

Special Meeting of: The Council to confer the title Honorary Alderman
Ordinary Meeting of: The Council

Wednesday 16th July 2025 at 6.30pm or at the conclusion of Question Time and Public Engagement whichever is the later.

Venue: Council Chamber, The Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup. OL13 0BB



The meeting will also be live streamed at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrLsMDOP7AYxik5pNP0gTIA/streams>

Supported by: Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager Tel: 01706 252422
 Email: democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk

ITEM		Lead Member/Contact Officer
A.	SPECIAL MEETING ITEMS	
A1.	Honorary Aldermen To consider the nominations and to confer the title of Honorary Alderman of the Borough of Rossendale to the following: Barbara Ashworth	Rob Huntington, Chief Executive. Tel: (01706) 252447 Email: robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk
B.	BUSINESS MATTERS	
B1.	Apologies for Absence	
B2.	To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meetings on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16th May 2025 4th June 2025 	
B3.	Declarations of Interest <i>Members are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to seek advice on interest issues if necessary.</i> Members are requested to indicate at this stage, any items on the agenda in which they intend to declare an interest. Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the Council's Code of Conduct, they must declare the nature of any personal interest and, if the interest is prejudicial, withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item.	Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal/ Monitoring Officer 01706 252438 clarebirtwistle@rossendalebc.gov.uk
B4.	Urgent Items of Business To note any items which the Chair has agreed to add to the Agenda on the grounds of urgency.	

The agenda and reports are also available for inspection on the Council's website <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/>. Other formats are available on request. Tel 01706 217777 or contact Rossendale Borough Council, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB

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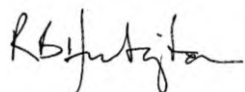


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C.	Communications from the Mayor, the Leader or Head of Paid Service To receive any communications from the Mayor, the Leader, or the Head of the Paid Service that they may wish to lay before the Council.	The Mayor, Councillor Michelle Smith, The Leader, Councillor A.Barnes and Rob Huntington, Chief Executive 01706 252447 robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D.	ORDINARY BUSINESS	
D1.	Support for the redevelopment of the former Bingo Hall, Bacup To consider support for the redevelopment of the former Bingo Hall, Bacup	Councillor Harris/ David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development 01706 252429 davidsmurthwaite@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D2.	Extension of burial plots To consider the extension of burial plots report	Councillor Lythgoe/Andy Taylor, Head of Environmental Services 01706 252519 andrewtaylor@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D3.	Procurement of energy contract via framework To consider the energy procurement report	Councillor Lythgoe/Clare Law, Head of People and Policy 01706 252457 clarelaw@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D4.	Local Government Reorganisation To consider the Local Government Reorganisation report	Councillor A Barnes/ Rob Huntington, Chief Executive 01706 252447 robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D5.	Urgent decisions To note any urgent key decisions that have been taken by the Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council.	Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal/ Monitoring Officer (01706) 252438 clarebirtwistle@rossendalebc.gov.uk
E.	RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES	
E1.	Recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme	Councillor Lythgoe/ David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development 01706 252429 davidsmurthwaite@rossendalebc.gov.uk
F.	NOTICES OF MOTION	
F1.	To consider a notice of motion submitted by Councillors Adshead and Bauld To consider a notice of motion as set out in item E1 regarding sustainable food strategy.	Councillor Julie Adshead Councillor Bob Bauld



Rob Huntington
Chief Executive

Date Published: 8th July 2025

Re-published: 9th July 2025

COUNCILLOR JUDITH DRIVER, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 16th May 2025

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor Driver (in the Chair)
Councillors Adshead, Ashworth, A. Barnes, S. Barnes, Bauld, Bleakley, Cheetham, Eaton, Gill, Hancock, Harris, Harrison, Hodgkiss, Holland, Kenyon, Looker, Lythgoe, McInnes, McMahon, Neal, Norton, Payne, Procter, M.Smith, Walmsley and Woods.

IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Huntington, Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal/Monitoring Officer
Stephanie Carroll, Civic Services Officer and Leader's PA
Phillip Veevers, Mayor's Attendant
Darren Kershaw, Mayor's Attendant

ALSO PRESENT: 43 guests

A short silence was held as a mark of respect for former councillor Mike Royds.

CIVIC MATTERS

1. Election of the Mayor

The Mayor invited nominations for the position of Mayor for the Municipal Year 2025/26. Councillor Michelle Smith was proposed by Councillor Andrew Walmsley and seconded by Councillor Alan Woods.

Resolved:

That Councillor Michelle Smith be appointed as the Mayor for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

NB: The New Mayor, Councillor Michelle Smith, chaired the meeting from this point forward.

2. Election of the Deputy Mayor

The Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2025/26. Councillor Liz McInnes was proposed as Deputy Mayor for external engagements only by Councillor Alyson Barnes and seconded by Councillor Alan Neal.

Resolved:

That Councillor Liz McInnes be appointed as the Deputy Mayor for external engagements only for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

3. Presentation and Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor and Consort

Councillor Michelle Smith moved the vote of thanks and spoke in relation to the retiring Mayor and Consort, seconded by Councillor Simon Holland, to which Councillor Judith Driver responded.

Resolved:

That the grateful thanks of this Council be offered to Councillor Judith Driver for the excellent manner in which she has fulfilled her duties as Mayor.

BUSINESS MATTERS

4. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Belli and S.Smith.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd April 2025 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

6. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8. Communications from the Mayor, the Leader or Head of Paid Service

There were no communications.

9. Urgent decisions

Council noted the Special Urgency Decision taken 11th April 2025 regarding the acceptance of the Household Support Fund 7 (HSF7) grant as detailed in the decision notice.

10. Political Balance, Committees and Outside Bodies 2025/2026

The Council considered the Political Balance, Committees and Outside Bodies report.

Resolved:

That the Council confirm appointments proposed by the various political groups as set out in the following appendices:

- Appendix A - Draft political balance calculation
- Appendix B - Draft committees of the Council, working groups, member champions and other meetings.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Council can effectively conduct its business.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7.25pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date

COUNCILLOR MICHELLE SMITH, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

DATE OF MEETING: 4th June 2025

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor M. Smith (in the Chair)
Councillors Ashworth, A. Barnes, S. Barnes, Cheetham, Eaton, Hancock, Harris, Holland, Kenyon, Looker, Lythgoe, McInnes, McMahon, Neal, Norton (in part), Payne, Procter, S. Smith, Walmsley and Woods.

IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Huntington, Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Kwabena Osei Poku, Climate Change Programme Officer
Phillip Veevers, Mayor's Attendant

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 1 press

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Adshead, Bauld, Belli, Bleakley, Driver, Gill, Harrison and Hodgkiss

2. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

EXTRAORDINARY BUSINESS

4. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Project at Marl Pits Leisure Centre

The Council considered the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Project at Marl Pits Leisure Centre report.

Thanks was given to the officers for their work and passion for such schemes.

