

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 26th November 2025

Present: **Councillor A Barnes (Chair)**
Councillors Harris, Lythgoe, McInnes and Walmsley

David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Chris Warren, Director of Resources, s151 Officer
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal, Monitoring Officer
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Financial Services

Also present: **Councillor Neal**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**Resolved:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harris declared a non-registerable interest in item D5/11 as it related to the financial interest of a close associate.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no written or verbal questions.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided an update from the 10th November 2025 Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Thanks were expressed to the Chair of the Committee.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Leader of the Council outlined the report which asked Cabinet to note the process and timetable for submission of proposals and agree to submit the 'Three Lancashire Unitary Business Case'. Due to the urgency of the decision, it was proposed that Cabinet waived the call-in procedure in order to meet the deadline set by Government.

Members were invited to comment on the report:

- Councillor Neal requested that the Harmonisation Order be reviewed again in terms of the Town Council Election, now due to take place in 2028. Cabinet confirmed that enquiries would be made.
- Thanks were expressed to all who had worked on the preparation of the business case.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet noted the process and timetable for the submission of proposals for local government reorganisation in Lancashire.
2. Cabinet agreed to submit the 'Three Lancashire Unitary Business Case' to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government for review and decision by ministers.
3. Due to the urgency of the decision, Cabinet waived the call-in procedure in order to meet the deadline set by Government.

Reason for Decision:

To support the submission of the three unitary model for the Lancashire business case.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to consider and note the contents of the report.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- If the Council did not proceed with the Waste Transfer Station it would cost £2 million revenue cost per year which would increase year on year.
- The Henrietta Street Waste Transfer Station would not meet the borough's requirements without significant investment.
- The Leisure Trust review was currently underway with the initial recommendations due by 11th December 2025.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet considered and noted the report.

Reason for Decision:

To provide an update on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. PROCUREMENT OF WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICES

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the commencement of a fully compliant tender activity and delegate authority to enter into all relevant legal agreements to the most advantageous provider.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the commencement of a fully compliant tender activity for the provision of water and wastewater services for a period of three years.
2. Cabinet delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Director of Resources and Lead Members for Environment and Corporate Services and Resources to enter into all relevant legal agreements to the most advantageous provider.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure compliant procurement of water and wastewater services and to secure best value.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. APPROVAL OF PRIDE IN PLACE REGENERATION PLAN

The Lead Member for Economic Development outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the Regeneration and Investment Plan for Rawtenstall, Waterfoot and Crawshawbooth. Cabinet was also asked to approve delegations to enter into agreements, manage the implementation and agree small amendments or reprofiling for the project funding or finance.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Officers and members of the board were thanked for their work on the plan.
- Using funding as leverage to bring other funding into the borough was welcomed.
- The supporting document was a great piece of work which would be circulated to all councillors.
- The document could be found on the Council's website.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the Regeneration and Investment Plan for Rawtenstall, Waterfoot and Crawshawbooth under the Pride in Place Funding.
2. Delegated authority to the Head of Legal, Director of Resources and Director of Economic Development with the Lead Member for Economic Development to enter into any agreements related to this project.
3. Delegated authority to the Director of Economic Development to manage the implementation of the Regeneration and Investment Plan in conjunction with the Lead Member for Economic Development.
4. Delegated authority to the Pride in Place Board in conjunction with the S151 Officer and Lead Member for Resources, to agree any small amendment or reprofiling for the project funding or finance.

Reason for Decision:

The decision enables the Council to implement a community-led, strategic approach to regeneration, ensuring that projects meet local needs, align with long-term plans, and deliver tangible economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. FUNDING PROPOSAL FOR ABD CENTRE – DIGITAL SKILLS

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to provide a grant to expand the centre's capacity and to delegate authority to Lead Members and Officers to procure consultants and enter into any agreements for the project.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- It was important that the project kept momentum to ensure more services were available to residents of the borough.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved a grant of up to £72,000 for the ABD centre, (a Council owned asset) to expand its capacity, enabling the delivery of more digital courses and transforming the building into a high-quality, inclusive digital learning hub for the wider district as part of "The Bridge" element in the Capital Regeneration Projects Levelling Up Fund Allocation.

2. Cabinet delegated authority to the Head of Legal, Director of Resources and Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Members for Economic Development and Resources to procure any consultants necessary and enter into any agreements related to this project.

Reason for Decision:

The funding would enhance the skills and employability of Rossendale residents whilst enhancing a Council owned asset. It would also fulfil the council's objective under the enterprise heading of the Bacup 2040 Masterplan to incorporate digital technology to ensure businesses remain relevant and provide training to keep knowledge current.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

12. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2025-29

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to review and comment on the refreshed strategy and action plan, endorse the strategy for Council approval and support its implementation.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The refreshed strategy was welcomed.
- It was important that public bodies supported the legislation.
- Officers were thanked for their work on the strategy.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet reviewed and commented on the refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan for 2025-2029.
2. The strategy was endorsed for Council approval.
3. Implementation of the strategy was supported through ongoing annual equality reports.

Reason for Decision:

The refreshed strategy provided a clear and accountable framework for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across Rossendale. It reflected best practice, legal compliance, and the Council's ambition to be a fair and inclusive organisation. Endorsement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would support its successful implementation and ensure ongoing scrutiny of progress.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

13. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 2 2025/26

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to note the contents for quarter 2.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The revaluation of pensions was noted.
- Investment in the borough was significant.
- Fair funding was expected.
- The Finance Team were thanked for the work they undertake to prepare the report.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet noted the content of the quarter 2 financial monitoring report.

Reason for Decision:

To note the quarter 2 monitoring report.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

14. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 2 2025/26

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to consider and note the Council's performance during quarter 2.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The percentage of staff appraisals completed was good to see.
- The report would be shared with all councillors.
- Thanks were expressed to officers.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet considered and noted the Council's performance during quarter 2 2025/26.

Reason for Decision:

Monitoring the Council's performance enables Cabinet to identify and consider any service actions, projects, performance measures or corporate risks requiring further action.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting concluded at 7.55pm

CHAIR

DATE