

Meeting of: The Cabinet

Date: 18th March 2026 **Time:** 6.30pm

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>

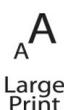
Supported by: Glenda Ashton, Committee and Member Services officer Tel: 01706 252423

Email: democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk

ITEM	Lead Member/Contact Officer	
A.	BUSINESS MATTERS	
A1.	Apologies for Absence	<p>Clare Birtwistle, Monitoring Officer 01706 252438 clarebirtwistle@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>
A2.	Minutes of the last meeting To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11 th February 2026.	
A3.	Urgent Items of Business To note any items which the chair has agreed to add to the agenda on the grounds of urgency.	
A4.	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.	
B.	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
B1.	Public Question Time Members of the public can register their question by contacting the Committee Officer. Groups with similar questions are advised to appoint and register a spokesperson. This is an opportunity to ask a question about	<p>Glenda Ashton, Committee and Member Services Officer, 01706 252423 glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>

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 Rosendale Borough Council, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB

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ITEM	Lead Member/Contact Officer	
	<p>an agenda matter which the council may be able to assist with. A time limit applies for each question and you are only able to address the meeting once. Please begin by giving your name and state whether you are speaking as an individual member of the public or as a representative of a group (question time normally lasts up to 30 minutes).</p>	<p>Questions can be submitted in advance of the meeting to democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk in line with the Cabinet speaking procedure</p>
C.	CHAIR'S UPDATE	
C1.	Update from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Councillor A Barnes
D.	KEY DECISIONS	
D1.	Housing Benefit Overpayment Policy	Councillor Walmsley/Rob Huntington Chief Executive robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D2.	Confirmation of the Article 4 Direction to withdraw permitted development rights for the conversion of houses to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)	Councillor A Barnes/David Smurthwaite Director of Economic Development davidsmurthwaite@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D3.	Annual Air Quality Report 2025	Councillor Lythgoe/Andy Taylor Head of Environment and Corporate Services andrewtaylor@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D4.	Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan Update	Councillor Lythgoe/ David Smurthwaite Director of Economic Development davidsmurthwaite@rossendalebc.gov.uk
E.	NON-KEY DECISIONS	
E1.	Residents' Survey 2025	Councillor Lythgoe/Clare Law Head of People and Policy clarelaw@rossendalebc.gov.uk
E2.	Publication of the first statutory Biodiversity Report (2023-2025)	Councillor A Barnes/David Smurthwaite Director of Economic Development davidsmurthwaite@rossendalebc.gov.uk
F.	PERFORMANCE MATTERS	
F1.	Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2025/26	Councillor Walmsley/ Rob Huntington Chief Executive robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk
G.	EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS	
	<p>To consider passing the appropriate resolution under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business since they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under Part 1</p>	

ITEM	Lead Member/Contact Officer	
	Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.	
G1.	Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate & Housing Benefit Overpayment Write-offs	Councillor Walmsley/ Rob Huntington Chief Executive robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk
G2.	Housing Benefit Write Off Policy	Councillor Walmsley/ Rob Huntington Chief Executive robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk



Rob Huntington
Chief Executive

Date Published: 10th March 2026

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 11th February 2026

**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
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Financial Services
Andy Taylor, Head of Environmental Services
Jackie Flynn, Community Projects and Partnerships Officer**

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 26th November 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McInnes declared an interest in item 9 (agenda item D3) as she was a member of the Friends of Whitaker Park Group.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no written or verbal questions.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided an update from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 12th January and 9th February 2026.

7. BETTER LIVES ROSSENDALE ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

The Lead Member for Communities, Housing, Health and Wellbeing outlined the report which asked Cabinet to adopt the strategy for the borough.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The ability to resource the Strategy was welcomed.
- The LIFT platform would give the Council the ability to help residents access benefits available.
- Officers were thanked for all their hard work.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet agreed to adopt the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan for the borough.

Reason for Decision:

To address poverty in Rossendale.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. ADOPTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMOs)

The Lead Member for Planning outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the guidance for use in the determination of all HMO planning applications and delegate minor amendments to the guidance to the Lead Member and Head of Planning.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Primary Care Network concerns do not appear to apply to HMOs.
- Officers were thanked for all their hard work.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for use in the determination of all planning applications for Houses in Multiple Occupation.
2. Cabinet delegated minor amendments to the SPG including formatting changes to the Head of Planning and Lead Member.

Reason for Decision:

To guide decisions on planning applications for HMOs in the borough.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. IMPROVEMENTS TO WHITAKER PARK TODDLER PLAY FACILITIES

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the expenditure of £143,000 on the play area and authorise officers to tender for the works. Cabinet was also asked to delegate authority to the Lead Member and Head of Environmental Services to accept the most advantageous tender.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The improvements would complement the new older children's play area.
- It was confirmed that the zip wire had been fixed.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the expenditure of £143,000 on the new play area at Whitaker Park, Rawtenstall and authorised officers to tender for the works in compliance with the Council's Constitution.
2. Cabinet delegated authority to the Head of Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member to accept the most advantageous tender.

Reason for Decision:

A refurbished play area would further improve one of the borough's main parks and increase its reputation as a destination site, whilst reducing the increasing maintenance costs

associated with its current form.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. ACCEPTANCE OF THE LOCAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION FUND (NEW SYSTEM PLAN FUND)

The Lead Member for Planning outlined the report which asked that if the bid was successful, that Cabinet provide authority to the Director of Economic Development and the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Lead Members for Planning and Resources to accept the funding, and enter into any necessary funding agreements.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The benefits of receiving funding were recognised.
- It was suggested that a member briefing take place to help councillors understand how the new regime would work.
- An early start on plan-making would be beneficial in light of the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved authority to the Director of Economic Development and the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Lead Members for Planning and Resources to accept the funding, if the bid was successful, under the Local Plan Implementation / New System Plan Fund and to enter into any necessary funding agreements.

Reason for Decision:

It was necessary to seek Cabinet approval as it was expected that, if successful, the Council could be awarded circa £120,000 in funding to help with preparing the next Local Plan, which would need to be prepared under the new system.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. THE ACCEPTANCE AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME (HAF) FUNDING

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to accept the grant of c.£230,000 for the 2026/27 programme and approve the Lead Member and Director of Resources to commission Rossendale Leisure Trust to deliver the programme under existing arrangements.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The amount to be received was currently unknown but confirmation from Lancashire County Council was expected imminently.
- Rossendale Leisure Trust would provide activities across the whole of the borough.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet accepted the grant of c.£230,000 for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme 2026/27.
2. Cabinet approved the Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources to commission Rossendale Leisure Trust, under existing arrangements, to enable them to support the children in the borough who were in receipt of free school

meals.

Reason for Decision:

To provide support during holiday periods for children of the borough who receive free school meals.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

12. COUNCIL BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/27

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to recommend that Council approves a revenue budget for 2026/27, a Council Tax increase of 2.99%, use of reserves to support the 2026/27 revenue budget and approve the proposed fees and charges.

The Director of Resources advised that Table 2 had been amended following the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in readiness for presentation to full Council.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The 3-year settlement had helped the Council make plans.
- It was the first growth budget in some time.
- Monies were being invested for the future.
- The team were thanked for their hard work.

Resolved:

Cabinet recommended that Council approves:

1. A revenue budget for 2026/27 of £14.8m, as detailed in the report.
2. A 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.
3. Use of £1,261k from the reserves to support the 2026/27 revenue budget, acknowledging that this requirement was forecast to reduce in future years
4. The proposed fees and charges as attached in Appendix 1.

Reason for Decision:

The budget process was a key element of the Council's Strategic Planning process. It was part of the service and financial planning approach adopted by the Council, was a means of ensuring that resources were best placed to enable the Council to deliver its Corporate Priorities expressed in the Corporate Plan.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

13. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27 – 2027/28 AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2026/27

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked that Cabinet recommend that Council approves the Capital Programme and associated capital expenditure for 2026/27 and 2027/28. Highlights were provided on all the projects currently underway.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Progression of the ongoing projects was positive.
- Much of the funding had come via external funding which was good for the borough's investment.
- Work was needed to put the Council in a good position as it progressed into Local

Government Reorganisation.

- The benefits of the Waste Transfer Station were highlighted.
- The team were thanked for all their work.

Resolved:

Cabinet recommended that Council approves:

1. The capital programme for 2026/27 and associated capital expenditure of £30,177m, and additional capital expenditure for the period of 2027/28 of £3.682m.

Reason for Decision:

To achieve the Council's strategic plans and operational requirements for the next two years.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

14. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026/27

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to recommend that Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy, including borrowing statement, the Investment Strategy, including Investment Indicators, the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and delegate minor amendments to the Lead Member and Director.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- It was an important report which showed how carefully the Council were managing large sums of money.

Resolved:

Cabinet recommended that Council approves:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, including the borrowing strategy.
2. The Investment Strategy, including Investment Indicators.
3. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.
4. To delegate any further minor amendments to the Director of Resources (s.151 Officer) in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure continued compliance with the Code and continue to manage the Council's exposure to financial risk.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Leader outlined the reasons for dealing with the matter with the exclusion of public and press.

Resolved:

That public and press be excluded from the following item of business under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the item involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

16. SUNDRY DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report.

Cabinet commented on the report.

Resolved:

Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report.

Reason for Decision:

To approve the Sundry Debt Management Policy.

17. COUNCIL TAX AND NON-DOMESTIC RATE DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report.

Cabinet commented on the report.

Resolved:

Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report.

Reason for Decision:

To approve the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate Debt Management Policy.

The meeting concluded at 7.47pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE

Report Title:	Housing Benefit Overpayment Policy		
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	18 th March 2026
Report of:	Head of Customer Services & I.C.T.	Cabinet Portfolio	Resources
Cabinet Lead Member	Councillor Walmsley	Wards Affected	All
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: n/a
Contact Officer:	Angela Richmond	Telephone:	01706 252588
Email:	angelarichmond@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This policy document sets out Rossendale Borough Council's commitment to the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments as laid down by The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to act as a guide to the Council's Administration of Housing Benefit overpayment recovery and to set out a clear Debt Recovery strategy.
- 1.3 Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments is a potential source of income for the Authority.
- 1.4 This policy was last reviewed in 2023. There are no fundamental changes to the existing policy other than format and presentation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the Housing Benefit Overpayment Policy as set out in this report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegate any minor amendments to the policy to the Head of Customer Services and ICT in consultation with the Lead Member.

3. BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

3.1 It is essential for Rossendale Borough Council to demonstrate that it carries out administration and recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments efficiently and effectively. A light touch review is regularly undertaken and the previous version of the Housing Benefit Overpayment Policy was approved in January 2023.

3.2 DWP data sharing arrangements have improved over recent years which means that overpayments are identified sooner, and are usually lower amounts. However, Universal Credit migration is eroding the Housing Benefit caseload reducing the opportunity to recover overpayments from ongoing benefit entitlement, which is the easiest and most cost-effective method. Recovery via sundry debtor invoice can be protracted depending on the debtors' circumstances and the recovery options available to us.

3.3 Housing Benefit debt stands at £790k having fallen by £235k over the past five years. This trend is expected to continue as the Housing Benefit caseload declines and DWP data sharing arrangements reduce the value of overpayments raised. Rossendale Borough Council are proactive in preventing and/or reducing the value of overpayments created in the first instance.

In recent years the levels of overpayments raised have fallen sharply, whilst collection rates have increased. In 2017/18 £675k of overpayments were raised in-year, with £399k collected, a rate of 59.7%. In 2024/25 £368k of overpayments were raised in-year with £284k collected, at a rate of 77.1%. Overpayment recovery rates are a performance indicator and are reported to Overview & Scrutiny quarterly.

3.4 Overpayments created are classified for subsidy purposes and levels of Local Authority error are monitored by the DWP. Error level thresholds are between 0.48% - 0.54% of the total Housing Benefit spend. 2025/26 Housing Benefit expenditure is £4.98m to date, so the lower threshold is currently £24k We are well below the threshold with a £0.2k error rate. Processing accuracy is a performance indicator which is reported to Overview & Scrutiny.

3.5 Subsidy arrangements mean that Housing Benefit overpayments can generate income for the Council. Rossendale Borough Council receive 100% subsidy on all qualifying Housing Benefit expenditure. This means there is no cost to the authority. However, when an overpayment is identified, subsidy is reduced to 40%, as a result there is a 60% cost to the Council. To provide an incentive for Local Authorities to recover overpayments, the DWP allow them to retain all monies recovered from the debtor.

3.6 This policy will act as a guide for staff. Recovery procedures need to be documented, effective and time managed to maximise the Council's performance.

3.7 Having a current and relevant policy ensures the Council;

- Helps reduce the loss from overpayments
- Mitigate the risk of loss to public funds
- Provides revenue for the Council
- Deters fraud and error
- Demonstrates commitment to accuracy and provision of a quality service to customers

4. RISK

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

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

5.1 The Council only receives a 40% subsidy for Housing Benefit overpayments, with the unfunded 60% being an additional cost to the Council. Therefore, it is essential that the Council seeks to recover overpayments where possible. Any recovery over the 60% is retained as additional income for the Council.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

6.1 It is essential for the Council to demonstrate that it carries out the administration and recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments efficiently and effectively to mitigate the risk of legal challenge.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) initial assessment has been undertaken and it has been identified there are no disproportional impact and a Full IIA is not required.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There have been no significant changes to the policy. Consultation has been undertaken with the Capita Governance Board, Corporate Management Team and Lead Member.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Rossendale Borough Council need to demonstrate that it carries out administration and recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments efficiently and effectively by having a current and up to date policy. This policy will be superseded by a combined policy when the new Lancashire authority is created.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Housing Benefit Overpayment Policy 2023

10.2 Cabinet report 2023:
[e1-refresh-of-housing-benefit-overpayment-policy](#)

10.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee report 2023:
[d2-refresh-of-housing-benefit-overpayment-policy](#)



ROSSENDALE
BOROUGH
COUNCIL



Housing Benefit Overpayment Policy 2026



Thriving Local Economy

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Housing Benefit Overpayment Policy 2026

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy document sets out Rossendale Borough Council's commitment to the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments as laid down by The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006.
- 1.2 The Council acknowledges that overpayments of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction will occur. We will aim to minimise overpayments by making accurate and timely payments of benefits. We will also take our duty to recovery overpaid benefits seriously and will seek repayment of monies owed whilst remaining responsive to the needs of individual customers.
- 1.3 Where overpayments do occur, we will seek full repayment of monies owed but at the same time will be responsive to the needs of individual customers. This policy is flexible in its approach to the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments with each case treated on its own merit.
- 1.4 At all times we will act in accordance with Rossendale Borough Council's prevailing Equality Strategy and Equal Opportunities Policy, adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that in carrying out this policy we will not discriminate against any customer.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 It is essential for Rossendale Borough Council to demonstrate that it carries out administration and recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments efficiently and effectively. By doing so the Council:
 - Helps reduce the loss from overpayments;
 - Mitigate the risk of loss to public funds;
 - Provides revenue for the Council;
 - Deters fraud and error;
 - Demonstrates commitment to accuracy and provision of a quality service to customers.