N.B. Councillor Norton entered the meeting.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- It was important to do what we could for climate change both nationally and locally.
- Rossendale Valley Energy was crowd funding and trying to raise funds locally for solar panels.
- Marl Pits Leisure Centre was a council owned asset. The Council was investing in its property. There were no barriers and the centre was open to users in the Borough.
- The Carbon Reduction Fund was directing funds into Council assets.
- A Climate Change Emergency was declared in 2019 and anything to reduce the carbon footprint was welcomed.
- Some small businesses also benefited from the Carbon Reduction Fund.

Resolved:

1. To note the award of £1,379m in capital funding from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 4 together with match funding of £300k from the

Carbon Reduction Fund as approved, to replace the current fossil fuel heating system with a low carbon alternative at Marl Pits Leisure Centre.

2. To approve the inclusion of the scheme in the Council's Capital Programme.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development, the Director of Resources and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Lead Members for Regeneration and Resources to procure and appoint consultancy and contractors to deliver the works.

Reason for Decision

The successful completion of the decarbonisation project at Marl Pits will support the Council in achieving net zero emissions across its corporate assets by 2030. The measures are estimated to deliver annual carbon savings of approximately 194 tonnes of direct carbon emissions. The PSDS project aligns strongly with the Council's Corporate Plan and Core Strategy, particularly the priorities of addressing climate change and reducing carbon emissions. Implementing these energy efficiency measures and replacing fossil fuel-based boilers directly contributes to the Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

As it was Volunteers Week, the Mayor gave thanks to the community's volunteers, highlighting their invaluable contributions to the borough, including their selfless efforts of dedicating their time, energy, and passion to support various community initiatives. Such endeavours strengthened neighbourhoods, fostered resilience, and cultivated a spirit of togetherness that defined Rossendale. The Mayor called upon residents to continue supporting one another, build stronger connections, and work towards making Rossendale an even better place to live and work, and care for one another. On behalf of the Council she extended a sincere thank you to the "quiet heroes" whose remarkable works uplifted the community.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 6.55pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date

Subject:	Support for the Redevelopment of the Former Bingo Hall, Bacup	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	16 th July 2025
Report of:	Economic Development Officer	Lead Member:	Economic Development
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>	
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: n/a
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: n/a
Contact Officer:	Andrew dean	Telephone:	01706 252480
Email:	andrewdean@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Council enters into an agreement with Brother Investments to provide a maximum grant of £535,000 for the purposes to demolish the former Bingo Hall and Snooker Club in Bacup and construct high quality business units. The sum to be earmarked from the original proposed £1.8m match fund to be provided by the Council to the Levelling Up Fund as approved in the Execution Plan at Council 28th June 2023.
- 1.2 To delegate authority to the Head of Legal, Director of Resources and Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development and Resources to procure any consultants necessary and enter into any agreements related to this project.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Former Bingo Hall in Bacup has been unused since the early 2000's. It is now in an advanced state of dilapidation.
- The site is a key gateway in Bacup Town Centre and is recognised as a key action in the Bacup 2040 strategic board.
- Planning permission has been granted to demolish the building and build 5 business units and redevelop the snooker hall.
- Due to the high cost of construction and the level of market rents in Bacup, there is a viability gap which is stopping the scheme being developed.
- This report proposes to subsidise Brother Investments by way of a grant of £535,000 to address the viability gap.
- The grant will be subject to a range of conditions including payment schedule and pay back clauses.
- The funding will come from Rossendale Borough Council's £1.8m contribution to the wider capital regeneration project LUF Programme.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The building, originally constructed in 1931 and converted into a bingo hall in the 1960s, has been derelict since the early 2000s. The buildings were bought by Brother Investments in 2009.

- 3.2 The condition of the Bingo Hall and the vacant Snooker Hall is very poor both internally and externally and this visual appearance and deterioration is having a negative impact on the town's aesthetic.
- 3.3 In 2023, planning consent was granted to demolish the buildings and construct 5 business units. The building is prominent within the conservation area, with a distinctive façade. This required the new build to be of high quality, with a façade of the scale that relates to the wider conservation area. It is expected that this development will rejuvenate this area of Bacup Town Centre, creating 5 new opportunities for businesses and increase employment and skills within the centre.
- 3.4 A recent review of the proposed Bacup Market development contained the ambition to use some of the Capital Regeneration Projects Levelling Up funding allocated to Bacup market to resolve long standing issues within the town centre. The former bingo hall, The Regal, was identified as an appropriate and compliant use of this funding given its location and the existing planning permissions.
- 3.5 Recently, the owners have submitted applications to discharge the planning conditions to Rossendale Borough Council showing willing to proceed with this development.
- 3.6 The proposal supports Rossendale Borough Council's Valley Plan, the Economic Development Strategy and also the Bacup 2040 Vision and Masterplan, which is underpinned by 4 key themes, enterprise, people, place and vibrancy. This proposal compliments other works that have taken place in the town centre, such as the Bacup Heritage Action Zone scheme.

4. Viability Assessment

- 4.1 The viability assessment comprises of the expected cost of construction and also the final value of the building which is based on the likely rental returns. The difference between the two figures provides the viability gap. Brother Investments have provided their expected costs and Trevor Dawson have provided an independent view on the likely value after construction based on square footage values of similar schemes. The total development is expected to cost circa £1.9m.
- 4.2 Rossendale Borough Council independently commissioned Appleyard & Trew to independently review the development costs. They concluded that there is no development profit within the costs and that the amounts are comparable of other developments.
- 4.3 As a result, the recommendation is to provide a grant to the owners of the property to support with the development and bringing the building back into use. It is proposed that this grant is provided out of Rossendale Borough Council's match funding allocation to the capital regeneration projects Levelling Up fund.

5. Grant Conditions

- 5.1 The grant will be subject to conditions in order to ensure it is spent in the appropriate manner and that profits from any sale of the property are not made.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that the grant will be issued to the property owner in arrears, based on monthly valuations. Rossendale Borough Council will release payment on verification of the valuation

at a rate of 28% of the actual costs that month. This percentage has been determined as £535k/£1.9m x 100.

- 5.3 Payments will cease once the contribution reaches £480k and the final £55k will be made available at practical completion.
- 5.4 An independent QS will be employed for a 6-12m period for a value of circa £6k. Their work will cease when the grant value is reached. Compliant procurement of the specialist will be undertaken in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 5.5 The expected terms of the grant will include:
- The development will retain its proposed use for at least 15 years.
 - The development will need to be delivered within a 12m period from the signing of a Grant Funding Agreement.
 - The grant will not fund any activity prior to the signing of the Grant Funding Agreement.
 - If any part of the site is sold within the first five years from the date of the final payment then 100% of the grant shall be returned to RBC
 - Between year 6 and 15, an appropriate formula will be agreed with the grantee to apportion any development gains within this period up to a maximum of the or
 - The grant will go directly to the owner, in arrears and based on a monthly valuation.
 - Works commence on site within 3 months of signing the Grant Funding Agreement with RBC.
- 5.6 Rossendale Borough Council will ensure that all subsidy control requirements are completed as necessary.

