

MINUTES OF: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 9th February 2026

Present: Councillor Ashworth (Chair), Driver, Gill (sub), Eaton (sub), Harrison, S Smith, Bauld

In attendance: Chris Warren, Director of Resources
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Financial Services
Anne Storah, Principal Planner – Forward Planning
Louise Kirkup, Senior Forward Planner
Hannah Callan, Executive and Democratic Services Officer

Also present: Councillors A Barnes, Lythgoe and Walmsley
1 member of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received by Councillor Samara Barnes (Councillor Eaton subbed), Councillor McMahon (Councillor Gill subbed), David Smurthwaite and Co-Opted member James Heaton.

2. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting on 12th January 2026 be approved as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor S Smith declared an interest as a member of the Leisure Trust Board.

4. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

5. Question Time

There were no public questions.

6. Chair's Update

6.1 There was no update.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

7. The Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties Draft Supplementary Planning Document

7.1 The committee is asked to note and comment on the Supplementary Planning Document and consultation prior to consideration of the document at Cabinet.

7.2 In response to members' questions the following clarification was given:

- It was clarified that driveways for new residential properties are considered within the document in order to retain landscaping areas where possible. It was explained that the creation of hard-standing driveways on former garden areas may contribute to surface water flooding and could negatively impact the character of the area and the street scene.
- It was confirmed that Councils are expected to keep Local Plans under review and monitor them at least every 5 years. Rossendale Borough Council's (RBC) will be 5

years old in December 2026. It was explained that there is a new system that the Council awaits the regulations for, that is said to transform plan making and make the process quicker. As part of that system, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) are being eased out and will be replaced by a Supplementary Plan and will undergo examination. No new SPD's can be adopted after the 30th June 2026 and any SPD's adopted before the 30th June 2026 will run until the Rossendale Local Plan is updated.

- It was confirmed that the government is committed to better design and the adoption of the SPD will assist with better design in relation to householder planning applications.
- In relation to renewable energy, the SPD has begun to look at solar panels and heat pumps.

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties Draft Supplementary Planning Document.

8. Council Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27

8.1 The committee is asked to note and consider the following:

- A proposed revenue budget for 2026/27 of £14.6m, as detailed in the report.
- A proposed Council Tax increase of 2.99%, increasing the Council Tax rate for a Band D property from £317.66 to £327.16, an increase of £9.50pa.
- The proposed use of £1,261k from the reserves to support the 2026/27 revenue budget, acknowledging that this requirement is forecast to reduce in future years.
- The proposed fees and charges in Appendix 1.

8.2 In response to members' questions the following clarification was given:

- It was confirmed that returns on business rates revenue are based on the non-domestic rates roll. It was acknowledged that while empty business premises do have an impact, the figures are based on the best estimates available at the time. It was clarified that this is not expected to impact the Council in the short term; however, a future decline in the number of occupied businesses would have a negative impact on business rates revenue returns.
- Haslingden and Bacup market will have a small but immaterial impact in relation to this year's budget and ongoing budgets.
- It was confirmed that the Revenue Support Grant forms part of the Settlement Funding Assessment which is part of the overall funding package.
- The National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) retention is within the Settlement Funding Assessment line, however, there is no separate reference to the Fair Funding element as it is not possible to split it out in the way the settlement has been rolled out.
- The draft budget figure in Table 2 is originates from the zero-base budget process that has been brought in within the last few years.
- The revised budget estimate is 14.6m with minor revisions to be incorporated within papers for Cabinet and Council.
- It was confirmed that a number of high street business in Rossendale qualify for business rates relief so this does have an impact on the Council.
- It was clarified that the stability provided by the Fair Funding Settlement is beneficial, as it gives the Council a multi-year settlement. This enables more effective forward planning of budgets, as there is a stronger indication of likely future revenue.
- It was clarified that the Council are required to reference Band D when reporting on Council Tax. However, the majority of properties in Rossendale fall within Bands A

and B. The report therefore also identifies Band B as a reference point to support clearer understanding.

- It was clarified that the timing of when the information was received presented some challenges in relation to the timing of the Budget Consultation.
- It was confirmed that an all-member briefing was held on the budget to consult with all members.
- The correction to table 2 highlighted in the sum of £250,000 was identified within the non-distributed costs in corporate and will be corrected for Cabinet and Full Council.
- In relation to the Non-Domestic Rates Base, the Council are reliant on the Valuation Office. The business rates system is currently under review.

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Council Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 as set out within the report and recommends to Cabinet for approval with the addition of the below:

- That a revised budget be circulated to all Members prior to submission to Council for approval, incorporating any updated figures arising from the arrangements proposed by Lancashire County Council in relation to Waste Transfer costs, should these impact the budget.

9. Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2025/26

9.1 The committee is asked to note and consider the proposed Capital Programme for 2026/27 and associated capital expenditure of £30,177m, and additional capital expenditure for the period 2027/28 of £3.682m.

9.2 In response to members' questions the following clarification was given:

- It was confirmed that the Leisure Review is an ongoing process and that the outcome is awaited. Significant work has been undertaken by an external partner, working alongside Members and the Leisure Trust. The key challenge for the Council is balancing an affordable capital programme with aspirations to deliver more.
- There is no anticipated change of the budget in relation to leisure prior to the report going to Full Council due to the timing.
- There is potential that the Council may receive match funding which would increase the leisure capital budget.

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2025/2 and recommended to Cabinet for approval.

10. Forward Plan

10.1 Members were updated on the Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. Members were encouraged to submit their questions in advance in relation to items on the next agenda.

Resolved:

The Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme items were noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7:19pm)

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date