3. Aims of the Policy

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to act as a guide to the Council's Administration of Housing Benefit overpayment recovery and to set out a clear Debt Recovery strategy.

4. Housing Benefit Overpayments

4.1 What is a Housing Benefit Overpayment?

Overpayments of Housing Benefit happen when an amount of benefit is paid to which there is no entitlement under the regulations.

4.2 What causes a Housing Benefit Overpayment?

Overpayments can be caused by a failure to report a change in circumstances, late notification of a change in circumstances, delays in processing a change in circumstances, incorrect information being supplied, official error made by the Local Authority or official error made by the Department for Work and Pensions.

4.3 What is a recoverable Housing Benefit Overpayment?

A recoverable Housing Benefit overpayment is generally any overpayment unless it is due to an official error and the claimant, someone acting on their behalf, or the person to whom the payment was made could not reasonably have been expected to realise that an overpayment was taking place at the time of payment or upon receipt of any notification relating to the payment.

4.4 **What is a 'fraudulent' Housing Benefit Overpayment?**

A "fraudulent overpayment" is an overpayment that has been designated as fraudulent following investigation and intervention by a designated Fraud Officer. Recovery of such overpayments is given priority.

4.5 The Council will seek repayment of all incurred Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction overpayment that has arisen as a result of fraudulent activity.

4.6 Where an individual has committed a benefit fraud offence, Rossendale Borough Council will actively seek to recover the overpayment in full, prioritising these cases for urgent action taking all legal steps available.

4.7 All benefit overpayments resulting from a benefit fraud offence are recorded and taken into consideration if the perpetrator commits any further benefit offence when determining what further action to take.

4.8 **What is an 'administrative penalty'?**

Where a fraudulent overpayment has been identified the debtor can, in some cases, be offered the chance to pay an "administrative penalty" as an alternative to prosecution.

4.9 Recovery of the overpayment takes priority over the administrative penalty so should be paid first.

5. Identification/classification of Housing Benefit Overpayments

5.1 Accurate and prompt identification of overpayments is important in order to ensure that the incorrect payment of benefit is discontinued, maximise the chances of the successful recovery of the overpayment and reduce the number of complaints and appeals.

5.2 In order to help identify overpayments promptly the Council works closely with the Department for Work and Pensions and shares information in accordance with the legislation.

5.3 The Council identifies overpayments and establishes the cause of the overpayment and whether it is recoverable and from whom it should be recovered.

5.4 The Council receives subsidies from the Government for certain types of overpayments so it is important that classification is accurate.

6. Decision Making

6.1 Correct decision-making regarding whether or not there is an overpayment and whether or not it is recoverable is essential because there are consequences concerning the rights of claimants and other affected persons. The decision can affect the finances of the Council if it is not recoverable and decisions made and the reasons for them can provide an indication of the levels of fraud and error compared with inefficiency in our benefit administration.

6.2 Whether a recoverable overpayment is recovered is at the discretion of the Council and regard will be given to individual circumstances when deciding whether recovery is appropriate.

7. Claimant or Third Party error

7.1 An official error does not include circumstances where the claimant, someone acting on their behalf or the person to whom the payment was made caused or materially contributed to the error. These are claimant or third party errors and are recoverable.

8. Calculation of a Housing Benefit Overpayment

8.1 A recoverable overpayment is calculated by deducting the amount of benefit that should have been paid for the period in question from the amount of benefit that was actually paid. Any underpayment of benefit is taken into account. Claimants are given the opportunity to provide evidence of any possible underlying entitlement, which may reduce the overpayment.

9. From whom should the overpayment be recovered?

9.1 If the overpayment was caused by misrepresentation or failure to disclose information then it must be recovered from the person who actually misrepresented or failed to disclose that information.

9.2 If the overpayment was caused by an official error, it must be recovered from the person who at the time of receiving the overpayment or any notices relating to the payment, could reasonably have been expected to realise that it was an overpayment.

9.3 If neither of the above applies, the overpayment can be recovered from:

- The claimant.
- Housing Benefit payable to the claimant's partner, if they were members of the same household both at the time of the overpayment and when it is being recovered.
- The person to whom the overpayment was paid.

9.4 Overpayments must not be recovered from a joint tenant, unless that joint tenant is also a partner of the claimant and regulation 101(4) applies or they are the person to whom benefit was paid.

9.5 If a deceased person has an outstanding overpayment recovery can be sought from their estate.

10. Notification of an Overpayment

10.1 The Housing Benefit regulations state that any person affected by a decision relating to an overpayment must be notified in writing e.g. if the debt is to be recovered from a landlord notification must be sent to the claimant and the landlord. A notification is sent out within 14 days of the decision stating clearly the reasons for the overpayment and advising the debtor of their right of appeal/review.

11. Recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments

11.1 A Housing Benefit overpayment is a high priority debt and Rossendale Borough Council has a duty to recover any outstanding amount as quickly as possible.

12. Recovery from on-going Benefit

12.1 Where the claimant is still entitled to Housing Benefit the overpayment can be recovered from their on-going benefit entitlement.

12.2 The Government sets the weekly rate that Councils can recover; however, this amount can be increased with the consent of the debtor.

12.3 Where the overpayment is to be recovered from on-going benefit, details of this are shown on the notification letter. If the debtor is still in receipt of Housing Benefit but the amount in payment is not enough to allow the recovery rate to be taken, the Council will recover all but £0.50 per week.

12.4 In cases where a debtor indicates they are unable to pay the standard deduction amount an Income and Expenditure form will be issued in order to consider reducing the weekly deduction amount. Completion of an income and expenditure form allows maximum recovery whilst taking essential expenditure into account. Debtors are expected to review their outgoings to make additional income available and to reduce non priority expenses.

12.5 It should be noted that recovery from on-going benefit is counted as recovery from the claimant, not the landlord. Consequently, the landlord is not a person affected and cannot apply for a revision of the decision or appeal against it. The claimant must make up the shortfall in their rent in order to avoid any arrears. If a rent arrears situation does develop then the landlord should pursue recovery accordingly.

13. Where there is no on-going benefit entitlement

13.1 If there is no on-going benefit entitlement the debt will be recovered via invoicing after a calendar month has lapsed. This period allows for a revision, appeal or new claim being received. The invoice will request payment within 14 days. If there is no response to the invoice a reminder is automatically issued after 14 days, followed by a final notice 14 days later. Official notices may be supplemented by text or email messages.

14. Non-payment

14.1 If payment or an arrangement for payment is not made a final demand will follow the invoice. This requests payment within 7 days.

15. Arrangements

15.1 If the debtor cannot pay the overpayment invoice in full then the Council encourages them to make contact immediately, as it may be possible to make a payment arrangement. In addition to this, debtors can seek advice as to where they can go for independent advice.

15.2 Each case will be considered on its own merits - taking the amount due, personal circumstances and financial circumstances into account. Arrangements will be at a level equivalent to the DWP prescribed deduction from ongoing Housing Benefit. There are no rules limiting the maximum amount that can be asked for. The aim is to agree a realistic arrangement to collect unpaid debts within a reasonable time, without the need for more serious recovery action.

15.3 It may be necessary to issue an Income and Expenditure form in order to obtain a clear picture of the person's financial circumstances and thereby act as a basis for reaching a mutually acceptable instalment plan. Completion of an income and expenditure form allows maximum recovery whilst taking essential expenditure into account. Debtors are expected to review their outgoings to make additional income available and to reduce non priority expenses.

15.4 Once the arrangement is agreed, a letter confirming the details is issued along with a Standing Order to facilitate payment. Payments can also be made online. A payment arrangement will be reviewed on an annual basis.

16. Monitoring Arrangements

16.1 If the claimant defaults on their arrangement a final notice will automatically be issued. The instalment plan/arrangement is cancelled and the debtor is asked to make payment in full.

17. Further Recovery Action

17.1 Where payment has not been made in accordance with an arrangement or no payment has been made at all a decision on further action will be made based on the circumstances of each case. See below for further information on the type of action that may be taken.

17.2 Recovery from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Benefits

If the debt is not paid and no repayment arrangement is made, deductions from certain prescribed DWP benefits (such as Universal Credit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance or State Retirement Pension) will be considered.

17.3 In these instances, the Council will request that the DWP implement deductions. The regulations state that the DWP will recover overpayments from social security benefits where:

It is requested by the Council to do so and;

- They are satisfied that the overpayment arose as a result of a misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact by, or on behalf of, the claimant; or by some other person to whom payment has been made; and
- That person is receiving sufficient amounts of one or more benefit to enable deductions to be made.

17.4 **Recovery from landlord payments**

Where an overpayment is recoverable from the landlord and payment is not made by the invoice due date, the debt can be deducted from their next Housing Benefit payment.

17.5 The landlord cannot seek to recoup these monies from any tenant other than the tenant under whose tenancy the overpayment arose. The rent liability in respect of all other tenants covered by the Housing Benefit payment is discharged to the full amount of their Housing Benefit.

17.6 **Recovery via Direct Earnings Attachment**

The Council can ask an employer to deduct any Housing Benefit overpayment an employee owes direct from their earnings.

17.7 **County Court Action**

Where appropriate and taking into account the size and reason for the overpayment, we may seek recovery through the County Court. This allows us to enforce recovery of the overpayment in a number of ways including charging orders.

17.8 Decisions to take action through the County Court will be authorised by the Service Assurance Team, taking into account;

- i. The likelihood of successful recovery.
- ii. The level of potential costs to be incurred.
- iii. The circumstances of the customer.

17.9 **Debt Collection Agency**

We may pass the account to an external Debt Collection Agent and request that they pursue the customer for payment on our behalf.

17.10 **Changes of address and returned post**

If correspondence is returned undelivered and marked "Gone Away", or similar, and a forwarding address is not already known every effort is made to find a new address for the debtor.

17.11 The Council will make all legally allowable checks on different records and systems to trace the individual and so continue to recover the debt.

17.12 All cases where an individual has not been traced will be regularly checked with the aim of continuing debt recovery.

18. **Vulnerable Debtors**

18.1 There is no simple definition of vulnerability. The Citizens Advice Bureau suggests that:

'Generally, a person is considered to be vulnerable if it would be unreasonable to expect them to be able to deal with a problem themselves.'

18.2 Some characteristics which may lead to vulnerability are:

- Persons with a physical and/or sensory disability
- Persons affected by mental illness
- Persons with a learning disability
- Persons suffering a serious illness
- Older People
- Language Difficulties
- Literacy Issues
- Families with Children
- Young People Leaving Care
- Those at risk of homelessness
- People suffering from bereavement
- Fleeing or subject to domestic violence
- Prisoners and detainees
- Pregnancy

18.3 This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive. A person is not automatically vulnerable if they can be identified from the list above. Relevant and appropriate support may be in place. A person may be vulnerable for other reasons not mentioned above.

18.4 It is important that where recovery action is in place, no customer is unfairly discriminated against because they are unable to manage responsibilities or protect their rights in the face of that action. At the same time, potential or actual vulnerability does not mean that an overpayment is rendered irrecoverable provided that appropriate consideration is taken of each customer's circumstances.

19. Write-Off

19.1 We recognise that in certain circumstances it may not be practical or appropriate to recover an overpayment. In those cases, consideration will be given to non-recovery or write off the debt.

19.2 The circumstances in which this will be considered are as follows:

- Where the overpayment was caused as a result of Local Authority error and where the claimant or person receiving the payment could not reasonably have been expected to know the overpayment was occurring.
- Where all recovery processes have been exhausted.
- It is uneconomic to recover where the debt is under £50.
- The overpayment becomes unrecoverable due to the Limitations Act.
- The customer has demonstrated exceptional circumstances or extreme financial hardship.

19.3 In considering a debt for write off the following conditions will apply:

- Each case will be considered on its merits.
- Each request will be supported by relevant documentation.
- Each case will receive authorisation from the appropriate authorised officer and/or Members
- Appropriate records of all authorised write offs will be maintained and reviewed periodically against live caseload.

19.4 A separate, detailed write off policy for Housing Benefit debt sets out in full the conditions for write off.

20. Policy Review

20.1 This Policy will be reviewed on a periodic basis in order to ensure it remains valid, effective and relevant. This will normally be every 3 years or as a change in legislation occurs.

Report Title:	Confirmation of the Article 4 Direction to withdraw permitted development rights for the conversion of houses to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).		
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	18 March 2026
Report of:	Head of Planning	Cabinet Portfolio	Planning
Cabinet Lead Member	Councillor A Barnes	Wards Affected	All
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required: Yes	Attached: Yes	
Contact Officer:	Anne Storah	Telephone:	01706 252418
Email:	annestorah@rossendalebc.gov.uk/ louisekirkup@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

Valley Plan Priorities	<p>Thriving Local Economy - This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.</p>	
	<p>High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.</p>	

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Under delegated authority, on 19 September 2025, the Council made an Immediate Article 4 Direction across all wards in Rossendale to withdraw permitted development rights for the conversion of houses (Use Class C3) to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (Use Class C4)
- 1.2 Following this, a 6-week consultation was undertaken. It is necessary for the Article 4 direction to be confirmed within 6 months of it being made.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the consultation responses received following the making of the Article 4 Direction.

2.2 To confirm the making of the Immediate Article 4 Direction across all wards within Rossendale to withdraw permitted development rights for the conversion of houses to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

2.3 Due to the urgency Cabinet agrees to waive the call-in procedure in order to meet the deadlines laid down by legislation.