6 RISK

- Overestimated viability gap: If the cost estimates or projected end-values are inaccurate, the actual gap may be smaller (leading to over-subsidy) or larger (requiring further funding or risking project failure). *Mitigation: The grant amount remains fixed and cannot be adjusted if the construction envelope exceeds the proposed costs.* The grant is paid on valuations and any reduction in the cost envelope will have a direct impact on a pound for pound basis on the grant payable.
- Contractual default: If the developer fails to deliver or adhere to terms. *Mitigation: The funding will be released only against independently certified monthly valuations and any default will trigger the grant clawback clause and the immediate cessation of any potential further grant payments.*
- Perception of favouritism: Awarding funds to a specific private developer could create perceptions of preferential treatment, particularly if it is viewed a profit can be made from the scheme. *Mitigation: This proposal has been discussed at length with the Bacup 2040 Board, who are independent stakeholders representing the town. It is also a scheme that features significantly as part of the Bacup 2040 Vision and Masterplan. Independent assessments have confirmed that a profit is not included within the costs and that the grant clawback would be triggered if any sale takes place within a 15-year period.*

7 FINANCE

Version Number:	1	Page:	3 of 4
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7.1 Funding by way of Council match to Levelling Up Funding was agreed at Council in June 2023. Any public funding subsidy considerations will be addressed before any grant funds are remitted.

8 LEGAL

8.1 All grant and contractor agreements will be entered into prior to the release of any grant monies.

9 POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Any policy implications are included in the body of the report. There are no equality implications.

10 REASON FOR DECISION

10.1 The Bingo Hall has been a derelict building for a number of years. Providing a viability grant will unlock the key gateway site and transform this area into a vibrant place for enterprise.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Bacup Design Access Statement	Planning application: 2023/0158

Subject:	Extension of burial plots	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	16 th July 2025
Report of:	Head of Environmental Services	Portfolio Holder:	Environment and Corporate Services
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	David McChesney	Telephone:	01706 252584
Email:	davidmcchesney@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To add the development of new burial plots at Haslingden Cemetery to the Council's Capital Programme.
- 1.2 To delegate to the Head of Environmental Services in conjunction with the Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services, The Monitoring Officer and the Director of Resources the responsibility to procure all necessary consultants and contractors to deliver the project.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Feasibility studies have been carried out for extending both Rawtenstall and Haslingden Cemeteries' capacity for Muslim burials due to the current shortage of space on current plots.
- A decision was made to initially develop Haslingden Cemetery, and an area suitable for the burials has been identified.
- Designs have been shared with members of the Muslim Community from Rawtenstall and Haslingden who are in favour of the plans.
- The next step is to gain Council approval of funding to progress through planning, detailed construction specifications and the procurement process, and to appoint a contractor to deliver the projects.
- Costs for development are likely to be approximately £600,000 for Haslingden.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following discussions with the Muslim Community in 2021 regarding the future of burials for their faith at Rawtenstall and Haslingden, the council have been working with Harrison DD Consultants to carry out the necessary steps to develop concept designs for both sites. The work carried out by Harrison so far was procured via 3 quotes and to this stage has cost £6,930.
- 3.2 Following the necessary groundwater testing, topographical survey and initial costing exercise, it has been decided that the development at Haslingden will be pursued initially, with Rawtenstall being considered at a later date.
- 3.3 Officers have since met with representatives from both Rawtenstall and Haslingden Muslim communities to communicate the reasons for this decision, and to share the initial designs with them. The discussions were positive and a consensus has been reached on progressing with the concept design produced by Harrison DD.
- 3.4 The aim is to get the project ready for physical work at the beginning of 2026. The need for burial space in the short term has been addressed at both Rawtenstall and Haslingden. However, Haslingden will require additional capacity for Muslim burials by late 2025. Rawtenstall Cemetery has capacity until approximately late 2026.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 Designs were shared with representatives of the community and were well received. There will be space for 217 concrete vaults which will provide burial capacity for approximately 11 years.
- 4.2 The cost estimate for this site is £380,000 including consultant fees, surveys, planning, construction and post-construction. This does not include the vaults which will cost approximately £120,000 to purchase, taking the cost to approximately £500,000. The need for an additional area for parking in the cemetery is clear and a new ashes garden of remembrance is planned for the development which will mean that including a contingency the total approximate cost for the project will be c£600,000.
- 4.3 The site has been leased off in recent years and used for agricultural purposes. The lease was terminated in December 2024 to allow the development to progress. Due to the proposed change of use a full planning application will be required.
- 4.4 The current cost to purchase a grave space, vault and to inter the deceased is £4046. At this rate it is expected that the capital cost will be repaid within 7-8 years at a burial rate of 20 per year. Towards the end of the expected 11-year lifespan a decision will need to be made on whether to pursue phase 2.

Next steps

- 4.5 Authority from Council is sought to continue with the development at Haslingden Cemetery and add the project to the Capital Programme.

4.6 Options

1. Do nothing and make a decision that when current capacity is reached, Rossendale Borough Council will no longer offer areas for Muslim burials. This will be unpopular with the Muslim Community and will reduce the income generation of Rossendale's Cemeteries.
2. Proceed with development at Haslingden Cemetery and revisit Rawtenstall after this is completed. This has been discussed with representatives from both towns and has their approval.

5. RISK

- 5.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
- The council has worked alongside the community on this matter therefore failure to maintain momentum may affect relationships.
 - The development needs to progress due to the lack of space in current plots. This would lead to the council not being in a position to offer burials to the Muslim Community.
 - Failure to employ a specialist to do this work and attempt to carry out using in-house resources would risk the success of the projects due to lack of expertise.
 - Despite the initial cost, failure to develop the cemeteries would lead to a source of income generation being missed.

6. FINANCE

- 6.1 The proposal is not currently within the approved capital expenditure programme for 2025/26 and will therefore need Full Council approval to be added.

- 6.2 Based on estimated sales of 20 plots per year, by the end of the 11 year project life the project will have generated a surplus which will contribute towards the cost of cemetery staff time and ongoing running costs of the cemetery.
- 6.3 Whilst the current assumption is that the scheme will be funded by PWLB borrowing, when finalising the Capital Programme financing as a whole, officers will give consideration as to the optimum funding arrangements, which may include: use of capital receipts, internal borrowing and any other requirements for PWLB borrowing to minimise the financing cost.

7. LEGAL

- 7.1 The Council's Contract Procedure Rules will be adopted in procuring this work with all relevant legal agreements being signed prior to the commencement of works.
- 7.2 All statutory permissions and consents will be in place before project commencement.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no policy or equality implications. Any equality implications related to the project will be given consideration in a relevant and proportionate manner.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

- 9.1 The decision is to add the development of Haslingden Cemetery to the capital programme and allocate a budget of £600,000 for this purpose. This will mean that burials for the Muslim Community in Rossendale are supported for the next decade. This will address an issue for residents whilst continuing to provide a source of income for the Council.

