

COUNCILLOR MICHELLE SMITH, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

DATE OF MEETING: 17th December 2025

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

**IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Huntington, Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer
Andy Taylor, Head of Operations
Phillip Veevers, Mayor's Attendant**

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 1 press
50 public in the Council Chamber
12 public in the Breakout Room
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development**

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Ashworth, Belli, Bleakley, Harris, Holland, Looker, McInnes and S.Smith.

2. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 16th July 2025 and 26th November 2025 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Samara Barnes and Mackenzie Ritson declared that they were also County Councillors.

4. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

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

There were no communications from the Mayor.

The Head of Paid Service confirmed that Councillor Judith Driver had replaced Councillor Greg Bleakley as the Chairperson of the Audit and Accounts Committee and these details had been updated on the Council website.

The Leader of the Council provided the following updates:

- The Council placed on record its sincere thanks to former Councillor and Whitworth Town Councillor, Tom Aldred, for his outstanding dedication and service to the people and communities of Whitworth over the last 50 plus years.
- The Leader congratulated Councillor Alan Neal on his appointment as President of the Lancashire Association of Local Councils (LALC).
- An update was provided on the achievements of the Communities Team. Thanks was given to the team for their hard work.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

6. Waste Transfer Station

The Council considered the Waste Transfer Station report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- The additional cost of transporting all waste to Farrington was estimated to be circa £2 million every year and beyond.
- The facility would mitigate the challenges of Henrietta Street, which was already a Waste Transfer Station, address the concerns of the residents in that area and address the legislative requirements.
- There were additional costs associated with taking waste to another site in East Lancashire in time, fuel and fleet costs.
- Lancashire County Council (LCC) had not yet procured another site for all waste streams for East Lancashire and were only seeking a contractor to accept residual waste for a period of two years, nor had they obtained necessary licensing or planning permission for an alternative site. It was unlikely they would achieve this in time given Local Government Reorganisation.
- LCC Cabinet at their meeting on 4th September 2025 had resolved that district councils be supported should they wish to develop and implement alternative proposals to resolve the immediate challenges associated with the expiration of the Whinney Hill landfill contract in March 2026.
- Waste was currently processed outside at Henrietta Street, with new requirements to process indoors.
- The nursery hadn't placed any objections to the planning application for the Waste Transfer Station.
- Waste vehicles and other HGVs were already travelling along this stretch of road.
- The site would be a secure site and meet the needs for the future.
- The Council needed to find a solution for the Valley waste.

Councillors Ritson, Eaton and Alyson Barnes requested a named vote.

Members voted as follows:

Name	Vote
Cllr Adshead	For
Cllr Alyson Barnes	For
Cllr Samara Barnes	For
Cllr Bauld	For
Cllr Cheetham	Against
Cllr Driver	For
Cllr Eaton	Against
Cllr Gill	For
Cllr Hancock	For
Cllr Harrison	For
Cllr Hodgkiss	Against
Cllr Kenyon	For
Cllr Lythgoe	For
Cllr McMahon	For
Cllr Neal	For
Cllr Norton	For
Cllr Payne	For
Cllr Procter	For
Cllr Ritson	Against
Cllr Michelle Smith	For

Cllr Walmsley	For
Cllr Woods	Against
For:	17
Against:	5
Abstentions:	0

Resolved:

1. That Council agrees, to move forward with the redevelopment of Plot 4 on Futures Park and build a new Waste Transfer Station.
2. To deliver this, that the Council enters into an agreement with Caulmert Ltd to project manage the build process via a compliant procurement framework.
3. To delegate authority to the Head of Legal, Director of Resources and Head of Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services to procure any consultants and Contractors necessary and enter into any agreements related to this project.

Reason for Decision

The proposed solution will deliver significant revenue savings to this and any future authority and the capital expenditure could be recovered in under 3 years when compared to the solution of delivering waste directly to Farrington.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

7. Public Meeting Schedule

The Council considered the Public Meeting Schedule for 2026/27.

Resolved:

That Council agree the Public Meeting Schedule containing dates of public meetings for 2026/27 as detailed at Appendix A.

Reason for Decision

To agree a committee schedule in order to ensure that the Council can effectively conduct its business.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

8. Urgent decisions

No urgent decisions had been taken since the last meeting of the Council.

NOTICES OF MOTION

9. Notice of Motion

Councillor Samara Barnes moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Alan Neal:

The intimidation and abuse of councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election, and undermining public life in democratic processes.

This council notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact of local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.

This council also notes that whilst elected members will have differences of opinion and may not agree with each other's points of view, there should be an expectation that they will treat each other with respect, they will not share any misinformation that may cause harm or increase abuse to other elected members, and will do their best to disagree agreeably and uphold the Nolan Principles at all times.

This council therefore commits to challenge the normalisation of abuse against councillors and officers and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does. The council further agrees to sign up to the LGA's Debate Not Hate campaign. The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support those in public life facing abuse and intimidation.

In addition, this council resolves to

- Write to the local Member of Parliament to ask them to support the campaign and to raise awareness of this campaign in parliament when the opportunity arises.*
- Ensure the council has a clear reporting mechanism which councillors can use to monitor and record incidents of harassment and abuse of councillors and officers*
- Regularly review the support available to councillors in relation to abuse, intimidation and councillor safety*
- Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families and discuss the need to take a preventative approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, like MPs. This includes links with specialist officers as part of Operation Ford.*
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers.*

A friendly amendment to add an additional point was moved by Councillor Ritson and seconded by Councillor Eaton as follows:

- Always ensure both members and officers respect the public and uphold the Nolan Principles, especially openness, accountability and honesty at all times in their interactions with residents.*

It was clarified that the insertion of "and officers" to the following sentence as follows would suffice instead of the additional bullet point:

This council also notes that whilst elected members will have differences of opinion and may not agree with each other's points of view, there should be an expectation that they will treat each other with respect, they will not share any misinformation that may cause harm or increase abuse to other elected member and officers, and will do their best to disagree agreeably and uphold the Nolan Principles at all times.

Members voted on the amendment becoming the substantive motion.

The amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Members continued to discuss the amended motion as follows:

- There is need for a strong reminder on the Nolan Principles.*
- Members don't always get a good level of support where there are incidents.*
- Concern for members particularly when they are being targeted.*
- Officers give impartial advice to all members and should not be criticised on social media.*

Resolved:

This council resolves to

- Write to the local Member of Parliament to ask them to support the campaign and to raise awareness of this campaign in parliament when the opportunity arises.
- Ensure the council has a clear reporting mechanism which councillors can use to monitor and record incidents of harassment and abuse of councillors and officers
- Regularly review the support available to councillors in relation to abuse, intimidation and councillor safety
- Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families and discuss the need to take a preventative approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, like MPs. This includes links with specialist officers as part of Operation Ford.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers.

Reason for Decision

To support the amended motion.

Alternative Options Considered

The original motion.

(The meeting commenced at 7.18pm and concluded at 8.43pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date