3 BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

3.1 Under permitted development rights, houses can be converted to small HMOs without requiring planning consent. For the purposes of planning, small HMOs are properties occupied by 3 to 6 unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom.

3.2 Legislation allows the Council to make an Article 4 Direction to remove these permitted development rights and so planning permission will be required to convert a house to a small HMO, where a material change of use will occur. The Director of Economic Development has authority to issue an Immediate Article 4 Direction across all wards within Rossendale, subject to consultation with the relevant lead member. This took effect on 19 September 2025. Confirmation of the Article 4 Direction is required before 19 March 2026, six months after the Article 4 Direction was made, otherwise it will cease to have effect.

3.3 Having made the Article 4 Direction in September, notices were issued as required by the legislation, with a local advertisement, site display at no fewer than two locations within the area to which the Direction relates for not less than 6 weeks, and the Secretary of State was also informed. The consultation was publicised in the local press and on the Council's website and social media pages. Please see [Article 4 Directions | Planning | Rossendale Borough Council](#) for further details.

3.4 The Council received 21 comments, which can be viewed at <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/19321/responses-received>. Of these, 19 supported the Article 4 Direction, one was not in favour and one response was unclear. The issues that were raised include:

- Contributing to low prices of properties in an area
- Changing the character of an area
- Preventing families accessing the housing market
- Exacerbating parking issues
- Undermining community cohesion due to the transient nature of occupiers of HMOs
- Low standards of some HMOs
- Overcrowding, leading to potential physical and mental health problems for occupiers
- Increased number of people putting pressure on local services
- Hosting vulnerable users so requiring additional support from public services
- Anti-social behaviour e.g. excessive noise or not keeping outside areas clean and tidy.
- The Article 4 Direction will help with monitoring the location of HMOs, including the identification of clusters and the standards of HMOs

No reason was given as to why an individual (respondent 6) did not agree with the introduction of an Immediate Article 4 Direction.

- 3.5 Introducing an Immediate Article 4 Direction requires the Council to “*consider that the development to which the direction relates would be prejudicial to the proper planning of their area or constitute a threat to the amenities of their area*”.
- 3.6 It is acknowledged that HMOs play a crucial role in providing affordable and flexible/temporary housing options, particularly for younger people. However, there is concern about the increasing number of HMOs, the quality of accommodation provided, and the implications on the amenity and character of local neighbourhoods. As small HMOs do not require planning consent, it is very difficult to monitor their occurrence, and planning conditions cannot be imposed which would mitigate any impacts.
- 3.7 The 2021 Census recorded 17 HMOs, of which 15 were identified as small HMOs. Research undertaken in 2025 by the Planning team identified 79 HMOs (based on data identified from the Planning and Building Control Unit, rooms being advertised for rent on the website (e.g. the SpareRoom website) and Environmental Health records, including the Public Register of licenced HMOs). In addition, there are 31 properties that could be small HMOs, based on complaints and enquiries received. This shows there has been a staggering increase over the past four years, of about 500%. Mapping these properties has shown that HMOs are present in every ward in Rossendale and there are signs that clusters are beginning to form, in areas particularly around Haslingden, Bacup and Stacksteads.
- 3.8 In order to help in determining planning applications where there is a material change of use resulting in an HMO being created, Cabinet adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on 11 February 2026. This SPG is to ensure amenity is protected for both the residents of the HMOs and wider residential amenity for neighbouring properties.
- 3.9 Introducing an Immediate Article 4 Direction will not mean that planning applications will necessarily be refused, but it does mean that planning conditions can be imposed where appropriate. By requiring planning applications to be submitted, it will be valuable in helping the Council monitor how many are in operation and where they are located.
- 3.10 It is necessary to confirm the Article 4 Direction within 6-months of the Direction being made, otherwise the Direction will expire and the permitted development right will be restored. As such, Cabinet are being asked to consider this decision to be urgent, as any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council’s and the public’s interest. The minute of any decision taken as a matter of urgency must indicate the reasons for urgency
- 3.11 It should be noted that there could be incidences where the Article 4 Direction may not apply, specifically if it is considered that there would be no material change where a proposal changes the use class from C3 to C4. Whether a material change of use has or will occur is a matter for the Local Planning Authority to determine on a case-by-case basis.

Summary

- 3.12 Due to the number of complaints, it was considered appropriate to see if an Article 4 Direction should be introduced in Rossendale to withdraw permitted development rights for small HMOs. Having considered various data sources, it was found that there has been an exponential increase in the number of HMOs since the Census was undertaken in 2021. Discussions took place with Cabinet members and an all-member briefing session was held on 10/09/2025, where support was given to making an Immediate Article 4 Direction to apply to all of Rossendale. In line with the Regulations, following the making of the Direction, consultation was held and 21 responses received, with all but two being clearly supportive.

Under the Regulations, the Council has six months after making it to confirm the Article 4 Direction otherwise it will cease to have effect. This means that a decision has to be made before 19 March 2026, and as such it is recommended that Cabinet waives the call-in process.

4. RISK

4.1 Compensation

Bringing an Immediate Article 4 Direction in force as soon as practically possible, will mean that there is a risk of compensation claims being brought against the Council. These compensation risks are unquantifiable. It should be noted that this risk has not prevented other authorities from introducing an Immediate Article 4 Direction.

4.2 In accordance with Sections 107 and 108 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Town and Country Planning (Compensation) (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended) property owners may be eligible for compensation if they are affected by the introduction of an Article 4(1) direction within a 12-month period of it coming into effect. Compensation claims can arise from property owners and/or developers who have incurred abortive expenditure or losses due to the withdrawal of permitted development rights or the imposition of planning conditions. The level and nature of compensation is unknown and will likely remain broadly unknown. Compensation claims only apply to planning applications submitted within 12 months of the Direction being made.

4.3 Legal advice was sought and this noted that the landlord sector is well informed and advised by specialist legal firms.

4.4 It should be noted that of the two Local Planning Authorities who introduced immediate Article 4 directions relating to HMOs more than 12 months ago, Trafford Council received no compensation claims, and the London Borough of Merton received one compensation claim outside of the claim period

4.5 Resources

Additional resources may be required in order to determine these planning applications, off set by the planning fees. In addition, there are likely to be more planning enforcement cases arising

4.6 Reputational

The Secretary of State has the power to cancel or modify an Article 4 direction at any time before or after it is confirmed.

4.7 Not bringing into effect a Direction to remove permitted development rights will mean it will be continue to difficult to monitor actual numbers of HMOs. This means that the numbers of this type accommodation can increase, possibly at the expense of family accommodation, and result in further concerns raised by residents in the Borough.

4.8 Introducing an immediate Article 4 Direction will not mean that planning applications will necessarily be refused. In addition, changes that do not result in a material change of use will still not require planning permission. As such it is possible that the expectations of the public will not be met. Where such applications are refused it is expected that appeals will be brought.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. As referenced in the point above there may be financial implications depending on the outcomes of any potential claims which should they arise be a pressure on the revenue budget.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

6.1 Legal implications are covered in the body of the report. The Article 4 Direction was prepared in accordance with Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. The making of an Article 4(1) Direction is also informed by the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and the Regulations set out in Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

There is no right of appeal against an Article 4 direction. The decision of the Council to make an Article 4 direction can be subject to judicial review proceedings. If the proceedings are successful, the Article 4 direction could be quashed.

6.2 This is a key decision as the matter is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards but that due to the urgency of the decision Cabinet should consider waiving the call-in procedure in order to meet the deadlines laid down by legislation for the confirmation of the Direction.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As attached.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Introducing the Immediate Article 4 Direction will help the Council ensure “having access to a good quality home to either rent or buy plays a fundamental part in our residents’ quality of life.” (Healthy and Proud Communities, the Valley Plan).

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 It is expected that the Article 4 Direction will remain in force for the area shown on the map (which is the entire Borough of Rossendale) until is replaced, revoked or amended.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Scheme of Delegation

10.2 Immediate Article 4 Direction – details of the consultation [Article 4 Directions](#)

10.3 Evidence Base to support Immediate Article 4 – Available at Futures Park upon request

10.4 SPG on HMOs [Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPDs\)](#)

Integrated Impact Assessment

The council carry out Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) to analyse the effects of our decisions, policies or practices. Throughout this document, policy refers to any policy, strategy, project, procedure, function, decision or delivery or service. The IIA should be undertaken/started at the beginning of the policy development process before any decisions are made. Policies are developed and reviewed using a consultative approach involving relevant internal and external stakeholders. Officers must consider what action needs to be taken to help overcome or minimise any disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic will experience in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and socio-economic disadvantage.

Name of policy:	Confirmation of the Article 4 Direction to withdraw permitted development rights for the conversion of houses to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
Lead officer name	Anne Storah
Job title	Principal Planner
Service area	Planning
Telephone contact	01706 252418
Email contact	annestorah@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Date Assessment commenced	08.09.25
Date assessment completed	10.02.26

The main aims/objectives of this policy are:

By issuing an Article 4 Direction and removing permitted development rights, will ensure that any proposals involving the change from a house to a small House in Multiple Occupation (for 3 to 6 individual households) to need planning consent.

Indicate the status of the policy or decision

New/proposed Modified/adapted Existing

Indicate protected characteristics have been assessed

Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion/belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy/maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marriage or civil partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Indicate socio-economic disadvantage has been assessed

1. Identify any positive or negative impacts on protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage

Protected characteristic	Positive/Negative	How does it impact?
Age		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Disability		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Gender reassignment		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Marriage and civil partnership		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Pregnancy and maternity		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Race		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Religion or belief		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Sex		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Sexual orientation		The Article 4 Direction will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Socio-economic		HMOs are more prevalent in areas where house prices are lower, and can be occupied by people on lower incomes, although not always. However, it is not the intention that there will be a blanket ban on HMOs, rather that they will require planning permission so that adequate space and

		facilities can be provided, neighbour amenity maintained, and their location monitored to avoid clustering in unsuitable locations.
--	--	---

2. Explain and provide examples of any evidence/data used (add additional rows if needed)

Evidence	How does this have an impact on the protected characteristic?
ONS data, Indices of Deprivation, Census 2021, records from Planning & BC, Environmental Health	

3. Outcome of IIA

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take?	Please indicate
Outcome 1- The IIA has not identified any potential for negative impact on the protected characteristics. Progress to EIA approval – section 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 2- The IIA has identified a possibility for negative impact on the protected characteristics. An IIA Action Plan must be completed to mitigate the negative impact – section 4 before approval section 5	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. IIA action plan

Based on the above impact assessment, findings/evidence and outcomes identified, please complete the Action Plan below. The action plan should address:

- Any gaps in findings/evidence research including any consultation or engagement regarding the policy and its actual/potential impacts
- How you will address any gaps
- What practical changes/action that will help reduce any negative impacts identified
- What practical changes/action that will help enhance any positive contributions to equality

Negative impact identified	Action required	Lead officer	To be completed

Monitoring and reviewing the effect of the policy

Please state how you will monitor the impact and effect of this policy

5. IIA approval (to be completed by the relevant Head of Service/Director)

- Outcome of IIA agreed/approved by Management Team: (date)
- Published on council website: (date)

Signed: (Head of Service/Director) (date)

Report Title:	Annual Air Quality Report 2025		
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	18 th March 2026
Report of:	Public Protection Manager	Cabinet Portfolio:	Environment and Corporate Services
Cabinet Lead Member:	Councillor Lythgoe	Wards Affected:	All
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Susan Chadwick	Telephone:	01706 238 648
Email:	susanchadwick@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Annual Air Quality Report is a statutory requirement of the Authority.
- 1.2 Air quality continues to improve in Rossendale.
- 1.3 There were no breaches of the Air Quality Objective in 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the contents of the report be noted.

3. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer.
- 3.2 Poor air quality is associated with adverse health outcomes, particularly for children, older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. Continued improvement in air quality supports the Council's wider public health and climate change objectives and helps reduce health inequalities.
- 3.3 District Councils have responsibility for monitoring air quality.

- 3.4 The Council had previously declared three AQMAs for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Two AQMAs were revoked in December 2022 following sustained compliance with national objectives.
- 3.5 A new AQMA (AQMA 3) was declared in December 2022 along a short section of Grane Road, Haslingden. This covered thirteen pavement-front terraced properties where exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ were identified.
- 3.6 The 2025 Annual Status Report (ASR) confirms a continued and significant improvement in air quality within AQMA 3.
- 3.7 Source apportionment indicates that road traffic emissions remain the dominant contributor to NO₂ concentrations at Grane Road, with diesel cars and light goods vehicles being the primary sources. The AQAP therefore focuses on measures aimed at reducing emissions from private vehicles and encouraging behavioural change.
- 3.8 The AQAP 2025 replaces the previous action plan and sets out actions for the period to 2030. Given that monitored concentrations are now below the objective, the plan focuses primarily on 'soft measures' in line with Defra guidance. These include:
 - 3.8.1 Promoting alternatives to private vehicle use, such as car sharing and car clubs.
 - 3.8.2 Promoting low emission transport, including through council fleet and business travel practices.
 - 3.8.3 Encouraging travel alternatives such as home working and active travel.
 - 3.8.4 Increasing public awareness of air quality issues, including reducing exposure and addressing domestic solid fuel burning.
- 3.9 While individual measures are expected to have a low direct impact, their cumulative effect over time is anticipated to support continued compliance and wider public health benefits.
- 3.10 Air quality monitoring will continue, with progress reported annually through the ASR. Should compliance be maintained over a sustained period, officers will consider the future revocation of AQMA 3 in line with national guidance.

4. RISK

- 4.1 Failure to maintain compliance with air quality objectives could result in regulatory intervention and reputational risk. Ongoing monitoring and annual reporting through the ASR process mitigates this risk.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report. Any future financial implications arising from air quality inspections will be assessed as part of the Council's budget setting process.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 The Council is required to comply with the Local Air Quality Management framework under the Environment Act 1995. Approval and implementation of the AQAP ensures the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Areas affected by poor air quality often correlate with higher levels of deprivation. Continued improvement in air quality within the AQMA supports positive equality outcomes for affected residents.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The continued monitoring of air quality and implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan directly supports the Council's commitment to improving environmental quality and supporting climate resilience. It supports the Local Plan which includes policies that seek to protect health and well-being and it aligns with the wider public health objectives.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct local government reorganisation implications arising from this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Annual Status Report appended as **Appendix A**.