No background papers

Subject:	Procurement of Energy contract via framework	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	16 th July 2025
Report of:	Facilities and Safety Manager	Lead Member:	Environment and Corporate Services
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required: No	Attached:	No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required: No	Attached:	No
Contact Officer:	Jane Riley	Telephone:	01706 252515
Email:	janeriley@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Council authorises the procurement of Gas and Electricity fixing for a 2-year period via a suitable framework.
- 1.2 That Council delegates the acceptance of framework pricing to the Director of Resources in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer and Lead Members for Resources and Environment, and Corporate Services.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The current contracts for Electricity and Gas expire on the 30th September (Electric) and 30th November (Gas). Rossendale Leisure Trust have opted not to partner with Rossendale Borough Council for future energy procurement, which has significantly reduced the value of the contracts.
- 2.2 The effect of this will see a significant reduction in the value of the gas procurement, a reduction of 64%. Electricity will be reduced by 21%. These will not affect the revenue budget for the Council as the costs for gas and electricity are currently recharged to the Trust.
- 2.3 Indicative prices suggest that the annual cost will be in the region of £300,000. This will be tested as part of the framework buying activity.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 To date, the council has used the services of an energy broker to secure the contracts for gas and electricity based on best value principles in place at the time.
- 3.2 Of the two frameworks officers have benchmarked, there are variations as to how the services are delivered, with one requiring an additional level of software to allow bill validation. When prices are confirmed the decision will be based on best value incorporating the need for additional software.
- 3.3 Given the decision of the Leisure Trust (excluding The Whitaker) to procure its gas and electricity supplies. This will lead to a significant drop in the value of the utilities procured by the council, but this will not impact on the Council revenue budget as all costs relating to the Trust are recharged. There may be some cash flow implications for the Trust Board to consider.

4. DETAILS

4.1 Zenergi Framework Considerations

Zenergi, acting as the Framework Administrator for the South West Essex Community Education Trust framework, offers a comprehensive energy management service. Their offering includes fixed contract procurement to provide budget certainty, a bill validation service to ensure accuracy and identify savings, and access to a dedicated customer portal for real-time energy data and reporting. Additionally, Zenergi supports metering strategy and compliance, and provides guidance on Net Zero planning and carbon reduction initiatives.

4.2 YPO Framework Considerations

The YPO framework offers full compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.

- Social value contributions through reinvestment in public services.
- Transparent fixed-rate pricing for the first six months, followed by a variable rate model that mitigates exposure to market volatility.
- Access to potential funding opportunities for schools.
- Dedicated support and aggregated purchasing power to secure competitive rates.

4.3 However, there is no bill validation included in the YPO offer so this would need to be procured separately.

Bill Validation Software

There is proposed bill validation software, Systems Link, which would cost in the region of £9k per annum. This system will support accurate invoice checking, usage monitoring, and reporting, reducing administrative burden and improving data accuracy. It can also link into the Council's accounting system for uploading invoices for accounting and payment. This would save significant time currently invested in bill checking by the Finance and Facilities departments.

5. RISK

5.1 Roll over the current contract. This would incur additional costs as deemed rates are likely to be 35% higher

5.2 Run tender across energy providers. Will take additional time and resource of officers and may not be complete by the expiry of the current contract leading to additional costs.

6. FINANCE

6.1 The costs of gas and electricity are in the Council's revenue budget any significant increase in charges would lead to a pressure. Fixing for 2 years leads to a level of certainty to allow mitigation and planning for any such pressure.

7. LEGAL

7.1 The procurement of energy contracts from established and available frameworks is in full compliance with the Council's constitution and the Procurement Act 2023. Subsequent contracts will be signed once pricing have been validated.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no policy or equalities implications.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 To obtain best value for gas and electricity supplies and to minimise the risk of price fluctuation in the current volatile economy.

No background papers

Subject:	Local Government Reorganisation	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	July 2025
Report of:	Chief Executive	Lead Member:	Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	X Forward Plan X	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: n/a
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: n/a
Contact Officer:	Rob Huntington	Telephone:	01706 252480
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1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1.1 That Full Council note the process and timetable for the development of proposals for local government reorganisation in Lancashire.
- 1.2 That Full Council support in principle the three unitary model, including a Pennine Lancashire unitary council covering Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Rossendale, Hyndburn, Pendle and Ribble Valley.
- 1.3 That Full Council delegate to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, the authority to agree the council's position in the development of proposals to be submitted to government on November 28th, 2025.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report sets out a summary of the process to develop proposals for local government reorganisation in Lancashire, alongside a brief description of some of the main options being considered for the potential new unitary councils. It proposes that the initial preferred position of Rossendale Borough Council should be a model of three unitary councils in Lancashire.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local government in Lancashire and some other areas of England operates in a two-tier system of governance (or three if parish and town councils are included) meaning that the delivery of local government services is split between the County Council and 12 district councils. Two unitary councils (Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen) border the county council area. Local Government reorganisation refers to changing the structure of local government in an area, so the existing councils cease to exist and are replaced by new unitary authorities that are responsible for the delivery of all local government services and functions in the area they serve.
- 3.2 Towards the end of 2024, the government published its White Paper on English Devolution. The White Paper included significant proposals in relation to devolution and local government reorganisation. On 5 February 2025, the government issued a letter to all areas of England with two-tier local governance arrangements issuing a statutory invitation for proposals for reorganisation. The government has set an expectation that 'every effort' should be made to work together to develop and make one submission for the whole of Lancashire but accepts that may not be possible. The government will consider any suitable proposals submitted by local authorities. The timescales are as follows.

- **21 March 2025** – check in point to demonstrate direction, momentum and assurance councils in Lancashire are working together. An interim plan was submitted setting out progress on developing proposals in line with government guidance and criteria.
- Between **March 2025 and 28th November 2025** – Lancashire Leaders and Chief Executives will lead on the development of proposals.
- **28th November 2025** – deadline for submission of final Local Government reorganisation proposals for Lancashire.
- **January 2026 to April 2026** – the government will consult on final agreed proposals.
- **May 2026 to August 2026** – the government will make its decision on the final proposal.
- **September 2026 to December 2026** – Local Government Reorganisation legislation will be prepared and laid before Parliament.
- **May 2027** – elections to the new shadow unitary councils.
- **May 2027 to December 2027** – any transitional legislation will be prepared and laid before Parliament.
- **April 2028** – Go Live and Vesting Day for new unitary councils.

3.3 This report sets out some background on related developments on devolution before setting out requirements from the government in relation to proposals for reorganisation; the current potential options available for local government structures; and the recommended position for Rossendale Borough Council to adopt.

4. Devolution

4.1 Devolution and local government reorganisation are not the same, although there is a close relationship in the context of the White Paper, as the government suggests that simpler local government structures support deeper devolution.

4.2 A Lancashire County Combined Authority (LCCA) has now been formally established in Lancashire. Its constituent members are Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council. District Councils are not able to be full constituent members of the LCCA and instead are represented by two district leaders as non-voting members. Government has asked the LCCA members to review the options for deepening devolution arrangements in the Autumn 2025, with strong encouragement for adopting a model that includes a directly elected mayor for Lancashire. The powers and funding for areas with a combined authority and an elected mayor are significantly greater than for those without. If Lancashire were to pursue a model with an elected mayor, then there is the potential that the elections for that position would be held in May 2026. The White Paper also states that Combined Authorities will be renamed as Strategic Authorities.

