £40k.

Cllrs D. Cockburn-Price and A. Mahmood further commented on the report.

RESOLVED: That Executive

(1) notes the Quarter 3 position on the Council's Revenue Budgets for 2025/26;

(2) notes the Quarter 3 position on the Council's revised Capital Programme for 2025/26 and

(3) In light of the significant projected overspend, request Officers to bring back proposals to mitigate the projected overspend thereby reducing the reliance on reserves.

125. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2026/27

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which recommended to Executive, the Corporate Leadership Team's proposed General Fund revenue Budget for 2026/27. The report also recommended the level of Council Tax for 2026/27 and acknowledged in both cases that these were matters that Full Council would consider at its meeting to be held on 2nd March, 2026.

The following Appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A – Draft Statement of Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves 2026/27.
- Appendix B – Review of the Minimum Working Balance.
- Appendix C – “Firming Up” Adjustments for Base Budget 2026/27.
- Appendix D – Proposed savings from the leisure Trust.
- Appendix E – Estimates of Reserves and Balances 2026/29
- Appendix F – Council Tax Exemptions.
- Appendix G – Corporate Leadership Team's Proposed Budget for 2026/27.
- Appendix H – Budget Consultation Outcome.
- Appendix I – Town and Parish Council Precepts 2026/27.

Executive (19.02.2026)

Cllr D. Whipp commented on the report and added that the Council was now in a stronger financial position than 3-4 years ago and mentioned the Council had not only maintained the three swimming pools in the Borough, but that it was now investing £5-£6m upgrading these facilities.

He also mentioned the introduction of the weekly food waste collection service but that no New Burden Funding had been provided by Central Government towards the provision of this service.

Cllr D. Cockburn-Price further commented on the report and was provided with clarity by the Chief Executive that regarding the recovery grant as detailed at paragraph 3.29 of the submitted report, as in the current year and despite indicating it would not be paid, the Government would continue to provide the Council with a recovery grant of £453k.

Executive made the following resolutions.

RESOLVED: That Executive

(1) notes the proposal to maintain the General Fund Minimum Working Balance at £1.0m;

(2) notes the projected outturn position in the current financial year, details of which were set out in separate report on the Executive agenda;

(3) in relation to the Pendle Leisure Trust, subject to consideration of the savings proposals for 2026/27, agree to provide a grant of £1,507,410 in 2026/27;

(4) notes and agrees the allocation of funding from the Budget Strategy Reserves towards the Transition Fund for Local Government Reorganisation as set out in the report;

(5) notes the General Fund Budget Requirement for 2026/27 having regard to the recommended budget as set out in this report (and detailed at Appendix G)

(6) further to consideration of the budget proposals in this report, Executive notes the recommendation to Council on 2nd March, 2026, for a Band D Council Tax for 2026/27 of £316.71, being an increase of £9.19 (2.99%) on the current level of Council Tax;

(7) requires each Service to operate within its budget for 2026/27 once approved, and that these budgets be cash limited and subject to regular monitoring and control; and

(8) request that a further report be brought back to a future meeting of the Executive updating the Financial Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 to 2028/29.

126. GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which provided details of the General Fund Capital Budget for 2026/27.

The report recommended to Executive, the Corporate Leadership Team's proposed General Fund Capital programme 2026/27. It was noted that subject to Executive's consideration, the proposed Capital Programme for 2026/27 would be considered by Budget Council on 2nd March, 2026.

Executive (19.02.2026)

An updated Capital Strategy 2026/29 was also provided and considered by the Executive. The Capital Programme 2026/27 was underpinned by the updated Strategy. Further, in support of the development of the capital programme 2026/27, information was also provided on the Council's forecast outturn 2025/26.

The following Appendices were attached to the report:

- 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. Cockburn-Price commented on paragraphs 7.14 and paragraphs 10.10 and 10.11 of the submitted report, to which the Chief Executive responded.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL: That Council

- (1) notes the forecast outturn position in the current financial year, details of which were set out in a separate report on this Executive agenda.
- (2) approves the Capital Strategy for 2026/29, as presented at Appendix A to the submitted report.
- (3) approves the proposed Capital Programme as set out at Appendix B to the submitted report.
- (4) grants delegated authority to Director of Resources, as the Council's Chief Finance Officer, to determine the most appropriate method of financing the Capital programme 2026/27 to ensure the use of capital resources was optimised by the Council.
- (5) notes the indicative programmes for 2027/28 and 2028/29 as shown at Appendix B to the submitted report and acknowledge these would be subject to a further review as part of the development of future years capital programmes (subject to Local Government reorganisation).
- (6) Approves the Prudential Indicators as shown at Appendix C to the submitted report.

127. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

The Executive Member for Strategic and Local Planning Infrastructure introduced this item and gave an overview of the proposed responses on this matter as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report. There were 225 questions set out in the document which covered a wide range of topics. It was drawn to Executive's attention the main impacts for Pendle were as set out in Section 2 and the proposals set out how local plans would be reviewed once adopted.

John Halton, the Council's Principal Planning Officer (Policy) further commented on Neighbourhood Plans and the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Cllr S. Cockburn-Price commented on the proposed responses to some of the questions in the document and made a few suggestions for amended responses to some of the questions that were noted by both the Executive Member for Strategic and Local Planning Infrastructure and the Principal Planning Officer (Policy). The Executive Member added that she would consider the suggestions raised by Cllr S. Cockburn-Price following this meeting.

Executive (19.02.2026)

RESOLVED

(1) That Executive agrees the initial response as set out at Appendix A to the submitted report, subject to any further revisions agreed by the Executive Member having further considered the comments raised by Cllr S. Cockburn-Price following this meeting.

(2) That the final response be delegated to the Chief Executive to agree, in consultation with Executive Member for Strategic and Local Planning Infrastructure.

128. FOREST OF BOWLAND NATIONAL LANDSCAPE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN 2026-2031 CONSULTATION

The Executive Member for Strategic and Local Planning Infrastructure introduced this item.

RESOLVED

That Executive agrees that the draft management plan be endorsed and published.

129. TOGETHER AN ACTIVE FUTURE (DEEPENING PHASE)

The report was presented on behalf the Executive Member for Health and Leisure Services who had tendered his apologies for this meeting.

The Director of Resources reported that the next phase of the Pennine Lancashire Together an Active Future (TaAF) programme (Deepening) had now commenced. Funding of £112,500 would be allocated to Pendle Borough Council for the delivery period January 2026 - March 2028, to be passported to Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT), which was delivering the programme on behalf of Pendle Borough Council.

Cllr A. Sutcliffe commented on the report and enquired if Members could be briefed in more detail on this scheme, its purpose and outcomes following the meeting.

Cllr Z. Ali also commented on the report.

RESOLVED: That Executive

(1) Accepts the Together an Active Future grant for the local delivery pilot of £112,500, broken down £12,500 in 2025/26, £50,000 in 2026/27 and £50,000 in 2027/28.

(2) Delegates authority to the Director of Resources to approve the Deed of Variation Agreement relating to the Together an Active Future Local Delivery Pilot.

(3) Delegates authority to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council to accept any future Together an Active Future grant awards.

130.

FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan published on 15th January 2026 was submitted for information.

RESOLVED

That the Executive Forward Plan and information contained therein be noted.

131.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That in pursuance of the power contained in Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the next item of business when it was likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings or the business to be transacted that there would be disclosure of exempt information which was likely to reveal the identity of an individual and/or in relation to exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

132. REFERRAL FROM COLNE AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE – STRIP OF LAND AT COLNE CEMETERY, COLNE

The Leader of the Council presented a report which informed the Executive of a referral from the Colne and District Area Committee regarding a strip of land at Colne Cemetery, Colne as set out in the exempt report.

At the meeting of the Colne and District Committee held on 5th February, 2026, the Colne and District Committee made the following recommendation to Executive:

That the Executive be advised that this Committee has no objections to the proposals as set out in the report, subject to appropriate materials being used in the construction of the proposed wall.

Councillor S. Cockburn-Price commented on the report and enquired about the type of walling and railings proposed to be used. Cllr D Whipp responded that this would be considered as part of the negotiations on the terms of conditions of sale to the owners.

REASON

The sale of the land would generate a capital receipt and would relieve the Council of any future maintenance liability.

RESOLVED

That the Executive agrees the recommendation as set out in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the submitted exempt report.

CHAIR _____