10.2 Air Quality Action Plan for Grane Road, Haslingden appended as **Appendix B**.



2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)

In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995
Local Air Quality Management, as amended by the
Environment Act 2021

Date: October 2025

Information	Rossendale Borough Council Details
Local Authority Officer	Lorna Robinson
Department	Public Protection Unit
Address	Environmental Health, Futures Park, Newchurch Road Stacksteads OL13 0BB
Telephone	01706 217777
E-mail	envhealth@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Report Reference Number	ASR 2025
Date	October 2025

Local Responsibilities and Commitment

This ASR was prepared by the Environmental Health Department of Rossendale Borough Council with the support and agreement of the following officers and departments:

This ASR has been approved by:

Susan Chadwick Public Protection Manager

Andrew Taylor Head of Operations

This ASR has been signed off by a Director of Public Health.

If you have any comments on this annual status report please send them to:

Environmental Health, Futures Park, Newchurch Road Stacksteads OL13 0BB

envhealth@rossendalebc.gov.uk

01706 217777

Executive Summary: Air Quality in Our Area

Air quality continues to improve in Rossendale. Two air quality management areas were revoked in 2022 and AQMA3 (which is a small section of Grane Road Haslingden) is showing continued improvement in air quality. There were no breaches of the Air Quality Objective (above $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in 2024. The highest reporting tubes Tube 4 (formerly DT12) located on the façade of 250 Grane Road Haslingden recorded $42.1\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2023 but now in 2024 is $38.8\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and tube 5 (formerly DT19) located on the façade between 256-258 Grane Road Haslingden recorded $41.3\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2023 and $36.7\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2024. Looking at the trajectory and the data in the Air Quality Action Plan the air quality is improving and levels will hopefully continue to decrease to below the air quality objective.

Diffusion tubes 1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,14,15,16 and 17 were removed from the revoked AQMAs 1 and 2 saving the Council over £600 in analyst costs and saved officer time.

The number of diffusion tubes was reduced to nine and re-numbered as follows:

New tube number	Previous tube number	Current location of diffusion tube
DT1	DT13	30/32 Bacup Road Rawtenstall
DT2	DT7	366-368 Manchester Road, Haslingden
DT3	DT18	222 Grane Road, Haslingden
DT4	DT12	250 Grane Road Haslingden
DT5	DT19	256-8 Grane Road Haslingden
DT6	DT20	264 Grane Road Haslingden
DT7	DT10	277 Grane Road Haslingden
DT8	DT11	450 Bacup Road Waterfoot
DT9	DT1	1 Plantation View, Burnley Road Bacup OL13 8PY

Air Quality in Rossendale Borough Council

Breathing in polluted air affects our health and costs the NHS and our society billions of pounds each year. Air pollution is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer and can cause a range of health impacts, including effects on lung function, exacerbation of asthma, increases in hospital admissions and mortality.

Air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society, children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. Low-income communities are also disproportionately impacted by poor air quality, exacerbating health and social inequalities.

Table ES 1 provides a brief explanation of the key pollutants relevant to Local Air Quality Management and the kind of activities they might arise from.

Table ES 1 - Description of Key Pollutants

Pollutant	Description
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	Nitrogen dioxide is a gas which is generally emitted from high-temperature combustion processes such as road transport or energy generation.
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂) is a corrosive gas which is predominantly produced from the combustion of coal or crude oil.
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5})	<p>Particulate matter is everything in the air that is not a gas. Particles can come from natural sources such as pollen, as well as human made sources such as smoke from fires, emissions from industry and dust from tyres and brakes.</p> <p>PM₁₀ refers to particles under 10 micrometres. Fine particulate matter or PM_{2.5} are particles under 2.5 micrometres.</p>

Actions to Improve Air Quality

Whilst air quality has improved significantly in recent decades, there are some areas where local action is needed to protect people and the environment from the effects of air pollution. Rossendale Borough Council has done the following in 2024 as it works to continue to improve air quality in the borough:

Diffusion Tube 1 which was in front of Casa Tapas Bacup Road Rawtenstall in a revoked Air Quality Management Area was relocated to Plantation View near Northern Primary school Burnley Road Weir following a resident request.

We promoted Clean Air Night on 22nd January 2024 on our social media channels

We ran a cycling summit on 27th February 2024 see [Cycling Summit 2024 | Rossendale Borough Council](#)

Rossendale Cycling summit 2024 – Have your say “*Interested in cycling, active travel and campaigning for a better Rossendale? Join us for a day exploring how to make Rossendale a safer place for anyone to cycle, walk and wheel; a Rossendale that’s greener, cleaner and healthier*” We are delighted to announce that we will be hosting a cycling summit on Tuesday 27th February 2024 to discuss, share ideas and create a plan for cycling in Rossendale. The focus of the summit will be “*greener, cleaner and healthier*” by using cycling and active travel to embed into our daily lives. In attendance will be Cycling UK and British Cycling which is a real commitment to Rossendale and our cycling community. The summit will have a series of workshops focussed on the following: How do we build and increase active travel into our everyday lives? Marketing and communications is key to any campaign to engage more people, what can we do to ensure we are getting our message out about cycling? Infrastructure is key; discuss 1) Cycling infrastructure ie on the road / off-road – connecting places and 2) cycling facilities such as pump tracks etc. How will cycling contribute to the physical activity strategy for Rossendale? Understanding our Community – what exists?

An new electric pool van was purchased for use by the Parks Department [Rossendale council unveils new electric van and bin wagons | Lancashire Telegraph](#)

On 17th April 2024 officers attended an online national Air Quality and Climate Change guidance focus group

In June 2024 a new climate change page was added to council website [Climate Emergency – Rossendale Borough Council](#)

There was promotion of Cycling Awareness Week 10th to 16th June 2024 on social media

There was promotion of Clean Air Day on 20th June 2024 on social media with a focus on the message that 25% of the car trips we make are under 1 mile which could be walked on average in around 15 minutes. Protect your health and the planet by walking, wheeling, cycling and using public transport when you can

Improvements to the cycle ways in the borough where published see [Cycling routes - Lancashire County Council](#)

In autumn work commenced on a Department of Transport funded residential EV infrastructure project in collaboration with Connected Kerb and supported by Energy Saving Trust to install 30 new EV charging points at car parks in Rossendale- Haslingden,

Waterfoot, Rawtenstall and Bacup to create 52 new bays.

Officer attendance at the online Environmental Policy Improvement Community (EPIC) inaugural autumn conference on 10th October 2024

On 18th Nov 2024 Rossendale Borough Council did an electric vehicle infrastructure launch see [New electric vehicle charge points installed across the Valley | Rossendale Borough Council](#)

Lancashire County Council who are responsible for roads and public health have issued this report about their work on sustainable forms of travel, supporting the transition to electric vehicles, creating cleaner, healthier road networks, embedding air quality into policy and raising awareness and increasing engagement see [Air quality - Lancashire County Council](#) for further information.

Overview of Lancashire County Council's Air Quality Activity

In Lancashire, the strongest evidence we have on the population health impacts of air pollution is provided by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities within their Public Health Outcomes Framework. The most recently published data estimates that the [overall mortality rate from particulate air pollution in Lancashire-12](#) is 5.1% (2022).

Working with district councils, Lancashire County Council has an important role to play in taking action to reduce the health impacts of air pollution, and improving air quality is a key objective in the County Council's [Environment and Climate Strategy 2023-2025](#). Responsible for transport planning, network management, highway maintenance, public health and procuring local vehicle fleets, there are a number of ways LCC supports local and county-wide efforts to improve air quality:

1. Enabling the use of sustainable forms of travel

Lancashire's cycling and walking strategy, [Actively Moving Forward](#), sets out an ambitious plan for increasing the number of people walking and cycling in the county by 2028. By improving and increasing access to cycling and walking infrastructure, alongside training and promotional activities, it aims to significantly increase the amount of cycling and walking people do across the county. Information on the County Council's ongoing activities in this area can be found on the [Active Travel in Lancashire website](#).

As part of Lancashire's cycling and walking strategy, there are seven supplementary documents: [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans \(LCWIPs\)](#). These are:

- Lancaster
- Central Lancashire
- West Lancashire
- Fylde Coast
- Ribble Valley
- Burnley and Pendle
- Rossendale and Hyndburn

As part of the LCWIP process, extensive public and stakeholder engagement was carried out. The LCWIPs were signed off by the county council's Cabinet in May 2024. They include a network plan for cycling and walking infrastructure and an aspirational list of schemes for delivery over short, medium, and long-term timeframes. They will be used to support future infrastructure decisions and to access new funding schemes as they become available.

The county council's Road Safety Team works with schools, workplaces and the community to enable safe and sustainable modes of travel. Initiatives for schools are promoted through the [Safer Travel Moodle](#) and include: a series of cycling and walking safety training programmes; guidance and resources for teachers to enable safe and active travel; and support for creating travel plans.

Bus services across Lancashire operate in a deregulated market, meaning the County Council doesn't control the bus network, franchise routes or control fares. Buses in Lancashire are the most popular and well used form of public transport in the county so it's vital we ensure everyone can maintain connections with their friends and family, reach essential services, and access opportunities for education and employment.

As part of our Bus Service Improvement Plan, the county council will continue to work more closely with bus operators, alongside local communities, to create a network that people want and will use. The council has published a ten-year [Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme](#) alongside its [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) which together will deliver measures to restore confidence and grow patronage across Lancashire.

2. Supporting the transition to electric vehicles

Lancashire County Council has already installed 150 fast and rapid charge points around Lancashire, either on county council car parks or kerbside on our highways. These can typically allow vehicles to charge in less than an hour and are operated on our behalf by BP Pulse. The types of charge points installed will depend on the specific location, power supply and demand.

The [Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen EV Infrastructure Strategy](#) was approved in July 2023 and sets out our plan to provide more EV charge points across the county. It considers the future demand for charging infrastructure and identifies broad locations for different types of charging need, whilst it is modelled data it helps us to understand the size and type of public infrastructure that will be required. Further information on the rollout of the EV infrastructure is available at [Installation of electric vehicle chargepoints throughout Lancashire - Lancashire County Council](#).

This strategy supports the county council's application to the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) capital fund. The aim of the funding is predominately to deliver local, low power, on-street charging infrastructure, primarily benefiting residents who do not have access to off-street parking at home. A funding allocation of £10.1m has been awarded to Lancashire County Council for EV charging infrastructure. Following a procurement exercise, a chargepoint operator will be appointed to deliver the roll out of this infrastructure. This will help us to scale up the deployment of local charge points and deliver our strategic aims. We will be working closely with district councils and other partners to ensure there is county-wide provision which is suitable for the needs of the local area.

In addition to preparing an application to the LEVI capital fund, the county council is one of 16 English councils to secure funding from the LEVI extended pilot fund. This funding is to trial solutions and is also aimed at supporting residents who do not have access to off-street parking. It includes lamppost integrated chargepoints and pavement cable channels. These EV charging cross pavement channels and lamppost chargepoints provide a low cost and practical solution to support kerbside or close to home charging for Lancashire residents.

The county council's Parking Services Team fleet vehicles are now fully electric, with charging infrastructure installed at the offices and depots where the vehicles are based and regularly visit. The county council's Fleet Services team is committed to switching to electric

commercial vehicles, where possible, as set out in the our [Highways Decarbonisation Strategy](#).

3. Creating cleaner, healthier road networks

Work to develop the next Local Transport Plan (LTP4) for Lancashire Combined County Authority is underway. The Public Health team has submitted an evidence base to inform the process, highlighting transport-related health challenges affecting the population of Lancashire and making recommendations about how local transport planning policy can contribute to addressing these. The local [Highways and Transport Masterplans](#) will be refreshed to align with the priorities of LTP4. This will provide an opportunity to identify longer-term network solutions that address issues in AQMAs and have a positive impact on air quality generally.

The county council's [Highways and Transport Strategy](#) published in early 2023 provides a helpful explanation of the county council's transport priorities and actions in support of public health improvements.

4. Embedding air quality into policy

We work with district planners to ensure air quality is a key consideration of Local Plans, alongside wider public health issues. It supports district councils in developing policies that seek to ensure new developments do not contribute to increasing levels of air pollutants and that requirements for appropriate mitigation are in place.

The county council, as part of its highways input into planning applications, actively enables measures that aim to promote sustainable forms of travel. Working under the direction of the National Planning Policy Framework, the county council seeks measures that facilitate cycling and walking, increase the use of public transport and provide access to electric vehicle charge points. The county council also seeks funding from developers, through Section 106 contributions, to support existing bus services or to provide new bus services suitable to serve development sites once they are built.

5. Raising awareness and increasing engagement

Lancashire Insight provides information on the sources and health impacts of air pollution across the county. Webpages include a [Summary of Emissions Data](#) and [Monitoring of Air Quality and Health Impacts](#).

Conclusions and Priorities

For the first time since monitoring started, many years ago, ALL the diffusion tubes across the borough showed compliance with the air quality objective in 2024. If this continues for a couple more years then AQMA 3 will be revoked.

A priority for the Council will be the installation of more electric vehicle charging points to encourage continued uptake of electric vehicles promoting the uptake of electric vehicles along with increased use of public transport and promoting a reduction in open burning.

How to get Involved

Thinking about air pollution and climate change on a worldwide, or even country scale can be daunting because as individuals we can often feel insignificant. Yet if we all work to reduce the amount of fuel we use and the number of chemicals we use at home, we will improve the quality of the air that we breathe and help the local and global problem. Other ways we can all contribute to improving air quality are as follows:

- Using public transport more
- Reducing car use and doing more car sharing for things like the school runs sorted informally or see <https://liftshare.com/uk>
- Changing to an electric or hybrid vehicle see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-zero-emission-vehicles>
- Cycling and walking where possible
- Using less chemicals and more natural products in the home to reduce the toxic load on your internal air quality see <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng149>

- Not having garden bonfires and only burning smokeless fuel on domestic stoves as the whole of Rossendale is a smoke control area (except for a few outlying rural properties see https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/info/210197/environmental_protection/10622/report_pollution/4)
- Working from home, if you can, to reduce vehicle movements

There is no local air quality action group to the knowledge of the writer however there is an active Clean Air Parents Network public Facebook group.