5.0 Local Government Reorganisation - criteria

5.1 The government has set out guidance which will be used to assess proposals for reorganisation. The guidance is summarised below.

- **A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government**
Proposals should be for 'sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base' so there is not unfair advantage or disadvantage across the area. The proposals need to be supported by robust evidence and analysis.
- **Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.**

‘As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more’, although there may be certain scenarios where that does not make sense for an area. The proposal should set out the rationale.

- **Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.**
Proposals need to set out how they will improve local government service delivery and public service reform. Consideration needs to be made as to the impact on crucial services such as Children’s Services, SEND and Homelessness.
- **Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.**
- **New unitary structures should support devolution arrangements**
Proposals will need to set out how the CCA arrangement will need to change because of reorganisation and ensure that there are sensible population size ratios between the new councils and the new strategic authority.
- **New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.**
It is expected that Area arrangements will be hardwired into the proposals.

5.2 In developing proposals, existing district areas should be considered the building blocks and strong justification is required for more complex boundary changes.

6.0 Options

6.1 Set out in the table below are the options currently being considered for new local government structures in Lancashire alongside commentary on the proposals.

Option	Commentary
Two Unitary Councils	This is an option being discussed by the County Council. The configuration of the two unitaries is currently uncertain. The councils would be of sufficient size, but they would continue to be potentially significantly remote from local need, as well as placing together areas with few economic or community ties.
Three Unitary Councils	<p>Although different configurations could create three unitary councils, the preferred option is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. West Lancashire, Chorley, South Ribble, Preston 2. Fylde, Wyre, Blackpool, Lancaster 3. Blackburn, Hyndburn, Rossendale, Pendle, Burnley, Ribble Valley <p>Each of the Unitary Councils would serve a population of around 500,000 and would also be broadly of similar size. There are other advantages to this model, as the new unitary areas would sit on the same footprint as current policing divisions and co-terminus with health districts.</p>

	This model is supported by Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn, Fylde and Wyre, and is recommended to be supported by Rossendale.
Four Unitary Councils	<p>The option currently being considered is a four unitary model. This being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. West Lancashire, Chorley, South Ribble 2. Fylde, Wyre, Blackpool 3. Lancaster, Preston, Ribble Valley 4. Blackburn, Hyndburn, Rossendale, Pendle, Burnley <p>Only one unitary authority in this model has a population over 500,000, although the other three have populations around 350,000, the minimum size for a new unitary, and aligned to most in the North West.</p> <p>This model is supported by Preston, Lancaster, Chorley, South Ribble and Ribble Valley.</p>
Five Unitary Councils	<p>The option for five unitary councils has been proposed by Burnley, this being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lancaster, Wyre 2. Blackpool, Fylde and Preston 3. Chorley, South Ribble, West Lancs 4. Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale or Ribble Valley 5. Blackburn, Hyndburn, Ribble Valley or Rossendale <p>The population size in this model would vary from 250,000 to 370,000 and would cover smaller areas that would be closer to communities; however, the financial sustainability of this model would need to be effectively considered and some of the options do not meet the criteria published by government.</p> <p>This model is supported by Burnley and Pendle.</p>

7.0 Recommended preferred option

- 7.1 In seeking to establish a preferred option for Rossendale, it is important to ensure that the council best represents the needs of the borough, but also important that the council is prepared to possibly change its position based on the emerging proposals and evidence, which may include feedback from residents, partners or indeed the government.
- 7.2. It is proposed that the initial position of Rossendale Borough Council is that the preferred structure of local government in Lancashire should consist of three unitary councils covering:
1. West Lancashire, Chorley, South Ribble, Preston
 2. Fylde, Wyre, Blackpool, Lancaster
 3. Blackburn, Hyndburn, Rossendale, Pendle, Burnley, Ribble Valley

7.3 The rationale for this being the preferred model is that the new councils would:

- Be sufficient size to be financially sustainable
- Bring together boroughs with similar characteristics
- Provides the opportunity to deliver significant change and improvements in the delivery of local government services
- It is focused on a 'known' Pennine Lancashire economic area.

8.0 RISK

8.1 The key risks associated with this report include:

- Creation of uncertainty, which could lead to greater turnover of staff and further difficulties in recruitment. This is currently being managed through a programme of internal communications to provide reassurance and updates, as well as a continued focus on delivering the Valley Plan and core services of the council.

9.0 FINANCE

There are no direct current financial implications arising from the report at this stage.

10 LEGAL

This report provides Full Council with an update on the emerging process for local government reorganisation and the different options which are available, at this stage there are no direct legal implications.

11 POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

None currently

12 REASON FOR DECISION

Agreeing a position for Rossendale in the discussions on local government reorganisation will ensure that Rossendale's position will be stronger than if no position is adopted.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Ministerial letter to Lancashire 5 February 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-reorganisation-invitation-to-local-authorities-in-two-tier-areas/letter-lancashire-blackburn-and-blackpool>

Subject:	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Council	Date:	16 th July 2025
Report of:	Executive and Democratic Services Officer	Lead Member:	Environment and Corporate Services
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Hannah Callan	Telephone:	01706 252424
Email:	hannahcallan@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council approve the Annual Report 2024/25 and Work Programme 2025/26.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The annual report informs of the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2024/25 and section 6 highlights how scrutiny has made a difference.
- The work programme at section 12 details the proposed scrutiny items for 2025/26.

3. BACKGROUND

The annual report and work programme are required to be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agreed at Full Council each year.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The annual report and work programme summarises the work undertaken during 2024/25 and sets out the proposed work to be carried out by the committee during the coming year in 2025/26. The work programme provides a draft of what is expected to be brought before the committee in 2025/26 and is a working document which allows for fluidity and for new items to be added as required.
- 4.2 The report was sent to Corporate Management Team for their input into the proposed agenda items and timescales for planned work, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were consulted on the proposed work programme at their meeting on 16th June 2025.
- 4.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee made the following recommendations to Council:
 - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended Council to approve the Annual Report 2023/24 and draft Work Programme 2024/25.
 - The timing of the Food Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group would be amended in the work programme if necessary.

5. RISK

There are no specific risk issues to consider arising from this report.

6. FINANCE

All work must be contained within existing budgets and resources.

7. LEGAL

The committee is required to produce an Annual Report for Full Council.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific policy and equalities implications. All work undertaken by the committee will have regard to equalities and follow Council policy.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

To inform of the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2024/25 and outline of the work to be carried out during 2025/26.

No background papers.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Annual Report 2024/25 and
Work Programme 2025/26**

Foreword from the 2024/25 Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Councillor Samara Barnes



This report highlights the activity and work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period of 2024/25 and the expected programme of work for 2025/26.

The committee has been extremely busy during 2024/25, which is reflected in the list of policy items, performance reviews, external scrutiny and task and finish group work which has been undertaken over the course of the year. We are also pleased to highlight how scrutiny has made a difference at section 6.

It is important for scrutiny members to be involved at an early stage to influence the decision-making process and to play an important role as the 'critical friend' to Cabinet. This ensures the Council's policies and procedures are robust and also supports good governance and effective decision making. The report highlights which policies, plans and strategies have come before the committee for pre-decision review and where changes have been implemented to strengthen policies and processes.

