MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT OFFICE TEAMS
ON 19TH OCTOBER 2026

PRESENT –

Councillor Yvonne Tennant (Chair)

Councillors

Zafar Ali
Chris Church
Sarah Cockburn-Price
David Cockburn-Price

Co-optees

Claire Brightley
Sylvia Godfrey
David Penney
Jane Wood

Officers in attendance:

Rebecca Ferguson *Committee Administrator, Pendle Borough Council (PBC)*
Karen Spencer *Director of Resources, PBC*
Neil Yates *Head of Property & Engineering, PBC*

(Apologies for absence were received from Michael Powell & Angela Moran.)

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1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th August 2026 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th August 2026 be approved as a correct record.

2. INTRODUCTION FROM THE NEWLY APPOINTED HEAD OF PROPERTY & ENGINEERING

The Head of Property & Engineering provided an update on work undertaken since taking up post. This included Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund projects at Wavelengths and West Craven Leisure Centre, which were focused on low-carbon heating systems and associated energy efficiency improvements.

An update was also given on feasibility work being undertaken to assess the potential installation of solar panels on various Council assets, including Nelson Town Hall and other Council-owned buildings. Members were advised that no capital funding had yet been secured and that feasibility and structural assessments were currently being

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undertaken.

The Head of Property & Engineering also reported on the third phase of the Earby Flood Alleviation Scheme, which focused on natural flood management measures including leaky dams, water storage and peat restoration. It was explained that the scheme was being delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency and local landowners.

Information was also provided on discussions with external funding organisations including United Utilities, Electricity North West and GB Energy regarding future sustainability and climate-related projects.

Members asked questions regarding the decarbonisation works at the leisure centres, potential solar panel installations, available funding opportunities and flood risk management. Clarification was provided regarding current and future projects and opportunities for external grant funding.

AGREED

(1) That the update be noted.

(2) That further information be circulated to Members regarding the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund projects at Wavelengths and West Craven Leisure Centres.

3. CLIMATE EMERGENCY MANAGER RECRUITMENT UPDATE

The Director of Resources reported that no further progress had been made regarding recruitment to the vacant Climate Emergency Manager post. Following the postponement of Local Government Reorganisation and emerging budget pressures, all vacant posts across the Council were currently being reviewed as part of the budget-setting process.

Members reiterated the importance of the post and highlighted examples from neighbouring authorities where climate officers and climate teams had successfully secured external grant funding and delivered projects which had generated significant benefits.

Questions were raised regarding opportunities for shared arrangements with neighbouring authorities. Members were advised that discussions with Burnley Borough Council had confirmed that it did not employ a dedicated climate officer, whilst Rossendale Borough Council's officer was fully committed. Hyndburn Borough Council was identified as a potential authority with whom discussions could take place.

AGREED

(1) That the current position regarding recruitment to the Climate Emergency Manager post be noted.

(2) That officers explore opportunities for potential shared arrangements with neighbouring authorities, including Hyndburn Borough Council.

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4. PROGRESS AGAINST THE CLIMATE CHANGE STARTEGY ACTION PLAN

The Working Group considered the latest progress report against the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan.

Members discussed a number of actions contained within the Action Plan, including engagement with private landlords regarding minimum energy efficiency standards, support available to residents and businesses, annual emissions reporting and data collection arrangements.

Questions were raised regarding the enforcement of minimum energy efficiency standards, the number of businesses receiving support, progress against household retrofit initiatives, taxi licensing requirements and arrangements for monitoring and auditing carbon emissions data.

The Director of Resources advised that additional information would be sought from relevant service areas and circulated to Members following the meeting.

Members welcomed the continued progress being made across a number of actions despite the continued vacancy within the Climate Emergency Manager post.

The Head of Property & Engineering advised that work was underway to collate emissions data and prepare the annual emissions report, and that opportunities would be taken to publicise areas where carbon reductions had been achieved.

The Working Group also discussed issues relating to fly-tipping, bulky waste collections and recycling facilities and opportunities to improve public awareness of available services.

AGREED

(1) That the progress report be noted.

(2) That responses to Members' questions regarding specific Action Plan items be obtained and circulated following the meeting.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Working Group discussed community engagement activities and considered ways of increasing public participation in climate-related initiatives.

Reference was made to the forthcoming screening of the National Emergency Briefing in Colne. Members also discussed the importance of using a wider range of communication methods to engage different audiences, including social media, short-form video content and community-led campaigns.

Members highlighted a number of successful local initiatives, including repair cafes, clothing reuse projects, tree nursery projects, water quality monitoring programmes and community environmental groups operating across Pendle.

Discussion took place regarding the role of community organisations in promoting

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climate action and the potential for the Council to act as a facilitator by helping to signpost residents to local groups and projects.

Officers advised that opportunities for collaboration through the Council's community engagement arrangements would be explored.

6. FUNDING & OPPORTUNITIES

Members considered current funding opportunities and discussed the recent reopening and subsequent closure of the Government's Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme.

Concern was expressed regarding the short application window and the impact this had on local farmers' ability to access support. Members considered whether the Council should make representations to Government regarding the operation of the scheme, particularly in relation to upland and moorland farming communities.

Reference was also made to support available through organisations such as Ribble Rivers Trust and Lancashire Climate Action Network.

7. POTENTIAL FUTURE GUEST SPEAKERS TO BE SCHEDULED

Members considered future guest speaker opportunities.

In addition to the previously identified speakers, Members suggested inviting representatives involved in retrofit and home energy efficiency projects being undertaken within Calderdale. It was noted that a number of innovative projects were currently being developed to support improvements to older housing stock and community retrofit programmes.

Members felt that lessons learned from these schemes could provide valuable information applicable within Pendle.

AGREED

That enquiries be made regarding the availability of representatives from the Calderdale retrofit programme to attend a future meeting of the Working Group.

8. OUTSTANDING ITEMS

Plant Based Treaty

The Chair reported that the Executive had expressed reservations regarding the proposal, primarily due to concerns about the potential impact on the farming community. Members reiterated their support for the treaty and noted that endorsement did not require adoption of all elements of the initiative.

National Emergency Briefing

An update was provided regarding the forthcoming local screening of the National Emergency Briefing film in Colne. Members discussed opportunities for further screenings and the possibility of holding a larger public event in the future.

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9. ANY OTHER BUSNESS

Members discussed the relationship between housing policy and climate change, including the environmental benefits of bringing long-term empty properties back into use.

Reference was made to recent Government proposals relating to empty homes and Members discussed opportunities to reduce pressure on greenfield development through the reuse and retrofit of existing housing stock.

It was suggested that housing and climate change be considered as a future agenda item. Members were advised that information gathered from relevant Government bodies and parliamentary committees could be circulated prior to the next meeting.

AGREED

(1) That housing, empty properties and climate change be included as a future agenda item.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, 14th December 2026 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday 15th February 2027 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday 12th April 2027 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday 21st June 2027 at 6.00 p.m.

Chair _____

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