The Rossendale Climate Network was created which is a group of like-minded individuals, schools, groups, businesses and organisations who are interested practical action to tackle the climate emergency in Rossendale. Find them on the Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rossendaleclimatenetwork>. They would like to hear from anyone who is taking local action or has some information to share with others in the area. Client Earth are activist lawyers committed to securing a healthier planet. Their website is [ClientEarth | ClientEarth](#)

Further information on air quality and air pollution forecasts can be found on the DEFRA website UK Air quality Information Resource following this link [Home - Defra, UK](#)

The Choked up Campaign is teenagers in London raising awareness of air pollution issues Living Street UK is a charity who want a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday local journeys see [Living Streets | Home Page | Living Streets](#)

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1 Local Air Quality Management

This report provides an overview of air quality in Rossendale Borough Council during 2024. It fulfils the requirements of Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as set out in Part IV of the Environment Act (1995), as amended by the Environment Act (2021), and the relevant Policy and Technical Guidance documents.

The LAQM process places an obligation on all local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas, and to determine whether or not the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. Where an exceedance is considered likely the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) setting out the measures it intends to put in place in order to achieve and maintain the objectives and the dates by which each measure will be carried out. This Annual Status Report (ASR) is an annual requirement showing the strategies employed by Rossendale Borough Council to improve air quality and any progress that has been made.

The statutory air quality objectives applicable to LAQM in England are presented in Table E.1.

2 Actions to Improve Air Quality

2.1 Air Quality Management Areas

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are declared when there is an exceedance or likely exceedance of an air quality objective. After declaration, the authority should prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) within 18 months. The AQAP should specify how air quality targets will be achieved and maintained, and provide dates by which measures will be carried out.

A summary of the AQMA declared by Rossendale Borough Council can be found in Table 2.1. The table presents a description of the AQMA that is currently designated within Rossendale Borough Council. Appendix D: Map(s) of Monitoring Locations and AQMAs provides maps of AQMA and also the air quality monitoring locations in relation to the AQMA. The air quality objectives pertinent to the current AQMA designation is as follows:

- NO₂ annual mean

Table 2.1 – Declared Air Quality Management Areas

AQMA Name	Date of Declaration	Pollutants and Air Quality Objectives	One Line Description	Is air quality in the AQMA influenced by roads controlled by Highways England?	Level of Exceedance: Declaration	Level of Exceedance: Current Year	Number of Years Compliant with Air Quality Objective	Name and Date of AQAP Publication	Web Link to AQAP
AQMA 3	22 nd December 2022	NO ₂ annual mean	An area encompassing thirteen residential properties between Gas Street and Holden Place numbered 240 to 268 Grane Road Haslingden BB4 4PB	No	50.4 µg/m ³	38.8 µg/m ³	1	Awaiting DEFRA approval	Not published yet

Rossendale Borough Council confirm the information on UK-Air regarding their AQMA is up to date

Rossendale Borough Council confirm that all current AQAPs have been submitted to Defra

2.2 Progress and Impact of Measures to address Air Quality in Rossendale Borough Council

Defra's appraisal of last year's ASR concluded that trends over the past five years show that concentrations have generally been decreasing, there was an overall increase in concentrations in 2021 following removal of COVID traffic restrictions, but as of 2023 concentrations have decreased to levels below those observed during COVID.

Rossendale Borough Council has taken forward a number of direct measures during the current reporting year of 2024 in pursuit of improving local air quality. Details of all measures in progress or planned are set out in Table 0.1. Six measures are included within Table 0.1, with the type of measure and the progress Rossendale Borough Council have made during the reporting year of 2024 presented. Where there have been, or continue to be, barriers restricting the implementation of the measure, these are also presented within Table 0.1.

More detail on these measures can be found in the respective Action Quality Action Plan.

Rossendale Borough Council's priorities for the coming year are promoting the uptake of electric vehicles, increased use of public transport and reduction in open burning.

Rossendale Borough Council anticipates that the measures stated above and in Table 0.1 will achieve continued compliance in AQMA 3 and in the next couple of years enable the revocation of AQMA 3.

Table 0.1 – Progress on Measures to Improve Air Quality

Measure No.	Measure Title	Category	Classification	Year Measure Introduced in AQAP	Estimated / Actual Completion Date	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Barriers to Implementation
1	Promotion of Car and lift sharing schemes	Alternatives to private vehicle use	Car and lift sharing schemes	2024	N/A	Local Authority Lancashire County Council	Not funded	<£10k / £10k	Planning phase	Likely only a small reduction in emissions, emissions reduction can be maximised by targeting workplace schemes. Likely <1% reduction in NOx emissions.	Increased uptake of schemes (if possible to track)	Planning phase	There may be no schemes to promote	
2	Promotion of car clubs / encouraging car clubs to operated in Rossendale	Alternatives to private vehicle use	Car and lift sharing schemes	2024	N/A	Local Authority	Not funded	<£10k / £10k	Planning phase	Likely only a small reduction in emissions, emissions eg 1-2% reduction in NOx emissions.	numbers of members of car clubs	Planning phase	There may be no car clubs to promote or operators willing to start schemes in Rossendale	
3	Prioritising low emission transport	Promoting low emission transport	Company vehicle procurement	2024	N/A	Local Authority Lancashire County Council	Not funded	unknown	Ongoing implementation	Council fleet represents a small proportion of vehicles on the network – likely very small reduction in total emissions.	Reduction in business mileage travelled by staff in diesel or petrol vehicles – shown as a percentage	Planning phase	Resources	
4	Encourage/facilitate home working	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Encourage/facilitate home working	2021	N/A	All organisations	Not funded	Nil	Ongoing implementaion	Potential reduction in emissions due to reduction in car trips. Likely to be small.	Increase in days of home-working	Ongoing	N/A	

5	Active travel campaign and infrastructure	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Active travel campaign and infrastructure	Already in place	N/A	Lancashire County Council	Funding will likely come from ATE,LTG, s106, LUF, PfN and/or other Government funding	N/A	Ongoing implementation	Potential reduction in emissions from moving trips from cars to active modes. Difficult to quantify.	Number of public campaigns run, reduction in emissions, increase in cycling and walking, increase in health outputs.	Ongoing	Lack of political support to fund active travel schemes, lack of funding, planning issues (private land, ecological issues, physical constraints), lack of planning, design and construction resource
6	Increase Public Awareness of air quality issues, including reducing exposure, focus on active travel and domestic solid fuel burning.	Public Information		2024	N/A	Local Authority	Not funded	Nil	Planning phase	Difficult to quantify as over long time period and will work in collaboration with other actions	Number of campaigns launched	Occurring	
7	Encouraging the use of Electric Vehicles	Promoting Low Emission Vehicles	Procuring Alternative Refuelling Infrastructure to Promote Low Emission vehicles, EV Recharging, Gas Fuel Recharging	2030	N/A	Office for Zero Emissions (OZEV) Lancashire County Council, Rossendale Borough Council	Department for Transport, Office for Zero Emissions plus funding from the appointed chargepoint operator	£10 million LEVI fund award secured for Lancashire-12 districts, subject to procurement approvals from OZEV	Installations anticipated to begin in Spring 2026	Difficult to quantify as over long time period and will work in collaboration with other actions	Increased level of public EV charging infrastructure for residents without off street parking	Awaiting approvals	Charge point site selections will include resident engagement/inputs in collaboration with stakeholders and the appointed charge point operator

2.3 PM_{2.5} – Local Authority Approach to Reducing Emissions and/or Concentrations

As detailed in Policy Guidance LAQM.PG22 (Chapter 8) and the Air Quality Strategy¹, local authorities are expected to work towards reducing emissions and/or concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). There is clear evidence that PM_{2.5} (particulate matter smaller 2.5 micrometres) has a significant impact on human health, including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases.

Using the [Defra background mapping resource](#) the maximum background annual mean PM_{2.5} concentrations within the Local Authority was 5.6µg/m³. This is a reduction from the year below as Rossendale in 2023 had a maximum background mean of 7.4µg/m³. This is slightly higher than the regional northern area which has a maximum of 4.8 µg/m³

Rossendale Borough Council is taking the following measures to address PM_{2.5}:

In 2024 Environmental Health investigated 91 requests for service about open burning and smoky domestic chimneys, given advice and sent warning letters. Open burning is becoming more anti-social and we discourage it wherever possible. We've promoted National Clean Air Day and National Clean Air Night on social media.

¹ Defra. Air Quality Strategy – Framework for Local Authority Delivery, August 2023

3 Air Quality Monitoring Data and Comparison with Air Quality Objectives and National Compliance

This section sets out the monitoring undertaken within 2024 by Rossendale Borough Council and how it compares with the relevant air quality objectives. In addition, monitoring results are presented for a five-year period between 2020 and 2024 to allow monitoring trends to be identified and discussed.

3.1 Summary of Monitoring Undertaken

Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Rossendale Borough Council undertook non- automatic (i.e. passive) monitoring of NO₂ at 9 sites during 2024. Table A.1 in Appendix A presents the details of the non-automatic sites.

Maps showing the location of the monitoring sites are provided in Appendix D. Further details on Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) for the diffusion tubes, including bias adjustments and any other adjustments applied (e.g. annualisation and/or distance correction), are included in Appendix C.

3.2 Individual Pollutants

The air quality monitoring results presented in this section are, where relevant, adjusted for bias, annualisation (where the annual mean data capture is below 75% and greater than 25%), and distance correction. Further details on adjustments are provided in Appendix C.

3.2.1 Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)

Error! Reference source not found. and Table A.2 in Appendix A compare the ratified and adjusted monitored NO₂ annual mean concentrations for the past five years with the air quality objective of 40µg/m³. Note that the concentration data presented represents the concentration at the location of the monitoring site, following the application of bias adjustment and annualisation, as required (i.e. the values are exclusive of any consideration to fall-off with distance adjustment).

For diffusion tubes, the full 2024 dataset of monthly mean values is provided in Appendix B. Note that the concentration data presented in Table B.1 includes distance corrected values, only where relevant.

Appendix A: Monitoring Results

Table A.1 – Details of Non-Automatic Monitoring Sites

Diffusion Tube ID	Site Name	Site Type	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Pollutants Monitored	In AQMA? Which AQMA?	Distance to Relevant Exposure (m) ⁽¹⁾	Distance to kerb of nearest road (m) ⁽²⁾	Tube Co-located with a Continuous Analyser?	Tube Height (m)
DT1	30/32 Bacup Road Rawtenstall	Kerbside	381394	422756	NO2	N/A	0.0	2.0	No	1.8
DT2	366-368 Manchester Road Haslingden	Kerbside	379193	422210	NO2	AQMA 3	0.0	1.0	No	1.8
DT3	222 Grane Road Haslingden	Kerbside	378094	422560	NO2	N/A	0.0	4.0	No	1.8
DT4	250 Grane Road Haslingden	Kerbside	377909	422488	NO2	AQMA 3	0.0	1.0	No	1.8
DT5	256-258 Grane Road Haslingden	Kerbside	377896	422488	NO2	AQMA 3	0.0	1.0	No	1.8
DT6	264 Grane Road Haslingden	Kerbside	377899	422488	NO2	AQMA 3	0.0	1.0	No	1.8
DT7	277 Grane Road Haslingden	Kerbside	377879	422502	NO2	N/A	0.0	4.0	No	1.8
DT8	450 Bacup Road Waterfoot	Kerbside	382845	421978	NO2	N/A	0.0	1.0	No	1.8
DT9	1 Plantation View Weir	Kerbside	386925	424575	NO2	N/A	0.0	2.0	No	1.8

Notes:

- (1) 0m if the monitoring site is at a location of exposure (e.g. installed on the façade of a residential property).
- (2) N/A if not applicable.

Table A.2 – Annual Mean NO₂ Monitoring Results: Non-Automatic Monitoring (µg/m³)

Diffusion Tube ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Site Type	Valid Data Capture for Monitoring Period (%) ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2024 (%) ⁽²⁾	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
DT1 formerly DT13	381394	422756	Kerbside	N/A	100.5	28.4	32.7	31.2	30.6	25.3
DT2 Formerly DT7	379193	422210	Kerbside	N/A	93.0	26.3	30.0	28.3	26.8	24.1
DT3 Formerly DT18	378094	422560	Kerbside	N/A	108.1	20.4	23.2	21.3	18.4	17.3
DT4 Formerly DT12	377909	422488	Kerbside	N/A	91.4	44.9	50.4	46.7	42.1	38.8
DT5 Formerly DT19	377896	422488	Kerbside	N/A	100.8	41.6	46.9	42.2	41.3	36.7
DT6 Formerly DT20	377899	422488	Kerbside	N/A	100.8	34.8	36.1	36.2	34.5	32.3
DT7 formerly DT10	377879	422502	Kerbside	N/A	93.5	34.8	36.1	36.2	34.5	14.4
DT8 Formerly DT11	382845	421978	Kerbside	N/A	93.3	N/A	N/A	29.9	29.6	24.9
DT9	386925	424575	Kerbside	N/A	75.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	18.9

Annualisation has been conducted where data capture is <75% and >25% in line with LAQM.TG22

Diffusion tube data has been bias adjusted

Reported concentrations are those at the location of the monitoring site (bias adjusted and annualised, as required), i.e. prior to any fall-off with distance correction

Notes:

The annual mean concentrations are presented as $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean objective of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ are shown in **bold**.

NO₂ annual means exceeding $60\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, indicating a potential exceedance of the NO₂ 1-hour mean objective are shown in **bold and underlined**.