This year there has been a more focussed work programme, and where suitable, reports have been circulated for comment and updates have been provided by briefing notes to allow the committee more time to focus its attention on more significant items. Members have also been supported with the addition of member briefings to ensure that members understand the detail and purpose of the reports and policies.

The committee is also committed to continued development, and this year members have participated in external training provided by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Continued development in scrutiny will ensure we continue to add value in the work we do.

As always, I would like to thank all members of the committee for the contributions they have made throughout the year, in addition to supporting officers and those external to the Council who have provided us with their knowledge and expertise to assist us with our committee and task and finish work.

Message from the Lead Member 2024/25 Councillor Adrian Lythgoe



The overview and scrutiny process ensures that both Council services and those services of its partners, are delivered in an appropriate way and encourages further development and improvements for members of the local community who access these services.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to support and challenge the Cabinet and provides assurance in respect of policy development and review, acting as a 'critical friend'.

Whilst Cabinet members regularly attend the committee meetings, the updates to Cabinet from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny has kept Lead Members fully briefed on the work being undertaken. This assists our work in capturing suggestions for further improvement of public services.

Both councillors and officers continue to work together to ensure the best provision of services for the people of Rossendale.

Annual Report 2024/25

1. Background

- 1.1 Overview and scrutiny is a way of achieving open and democratic accountability for the provision of public services. Local authorities operating an Executive Leader and Cabinet Model have an overview and scrutiny function which is carried out by non-Cabinet members who act as a critical friend to the Cabinet to hold them to account. In Rossendale the committee is politically balanced and made up of 7 councillors and one co-opted member. Overview and Scrutiny is not a decision-making committee, but is there to monitor and influence those that are, i.e. the Cabinet. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee report their work back to the Cabinet who then decide whether recommendations will be accepted, and if not, explain their reasons for their decision.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a role in performance monitoring, and also policy development and review. The committee also undertakes more in-depth reviews by establishing task and finish groups. These are usually comprised of five politically balanced councillors (non-Cabinet members), who review specific issues and make recommendations for change and improvements, for example, in policy or service provisions. Task and finish groups are limited to a maximum of two operating at any one time to ensure there are sufficient resources to undertake an effective review.
- 1.3 Overview and scrutiny is not a mechanism for the investigation or settlement of individual complaints, as the Council has a separate complaints/member enquiry process for this. Nor can the committee look at individual planning or licensing decisions.
- 1.4 The committee welcomes suggestions for investigation and suggestions can be put forward at any time. Any suggestions received are considered as part of the work planning process for the Annual Work Programme.
- 1.5 The Council continues to work in line with statutory guidance and the Constitution, and where possible the chair, vice-chair and relevant officers attend North West Employers' Scrutiny Networks to keep up to date on the latest developments in scrutiny.

2. Internal scrutiny

Policy scrutiny

2.1 Pre-decision

During 2024/25 the committee was consulted on a variety of strategies, policies and plans. Feedback and recommendations were sought on the following prior to a decision being made or prior to further development:

- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Open Space and Outdoor Sports SPD
- Local Housing Allowance Safeguarding Policy
- Infrastructure Funding Statement
- Adoption of Local List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets
- Climate Change Strategy Update

- Corporate Priorities, Budget, Council Tax and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2025/26
- Valley Plan 2025-29
- Communications Strategy and Annual Action Plan Update

Performance scrutiny

2.2 Quarterly Performance Reports

The committee continued to monitor quarterly performance reports (which incorporate the quarterly update on the use of RIPA). If required, the committee can call a relevant senior officer to the committee meeting to answer questions and provide further clarification, or matters can be scrutinised in more depth through the Performance Management Task and Finish Group and fed back to the next committee. During 2024/25 the Head of People and Policy provided the quarterly updates to the committee and provided further clarification where requested.

2.3 Performance reviews and ongoing monitoring

The committee received a variety of performance updates during 2024/25 with some items being part of the work programme and some being brought to Overview and Scrutiny for a specific reason for discussion. This internal review and monitoring activity included:

- Annual Equality Workforce Profile – this item is required to be reported to the committee on an annual basis to review the Council's workforce profile.
- Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter and Council Feedback Update – this item is required to be reported to the committee on an annual basis and reviews the annual breakdown of formal complaints and compliments.
- Health and Well-being Plan Update – this item was included in the work programme as a briefing update and provided the opportunity to review the progress of the Health and Well-being Plan.

3. External scrutiny

The committee received a number of presentations and updates from external organisations, which are summarised as follows:

3.1 Lancashire Constabulary

As set out in the Overview and Scrutiny terms of reference, the committee acts as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee under the requirements of the Police and Justice Act and related statutory guidance from the Home Office. Lancashire Constabulary attend the committee each year to give a presentation on performance and progress against crime indicators. Inspector Plummer attended in January 2025 to provide the annual update and answered questions from committee members. They also provided a specific update on the HMIC Report, Crime and ASB Data for Rossendale, Violence Against Women and Girls Update, Councillor Relationships, Rural Crime Update, Dangerous Dogs and Road Safety Concerns.

3.2 Citizens Advice

In January 2025, Citizens Advice (East Lancashire) provided a briefing for members on their work and range of services offered. They informed how they were funded and expressed their gratitude to the Council for their continued support. They also reported

on their key outcomes and achievements over the last 12 months as well the pressures.

The following key points were noted from the update:

- Over the last 12 months, the Council funding has helped support over 2,600 Rossendale households, with over 1000 issues being related to charitable payments and foodbanks.
- Citizens Advice and the Council worked in partnership to distribute £54,000 of awards and provided targeted advice service through the Household Support Fund to households experiencing financial hardship.
- Citizens Advice has helped maximise the income for the residents that require the help generating financial outcomes of over £1.5 million including benefits, debt rescheduling and energy savings.
- For every £1 spent on the service by the Council, residents benefited by £22.

3.3 Leisure

In June 2024 the Chief Executive of Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT), Samantha Sandford, provided an annual update to the committee and highlighted key achievements as well as the planned ongoing work throughout the year. Members appreciated the improved data and benchmarking information available. It was good to see continual improvements, growth and engagement increasing.

4. **Health scrutiny**

4.1 At the time of writing the report, the Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Health is the East Lancashire representative for the Lancashire Leaders Group on Lancashire County Council Health and Wellbeing Board and also represents the Council on the Rossendale Health and Well-being Partnership and Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee.

4.2 The Rossendale Health and Wellbeing Partnership is open to any councillor to attend and issues of concern can be raised via the Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Health for any of these meetings.

4.3 In November 2024 the committee was provided with a briefing note update on the Health and Well-being Plan which outlined the progress made to date against the four priorities.

- In relation to the Community-led Mental Wellbeing priority in January 2024 a Mental Health Strategy Refresh was announced by Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust and Valley Vitality Festival was held in July 2024 to promote family wellbeing.
- In relation to the Physical Activity and Healthy Weight priority, the Physical Activity Big Connect Event took place in November to develop a Physical Activity and Sports strategy, workshops took place to consult on the strategy which is due to launch in January 2025. Partnership programmes continue to promote Cardiac Rehabilitation, Health Coaching, Up and Active and Weight Management. Rossendale Leisure Trust have been awarded The Family Healthy Weight Program contract for the next five years. The Childhood Obesity Workshop was organised in September 2024 to tackle high childhood obesity rates and TaAf programmes continue to deliver weekly wellbeing walks, Park Yoga and Junior Park Run.
- In relation to the Developing Facilities to Support Health and Wellbeing priority, a Leisure Facilities Steering Group was established with stakeholders,

Athletics and Football Development Groups were formed to discuss growth and facilities, funding applications were submitted for projects like a 3G pitch at the Adrenaline Centre, a Community Asset Review was commenced for outdoor facilities and the Playing Pitch Strategy is expected to conclude in November 2024.

- In relation to the Shaping the Delivery of Local Services priority, the NHS have been working with Adult Social Care to analyse all contact with ASC by district and identify those calls which did not need ASC services. This has resulted in funding being made available to districts and the Communities team have worked with the NHS and BPRCVS to put forward a bid for just over £300k for additional community connectors. Also, the Integrated Care Board – NHS – has again made funding available for VCFS organisation in Rossendale to apply for up to £5k.

It was also highlighted that Rossendale Primary Care Networks made funding available to run a series of events promoting vaccinations and health checks such as; Age of Inspiration event, the launch of the Family hub at Haslingden Community Link and the July Vitality Festival at the Valley Academy. In October an engagement event jointly run by the PCN, the Council and Rossendale Leisure Trust was also held at Haslingden Community link promoting health, leisure and council services to the South Asian community of Rossendale. The Portfolio holder for Health, Cllr Barbara Ashworth and Stephanie Thornton attended a meeting of all staff at the Irwell medical practice and Bacup to outline the services the council offers or brokers which can help vulnerable people e.g. the aids and adaptations, minor repairs and Homewise services around warmer homes. The Communities Team has started work with partners on the development of a Better Lives plan – aimed at ensuring all partners are aware of the available services for vulnerable people e.g. Affordable warmth, food, money and debt, homelessness, employment support and family support.

6. How has scrutiny made a difference?

6.1 Overview and Scrutiny continues to perform the important function of holding the executive (the Cabinet) to account, carrying out task and finish work and reviewing policies and strategies before implementation. For 2024/25 the following is worth noting:

6.2 Quarterly performance monitoring:

- Quarter 4 2023/24 – discussions focussed on housing targets, new methodology and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, additional Council savings, empty shops, reviewing town centre areas and also the need for member briefings to discuss complex documents and policies prior to committees. As a result of the discussions, the following action was recommended and actioned as follows:
 - *To introduce member briefings on complex documents and policies prior to the committee so that members can gain a better understanding ahead of the meeting.* This led to a member briefing taking place in relation to the Communications Strategy and Annual Action Plan.
- Quarter 1 2024/25 – discussions focussed on the increase in uptake of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), the policy refresh for DFG last year, and staffing in relation to minor adaptations.

- Quarter 2 2024/25 – discussions focussed on Bacup Market specifically relating to comments received from the Flood Authority, future traders of the market and relocation grants and also the reduction in grass cutting at the cemeteries due to staff shortages and weather conditions.
- Quarter 3 2024/25 – discussions focussed on the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) targets, incentives for empty shops, freedom of information requests and member enquiries. As a result of the discussions, the following action was recommended and actioned as follows:
 - *To look into the possibility of reducing the DFG target.* It was confirmed that this would be discussed with the Housing Team.
 - *To confirm the process for member enquiries and how they are recorded.* In response to this, an email was circulated to all members confirming the following; initial enquiries from members are supposed to go direct to departments (the same way service requests are dealt with) and these are not recorded. It only becomes a Member Enquiry if there is dissatisfaction in the way the original enquiry was dealt with or the enquiry needs escalating (we then record it and handle it in the same way we would deal with a formal complaint).
 - *To confirm how the number of FOI's we receive compares to other authorities and what the requests are made up.* It was agreed that we would try to obtain details from other Local Authorities and feed back to the committee.
 - *To confirm what the Local Government Ombudsman Complaint was regarding.* It was confirmed with members that the complaint was a premature complaint in relation to Council Tax and was referred back to the Council to deal with via the formal complaints process.

6.3 Policy development – the committee was consulted and provided feedback on policies before they were approved by Full Council or Cabinet and this included the annual budget reports. The following policies were revised prior to approval following recommendations made by the committee:

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - the committee recommended the following and subsequent changes were made prior to Cabinet approval:

- To make any necessary changes or explanations with regard to figures quoted and data presented. This was owing to the lapse of time between the survey and the development of the draft SPD.

Open Space and Outdoor Sports Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - the committee recommended the following and subsequent changes were made prior to Cabinet approval:

- To make any necessary changes or explanations with regard to figures quoted and data presented. This was owing to the lapse of time between the survey and the development of the draft SPD.
- To find out if the calculation by Sport England took account of regional diversity.
- To include *safe and secure for all to use* in the design guidance.
- To look into how accessibility in new facilities could be built into the guidance and reinforced.
- To better reflect the nature of the swimming pools in the figures quoted and explanations given.

Adoption of Local List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets – the committee recommended the following amendment was made prior to the consultation process:

- That minor amendments to the draft Local List to be also delegated to Ward Councillors as well as the Head of Planning and Lead Member prior to consultation.

6.4 Feedback monitoring - the Council is constantly reviewing how to improve service, and the following improvements were made during the 2024/25 period:

- Signposting to Lancashire County Council (LCC) and improved public information so customers know who to contact for LCC related complaints.
- Undertaking comprehensive consultation to manage residents' expectations.
- Monthly monitoring of operations complaints e.g. bin collections, parks and open spaces. A new back-office system now provides live data to assist monitoring and will be more efficient in identifying and resolving issues as they arise.
- Improved partnership working in order to promote relevant community events.

2025/26 Work Programme

7. Introduction

- 7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to produce and agree an Annual Work Programme which sets out the expected work to be carried out in the coming year.
- 7.2 As well as outlining the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the programme should also identify proposed work to be undertaken by task and finish groups, of which there can be two running at any one time.

8. Cabinet involvement

- 8.1 As well as being able to make work programme suggestions, Cabinet has previously resolved that Council grant recipients provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on their work. Citizens Advice have continued to provide updates to the committee annually.

9. Standing agenda items

The Council's Constitution outlines the items Overview and Scrutiny considers on a regular basis. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny can look at other non-key decisions/updates as required. The items outlined in the Constitution are detailed below:

9.1 Routine monitoring of the performance of the Council

To review on a quarterly basis the Performance Report and invite officers of the Council to attend a future meeting if their service area is under-achieving on its target. Alternatively, if a service area is falling behind on their targets, the Performance Management Task and Finish Group may be re-convened to look into the matter.