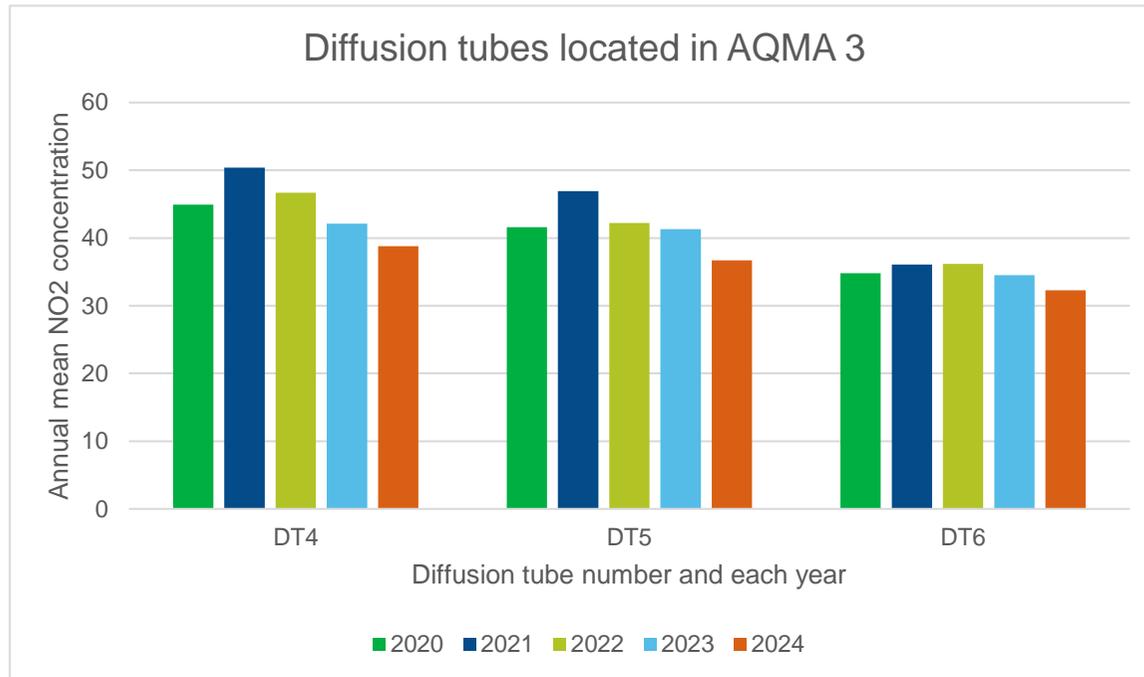
Means for diffusion tubes have been corrected for bias. All means have been “annualised” as per LAQM.TG22 if valid data capture for the full calendar year is less than 75%. See Appendix C for details.

Concentrations are those at the location of monitoring and not those following any fall-off with distance adjustment.

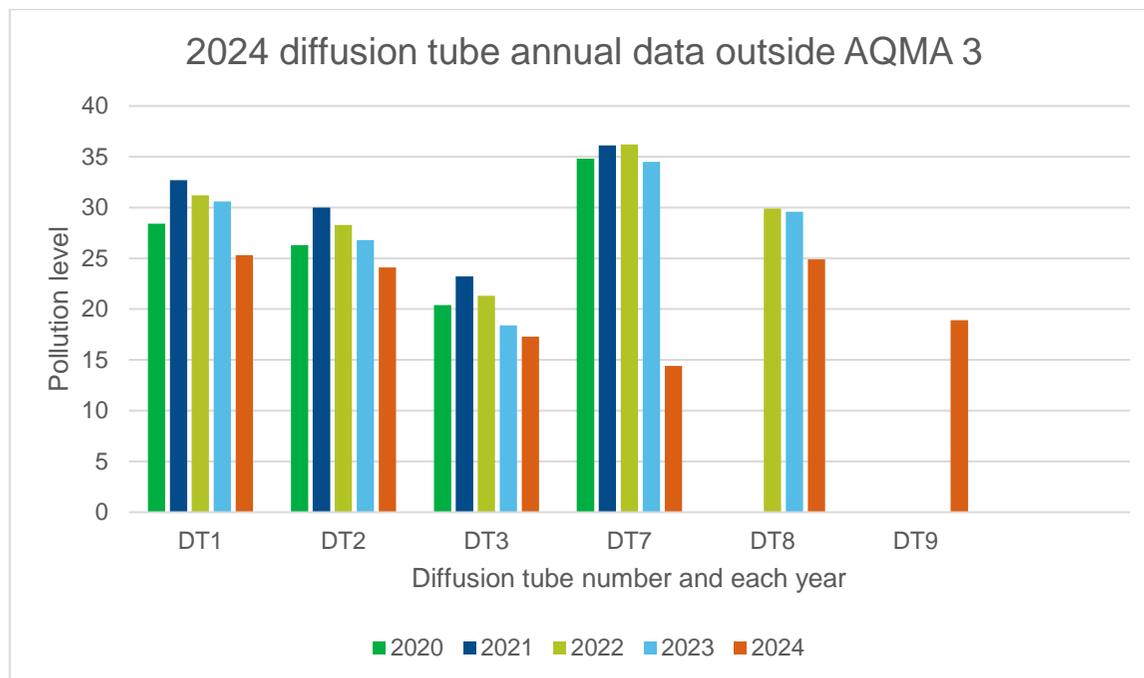
(1) Data capture for the monitoring period, in cases where monitoring was only carried out for part of the year.

(2) Data capture for the full calendar year (e.g. if monitoring was carried out for 6 months, the maximum data capture for the full calendar year is 50%).

Figure A.1 – Trends in Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations



Figures A.1 presents NO₂ annual mean concentrations for sites DT4 to DT 6 between years 2020 to 2024. There are no exceedances of the annual mean objective of 40µg/m³ in 2024 and there is a general trend of reduction experienced across the sites.



This graph shows that all the remaining diffusion tubes located across the borough were within the range of 14.4µg/m³ to 25.3µg/m³. There are no exceedances of the annual mean objective in 2024 and there is a general trend of reduction experienced across the sites.

Appendix B: Full Monthly Diffusion Tube Results for 2024

Table B.1 – NO₂ 2024 Diffusion Tube Results (µg/m³)

DT ID	X OS Grid Ref (Easting)	Y OS Grid Ref (Northing)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Mean: Raw Data	Annual Mean: Annualised and Bias Adjusted 0.78	Annual Mean: Distance Corrected to Nearest Exposure	Comment
DT1	381394	422756	35.1	39.3	35.8	29.0	44.6	35.9	32.8	30.0		32.9	39.9	17.5	32.5	25.3		
DT2	379193	422210	29.0	28.0	35.7	31.4	32.6			22.3	36.7	37.2	37.2	26.4	31.0	24.1		
DT3	378094	422560	29.0	24.8	24.6	22.3	24.0	15.9	19.9	16.1	25.0	23.2	30.9	17.1	22.1	17.3		
DT4	377909	422488		68.2	47.0	45.7	55.6	48.2	53.4		32.7	56.4	54.8	39.7	49.7	38.8		
DT5	377896	422488		53.3	48.7	37.6	53.9	41.6	48.9	45.0	48.1	53.0	59.0	36.9	47.0	36.7		
DT6	377899	422488		45.3	39.2	39.5	41.7	37.8	39.3	36.0	35.2	47.4	54.8	40.0	41.4	32.3		
DT7	377879	422502		25.8	17.2	17.6	17.9	13.3	14.2	12.9	19.6	21.3		20.8	18.5	14.4		
DT8	382845	421978		30.8	32.4	38.1	31.6	27.8	23.9	18.1		39.6	34.1	37.3	31.9	24.9		
DT9	386925	424575			17.1	16.8	14.4	10.9	12.2		30.2	37.6	23.7	36.9	24.2	18.9		

- All erroneous data has been removed from the NO₂ diffusion tube dataset presented in Table B.1
- Annualisation has been conducted where data capture is <75% and >25% in line with LAQM.TG22
- Local bias adjustment factor used
- National bias adjustment factor used
- Where applicable, data has been distance corrected for relevant exposure in the final column
- Rossendale Borough Council confirm that all 2024 diffusion tube data has been uploaded to the Diffusion Tube Data Entry System

Notes:

Exceedances of the NO₂ annual mean objective of 40µg/m³ are shown in **bold**.

NO₂ annual means exceeding 60µg/m³, indicating a potential exceedance of the NO₂ 1-hour mean objective are shown in **bold and underlined**.

See Appendix C for details on bias adjustment and annualisation.

Appendix C: Supporting Technical Information / Air Quality Monitoring Data QA/QC

New or Changed Sources Identified Within Rossendale Borough Council During 2024

Rossendale Borough Council has not identified any new sources relating to air quality within the reporting year of 2024

QA/QC of Diffusion Tube Monitoring

The air quality monitoring has been completed in adherence with the 2024 Diffusion Tube Monitoring Calendar.

The supplier used for the provision and analysis of the diffusion tubes continued to be SOCOTEC, Didcot,

The samples have been analysed in accordance with SOCOTEC's standard operating procedure ANU/SOP/1015. This method meets the guidelines set out in DEFRA's 'Diffusion Tubes For Ambient NO₂ Monitoring: Practical Guidance.'

The tubes were prepared by spiking acetone:triethanolamine (50:50) onto the grids prior to the tubes being assembled. The tubes were desorbed with distilled water and the extract analysed using a segmented flow autoanalyser with ultraviolet detection. All samples were received in good condition, unless otherwise stated in the comments field of results table. Please note:

i) As set out in the practical guidance, the results were initially calculated assuming an ambient temperature of 11°C, the reported values **have** been adjusted to 20°C to allow for direct comparison with EU limits.

(ii) The reported results have not been bias adjusted.

This analysis of diffusion tube samples to determine the amount of nitrogen dioxide present on the tube is within the scope of our UKAS schedule. Any further calculations and assessments requiring exposure details and conditions fall outside the scope of our accreditation. In the AIR PT intercomparison scheme for comparing spiked Nitrogen Dioxide diffusion tubes, SOCOTEC currently holds the highest rank of a **Satisfactory** laboratory.

Diffusion Tube Annualisation

All diffusion tube monitoring locations within Rossendale Borough Council recorded data capture of 75% therefore it was not required to annualise any monitoring data. In addition, any sites with a data capture below 25% do not require annualisation.

Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factors

The diffusion tube data presented within the 2024 ASR have been corrected for bias using an adjustment factor. Bias represents the overall tendency of the diffusion tubes to under or over-read relative to the reference chemiluminescence analyser. LAQM.TG22 provides guidance with regard to the application of a bias adjustment factor to correct diffusion tube monitoring. Triplicate co-location studies can be used to determine a local bias factor based on the comparison of diffusion tube results with data taken from NO_x/NO₂ continuous analysers. Alternatively, the national database of diffusion tube co-location surveys provides bias factors for the relevant laboratory and preparation method.

Rossendale Borough Council have applied a national bias adjustment factor of 0.78 to the 2024 monitoring data. It has 33 studies applicable to it. A summary of bias adjustment factors used by Rossendale Borough Council over the past five years is presented in Table C.1.

Table C.1 – Bias Adjustment Factor

Monitoring Year	Local or National	If National, Version of National Spreadsheet	Adjustment Factor
2024	National	06/25	0.78
2023	National	09/24	0.78
2022	National	03/23	0.76
2021	National	03/22	0.78
2020	National	03/21	0.77

Laboratory	Method	Year	Studies	No. Studies Added	Total No. of Studies	Factor	Change in Factor
Aberdeen Scientific Services	20% TEA in water	2024	6	0	6	0.76	0.00
Edinburgh Scientific Services	50% TEA in acetone	2024	2	5	7	0.86	0.03
Glasgow Scientific Services	20% TEA in water	2024	1	0	1	0.82	0.00
Gracko	20% TEA in water	2024	27	4	31	0.84	0.00
Gracko	50% TEA in acetone	2024	12	0	12	0.88	0.00
Lambeth Scientific Services	50% TEA in acetone	2024	2	6	8	0.8	-0.01
Milton Keynes Council	20% TEA in water	2024	1	0	1	0.75	0.00
SOCOTEC Didcot	20% TEA in water	2024	1	1	2	0.74	-0.01
SOCOTEC Didcot	50% TEA in acetone	2024	33	4	37	0.78	0.00
SOCOTEC Glasgow	20% TEA in water	2024	1	0	1	0.77	0.00
SOCOTEC Glasgow	50% TEA in acetone	2024	1	0	1	0.75	0.00
Somerset County Council	20% TEA in water	2024	4	0	4	0.81	0.00
Staffordshire County Council	20% TEA in water	2024	16	4	20	0.8	-0.02
Teayside Scientific Services	20% TEA in water	2024	1	0	1	0.76	0.00
Number of Studies Included			108	24	132		

Diffusion tubes analysed by both SOCOTEC laboratories showed abnormally low results for tubes exposed in December (period 12), so these results have been removed from the dataset.

2 studies were updated due to ratified data becoming available since the April 2025 release.

8 studies were submitted for 2024 data that could not be included due to less than 9 valid data periods or poor data quality.