- 9.2 Policy development
a) To deal with emerging policy and assist the Council in reviewing and developing policy as detailed in the Forward Plan.
b) Review and scrutinise decisions taken internally by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet members or officers of the Council.
- 9.3 Scrutiny of the Council's budget
To be consulted and make recommendations on the Council's annual budget setting.
- 9.4 Complaints/compliments
a) To monitor formal complaints received by the Council
b) To receive information on the number of compliments received for each service area
c) To monitor Ombudsman enquiries via the annual letter from the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 9.5 Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)
To deal with any relevant Councillor Call for Action requests and determine the appropriate course of action.
- 9.6 Call-In
To scrutinise decisions referred under the Council's Call-In Procedure.
- 9.7 Forward Plan
To monitor the Forward Plan and agree those policies to be scrutinised prior to decision by Cabinet/Full Council.
- 9.8 To act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee
To review local performance and progress against crime indicators.
- 9.9 External/partner scrutiny
To receive information from external organisations and partners whose operations affect the area to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working (with particular emphasis on those who receive funding from the Council).
- 9.10 Leisure scrutiny
To monitor the performance of Rossendale Leisure Trust as included in the Work Programme.

10. Drafting the 2025/26 Work Programme

- 10.1 The draft work programme in the table below is based on updates requested at previous committees, items identified from the Forward Plan and the standing items outlined in the terms of reference and as summarised in section 9.
- 10.2 Although the work programme is formally agreed, it may be amended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required. The table at section 12 sets out the basic agendas and planned reports/updates going to each committee. It is important to ensure that there is room for task and finish group reports and for any other items or policies, which may be added to the Forward Plan during the year.

- 10.3 This document was presented to Corporate Management Team on 22nd April 2025 for advice, and comments regarding the items and suggested timescales. Following these consultations the draft work programme for 2025/26 at section 12 has been proposed.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 The programme provides members with a clear plan of work and engages with our partners and grant recipients. The work programme is a living document and will be amended throughout the year as necessary.
- 11.2 Details of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings for 2025/26 can be found on the Committee Schedule on the Council website: [committee schedule](#)

12. Work Programme 2025/26

Date	Topic	Proposed areas in scope	Suggested Approach
Jun	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme	To examine the previous year's progress and review the draft work programme for year ahead.	Report for comment
	Rosendale Leisure Trust Annual Report and Annual Update (external scrutiny) - confidential	To scrutinise the report against the action plan with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the partner is improving outcomes for residents e.g. health, leisure, culture Examining how the 2024/25 plan will be implemented Performance monitoring against the 2023/24 action plan 	Committee presentation/ report
	Valley Plan Outturn Report	To review the annual update with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific objectives and priorities Reviewing the action plan and performance monitoring 	Report for comment
	Quarter 4 performance report	To scrutinise the performance of the council's services and corporate projects.	Report for comment
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council.	Report for comment
Sep	Quarter 1 performance report	To scrutinise the performance of the council's services and corporate projects.	Report for comment
	Workforce Profile Report	To scrutinise the workforce profile in relation to equalities.	Report for comment
	Ombudsman's Annual Letter Annual Council Complaints Review	To scrutinise the Council's performance in dealing with/responding to complaints.	Report for comment
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council.	Report for comment
	Temporary accommodation	Scoping to be completed prior to the scrutiny day.	Scrutiny in a day
Oct	Leisure review	Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be consulted on the Leisure review.	Consultation
Nov	Quarter 2 performance report	To scrutinise the performance of the council's services and corporate projects.	Report for comment
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council.	Report for comment
	Regeneration review	Scoping to be completed prior to the scrutiny day.	Scrutiny in a day

Jan	Lancashire Constabulary Annual Update (external scrutiny)	To scrutinise (as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee) the effectiveness of external partners in improving the lives of Rossendale residents with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the partner is improving outcomes for residents e.g. crime outcomes • How effectively are partners using any council funding (where applicable) • How the council can work more effectively with partners in the future 	Committee Presentation
	Citizens Advice Annual Update (external scrutiny)	To scrutinise the effectiveness of external partners in improving the lives of Rossendale residents with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the partner is improving outcomes for residents e.g. well-being • How effectively are partners using any council funding • How the council can work more effectively with partners in the future 	Briefing note
	Recycling and food waste	Scoping to be completed prior to the scrutiny day.	Scrutiny in a day
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council.	Report for comment
Feb	2026/27 Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy	To scrutinise the draft budget for 2026/27 with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of resources • Planned fees and charges 	Committee report
	Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2026/27	To scrutinise the draft Capital Strategy and Capital Programme with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of resources • Planned projects 	Committee report
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council.	Report for comment
Mar	Quarter 3 performance report	To scrutinise the performance of the council's services and corporate projects.	Report for comment
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council.	Report for comment

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR FULL COUNCIL

UNDER PARAGRAPH 11.1 OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

The following Motion to be submitted to Full Council on the date indicated below:-

This Council recognises that:

- The corporate plan commits us to playing a 'positive local role leading by example' in making changes that can mitigate climate catastrophe and help preserve the vitality of our planet for future generations.
- Increasing awareness of the environmental impact of dietary choices can allow individuals to make more informed and sustainable choices and that, as leaders in the Borough, we have an important role to play in modelling these choices.
- Our farmers make huge contributions to the local economy and its rural communities and that there is a need for farmers to be appropriately supported to deal with the challenges of farming in an increasingly unstable climate.

This Council Notes:

That the food system accounts for a third of all greenhouse gas emissions [1].

The broad agreement across expert bodies, including the Climate Change Commission [2] and EAT-Lancet Commission [3], that the UK must reduce consumption of meat and dairy in order to achieve its climate goals.

The Government commissioned National Food Strategy, which recommends that food provided in the public sector should be plant based by default.

This Council resolves to:

Ensure that food provided at all council catered events and meetings is predominantly plant-based, in line with the recommendations above, using ingredients sourced from local growers and suppliers as far as is practical.

Reach out to community groups to actively influence and inform on climate change, food choice, and the positive impact they can have on the environment, their health, and animal welfare through their food choices.

Inspire, promote and support initiatives surrounding climate change and in particular food growing, preparation and waste avoidance, especially as part of community projects.

[1] Crippa, M., et al. (2021), "Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic emissions," *Nature Food* 2, 198-209.
 [2] <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2022/06/13/governments-food-strategy-a-missed-opportunity-for-the-climate/>
 [3] <https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/the-planetary-health-diet-and-you/>

Date of Council Meeting:-	16 th July 2025
Notice submitted from	
Councillor Julie Adshead	Date: 27 th June 2025
Councillor Bob Bauld	Date: 27 th June 2025
Notice received and validated by S151 Officer: Chris Warren	
Comments: Any financial impacts would be addressed via the Council revenue budget. If activity remains as in recent years the impact is unlikely to be material.	Date: 30 th June 2025
Notice received and validated by the Monitoring Officer: Clare Birtwistle	
Comments: There are no legal issues arising from the motion.	Date: 30 th June 2025
Notice received on behalf of the Head of the Paid Service and entered in the book open to Public Inspection	
Received by: Rob Huntington	Date: 30 th June 2025