The National Diffusion Tube Bias Adjustment Factor Spreadsheet will be next updated at the end of September 2025

Local Air Quality Management Helpdesk
 Telephone: 0800 0327953
 E-mail: LAQMhelpdesk@bureauveritas.com

Previous Revisions Record:

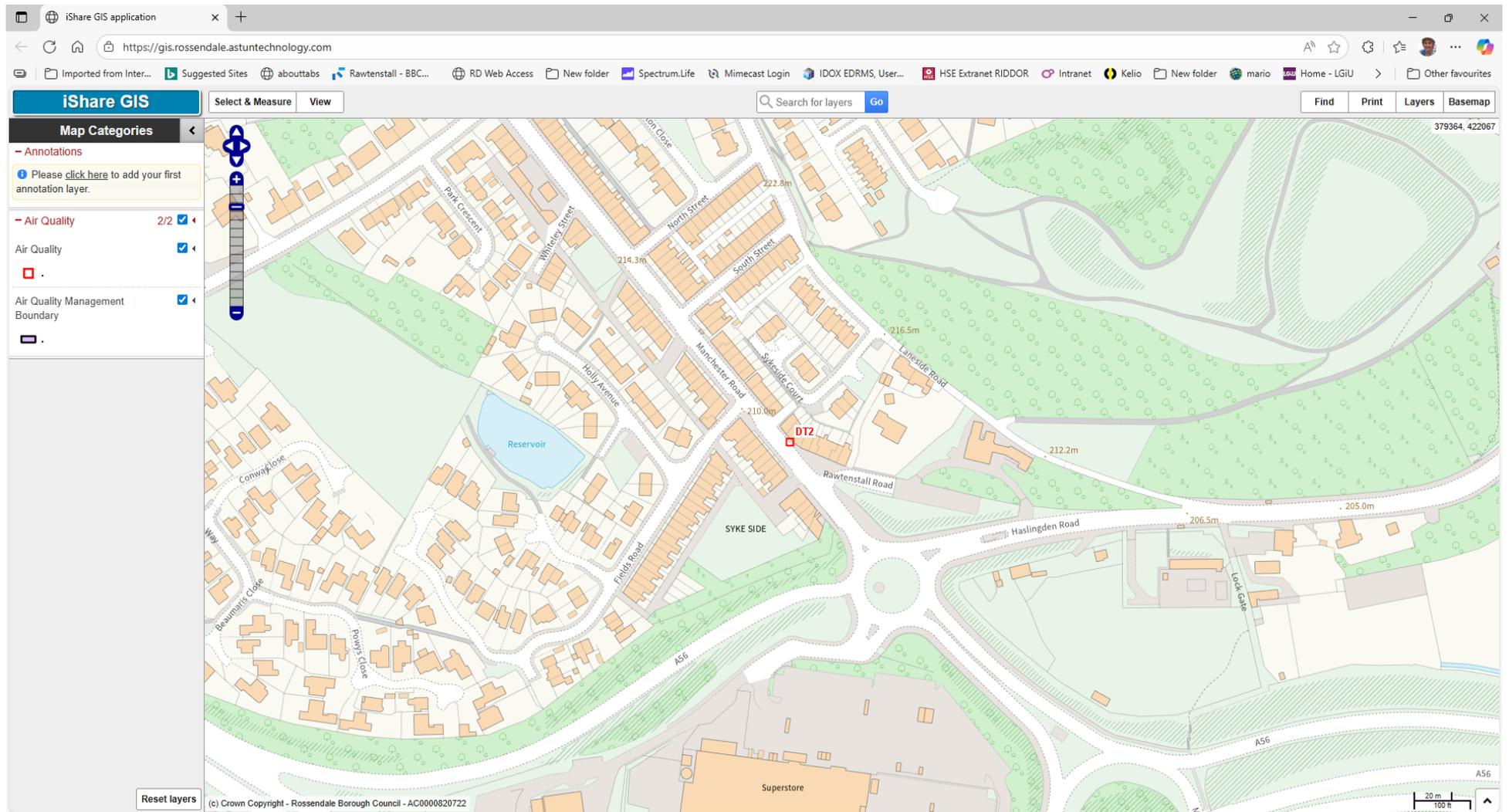
NO₂ Fall-off with Distance from the Road

All monitoring locations are representative of exposure so no fall-off with distance calculations were necessary.

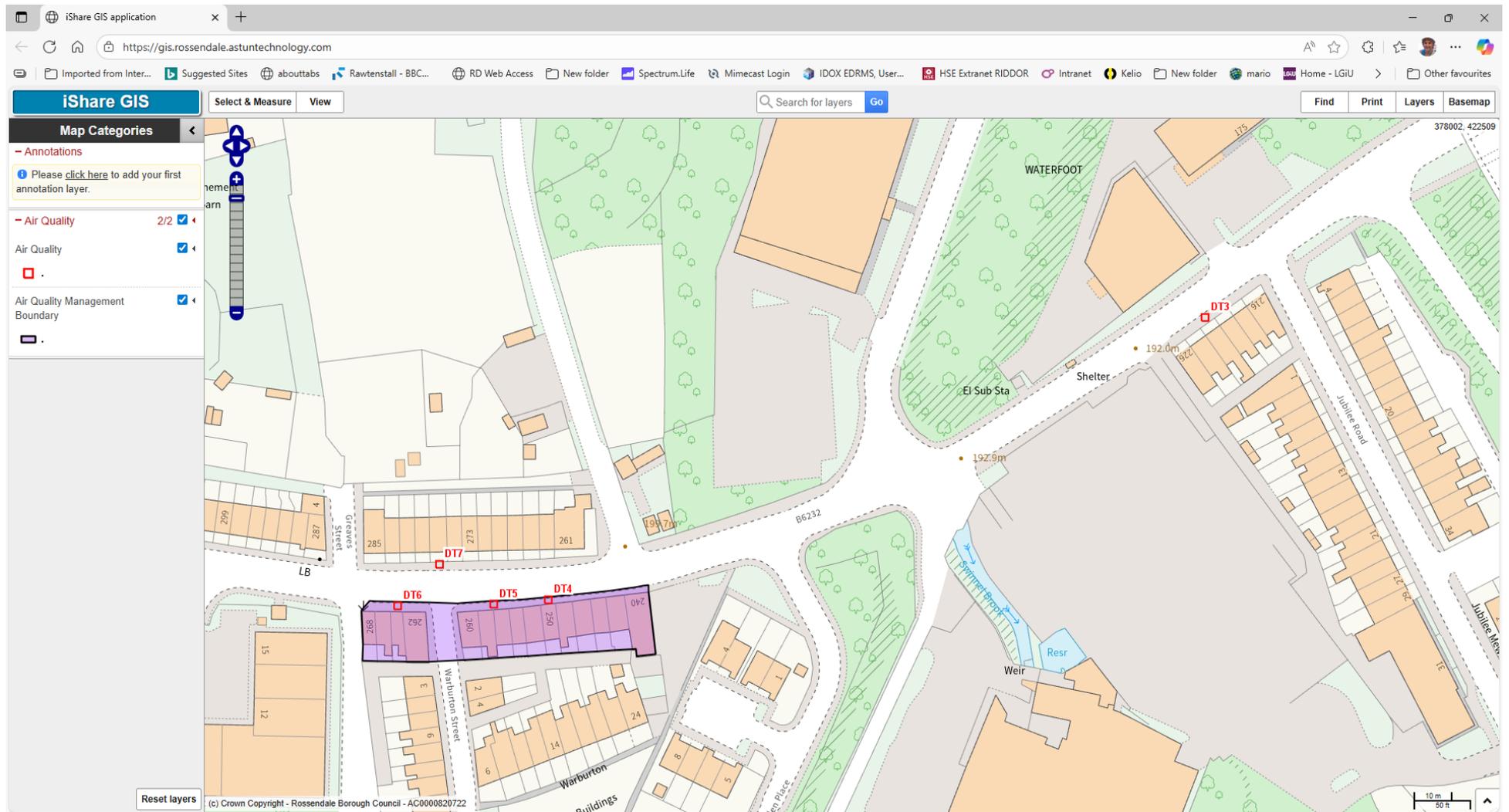
Appendix D: Map(s) of Monitoring Locations and AQMAs

Figure D.1 – Maps of Non-Automatic Monitoring Site

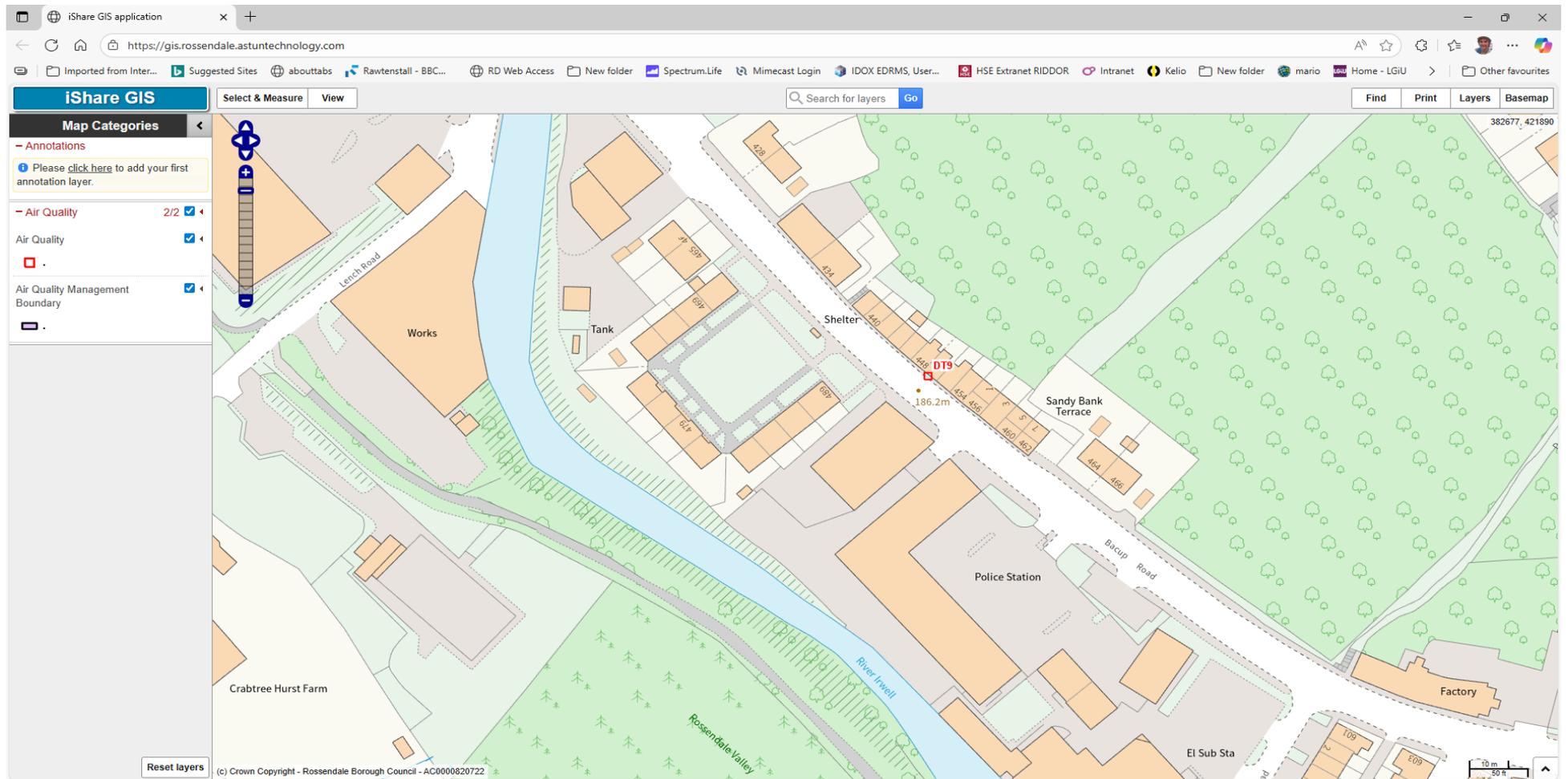
Diffusion tube 2



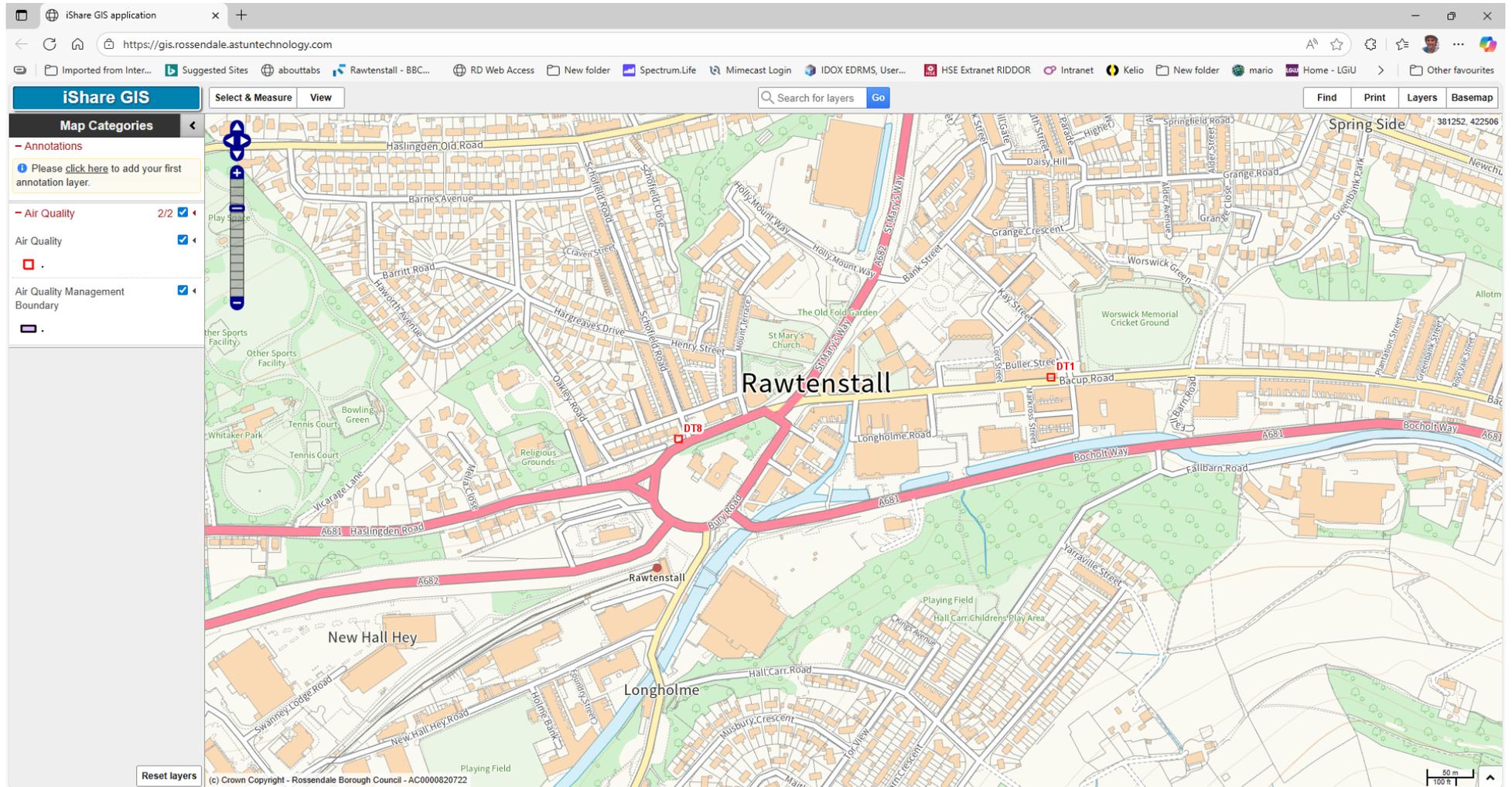
Diffusion tubes 3,4,5,6 and 7



Diffusion tube 9



Diffusion tubes 1 and 8



Appendix E: Summary of Air Quality Objectives in England

Table E.1 – Air Quality Objectives in England²

Pollutant	Air Quality Objective: Concentration	Air Quality Objective: Measured as
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	200µg/m ³ not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year	1-hour mean
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	40µg/m ³	Annual mean
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	50µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	24-hour mean
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	40µg/m ³	Annual mean
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	350µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year	1-hour mean
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	125µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year	24-hour mean
Sulphur Dioxide (SO ₂)	266µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	15-minute mean

² The units are in microgrammes of pollutant per cubic metre of air (µg/m³).

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan - A detailed description of measures, outcomes, achievement dates and implementation methods, showing how the local authority intends to achieve air quality limit values'
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area – An area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives. AQMAs are declared for specific pollutants and objectives
ASR	Annual Status Report
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges – Air quality screening tool produced by National Highways
LAQM	Local Air Quality Management
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
PM ₁₀	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10µm or less
PM _{2.5}	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less
QA/QC	Quality Assurance and Quality Control
SO ₂	Sulphur Dioxide

References

- Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG22. August 2022. Published by Defra in partnership with the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland.
- Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance LAQM.PG22. August 2022. Published by Defra in partnership with the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland.
- Chemical hazards and poisons report: Issue 28. June 2022. Published by UK Health Security Agency
- Air Quality Strategy – Framework for Local Authority Delivery. August 2023. Published by Defra.



Rossendale Borough Council

Air Quality Action Plan for Grane Road
Haslingden

In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995

Local Air Quality Management

September 2025

Rossendale Borough Council

Information	Rossendale Borough Council Details
Local Authority Officer	Lorna Robinson
Department	Environmental Health Public Protection Unit
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Telephone	01706 217777
E-mail	envhealth@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Report Reference Number	AQAP 2025
Date	October 2025

3 Executive Summary

This Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has been produced as part of our statutory duties required by the Local Air Quality Management framework. It outlines the action we and others will take to improve air quality in Rossendale Borough Council between 2023 and 2030.

This action plan replaces the previous action plan which ran from 2017 to 2022. The two previous Air Quality Management Areas have been revoked due to a satisfactory reduction in NO₂. Projects delivered through the past action plan include: renewing road signage, deprioritising roads, installation of electric charge points and a new taxi licensing policy.

A new Air Quality Management Area was declared in December 2022. This covers thirteen pavement fronted terraced properties between 240 to 268 Grane Road Haslingden BB4 4PB

Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people, and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equalities issues, because areas with poor air quality are also often the less affluent areas^{1,2}.

The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK is estimated to be around £16 billion³. Rossendale Borough Council is committed to

¹ Environmental equity, air quality, socioeconomic status and respiratory health, 2010

² Air quality and social deprivation in the UK: an environmental inequalities analysis, 2006

³ Defra. Abatement cost guidance for valuing changes in air quality, May 2013

reducing the exposure of people in Rossendale Borough Council to poor air quality in order to improve health.

We have developed proposed actions that can be considered under 4 broad topics:

- Alternatives to private vehicle use
- Promoting low emission transport
- Promoting travel alternatives
- Public information

In this AQAP we outline how we plan to effectively tackle air quality issues within our control. However, we recognise that there are a large number of air quality policy areas that are outside of our influence (such as vehicle emissions standards agreed in Europe), but for which we may have useful evidence, and so we will continue to work with regional and central government on policies and issues beyond Rossendale Borough Council's direct influence.

Responsibilities and Commitment

This AQAP was prepared by the Public Protection Unit of Rossendale Borough Council with the support and agreement of the following officers and departments:

Susan Chadwick Public Protection Manager

Ann Storah Rossendale Borough Council Forward Planning

Kwabena Poku Rossendale Borough Council Climate Change Officer

This AQAP has been approved by:

Andy Taylor Head of Operations Rossendale Borough Council

This AQAP has not been signed off by a Director of Public Health.

This AQAP will be subject to an annual review and appraisal of progress. Progress each year will be reported in the Annual Status Reports (ASRs) produced by Rossendale Borough Council, as part of our statutory Local Air Quality Management duties.

If you have any comments on this AQAP please send them to envhealth@rossendalebc.gov.uk

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1 Introduction

This report outlines the soft actions that Rossendale Borough Council will deliver in order to reduce concentrations of air pollutants and exposure to air pollution; thereby positively impacting on the health and quality of life of residents.

It has been developed in recognition of the legal requirement on the local authority to work towards Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and relevant regulations made under that part and to meet the requirements of the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) statutory process.

This Plan will be reviewed every five years at the latest and progress on measures set out within this Plan will be reported on annually within Rossendale Borough Council's air quality ASR. The air quality management area will be revoked if levels reduce to 10% under the annual objective of $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for 3 years or more.

All the 2024 monitoring data is below the objective.

2 Summary of Current Air Quality in Rossendale Borough Council

Air quality in Rossendale Borough Council is improving. Two previous Air Quality Management Areas were revoked December 2022 when the nitrogen dioxide levels fell below the Government level for action.

During 2023 the air quality in Air Quality Management Area 3 along a small section of Grane Road in Haslingden has shown a dramatic improvement from 50.4 µg/m³ in 2022 at declaration to 38.8µg/m³ in 2024 and the trajectory is promising for continued reduction. The 2024 results are all under the objective.

3 Rossendale Borough Council's Air Quality Priorities

3.1 Public Health Context

It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their area and take action to improve air quality when objectives set out in regulation are not met.

3.2 Planning and Policy Context

The following are supporting planning and policy documents that will contribute toward improvements in air quality in our local authority area.

East Lancashire Strategic Cycle network see [East Lancashire Cycle Way - Lancashire Enterprise Partnership \(lancashirelep.co.uk\)](#)

East Lancashire Highways and Transport Plan [The East Lancashire highways and transport masterplan - Lancashire County Council](#)

Rossendale Borough Council Climate Change Strategy [Climate Change | Rossendale Borough Council](#)

[Local Plan – Rossendale Borough Council](#) see [Rossendale Local Plan 2019 to 2036 | Rossendale Borough Council](#)

3.3 Source Apportionment

The AQAP measures presented in this report are intended to be targeted towards the predominant sources of emissions within Rossendale Borough Council's area.

Primary source of NO₂ is emission from road vehicles. In order to mitigate the problem, Rossendale Borough Council is tasked with identifying options that will aim to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides (as a precursor to the formation of nitrogen dioxide) and primary NO₂ from vehicles, and therefore reduce concentrations of NO₂ experienced locally. The primary contributors to NO₂ in this main road location are cars and taxis and light goods vehicles (LGV).

The latest annual average daily flow traffic data for Grane Road B6232 is 2019 and is made up of the following:

Table 1 DfT traffic count data for Grane Road (2019)

Count Method	2 wheeled motor vehicles	Cars and taxis	Buses and coaches	Light Good Vehicles	Heavy Goods Vehicles	All motor vehicles
Manual count	75	11134	37	2946	212	14405

A source apportionment exercise was carried out in support of this action plan for 2023. The 2019 data above was used with 2023 emission factors. Whilst this data is pre-COVID pandemic, it is assumed that the fleet splits will still be valid even if the total count may have changed. The analysis is undertaken on a proportional basis, and thus the total traffic count is not as important as the fleet mix. The source apportionment identified that within the AQMA, the percentage source contributions were as shown in Figure 1:

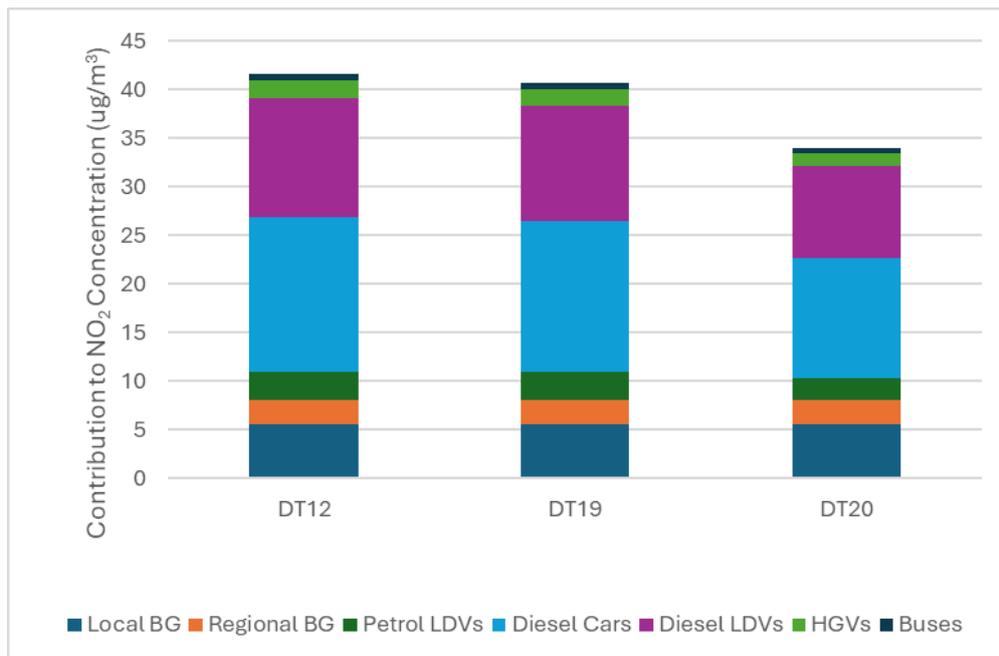


Figure 1 Source Apportionment (2023) for the diffusion tubes in the AQMA (2019 traffic data)

Diesel cars are the highest contributor to NO₂ concentration, with diesel LDVs being the next highest contributor. Actions within this plan should be therefore targeted at private vehicles, particularly (in the case of NO₂) the diesel fleet.

3.4 Required Reduction in Emissions

A calculation has been undertaken at the highest diffusion tube DT4 (formerly DT12) to understand the percentage reduction in NO_x required to meet the objective of 40 µg/m³, following guidance in LAQM.TG(22) (Box 7-6). Using the 2023 emission factors, a 6.4% reduction in road NO_x is required to meet the air quality objective, as shown in 2.

Table 2 Emission reduction calculation for 2023 (DT12) now DT 4

	Total NO ₂	Background NO ₂	Road NO _x (from Defra calculator)
2023	41.6	8.1	92.33
Objective	40	8.1	86.38
Road NO _x reduction required (µg/m ³)			5.95
Road NO _x reduction required - %			6.44

Using the emissions factor toolkit with the traffic for Grane Road as shown in Table 1, the natural reduction in emissions between 2023 and 2024 is found to be 10% due to fleet improvements. As such it would be expected that concentrations at DT4 (formerly DT12) for 2024 (not taking into consideration any changes in meteorological conditions) will be below the objective and this is correct. The annual mean value was 38.8 µg/m³.

However, although compliance with air quality objectives is important, from a health perspective, a general reduction in emissions of the key pollutants (including PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) may provide better health outcomes than focussing on hotspot locations. For this reason, wider, more strategic measures have been included, including those tackling PM_{2.5} such as those aimed at changing behaviour in relation to solid fuel burning through increasing awareness, and the Council will be working towards ongoing improvements in pollutant concentrations below the current air quality objectives.

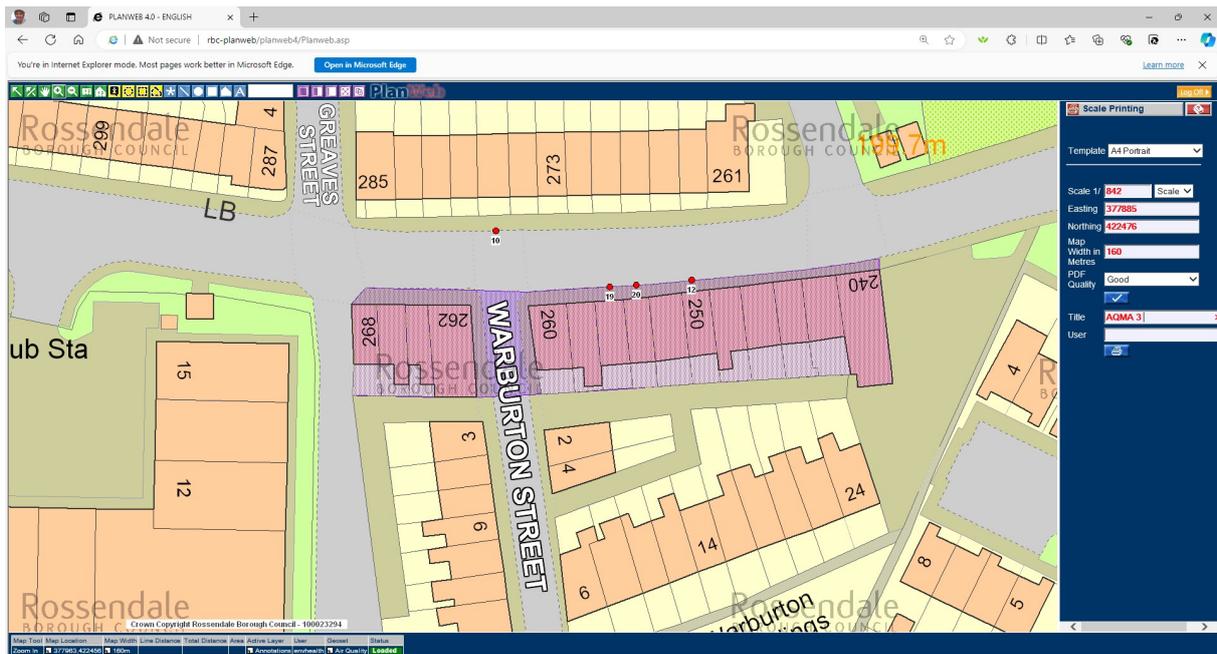


Figure 2 Location of AQMA 3 and the diffusion tubes within it

3.5 Key Priorities

- Priority 1 – Promoting Low Emission Transport
- Priority 2 – Promoting Travel Alternatives
- Priority 3 – Public Information
- Priority 4- Alternatives to Private Vehicle Use

4 Development and Implementation of Rossendale Borough Council AQAP

4.1 Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

In developing this AQAP, we have worked with the local community to improve local air quality. Schedule 11 of the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to consult the bodies listed in Table 5

A summary of the consideration of the impact of the measures, and whether they can be quantified is set out in table 3 below, with the criteria used as follows:

Impact **Very Low** – No indirect or direct impacts on air quality

Low- would reduce emissions, but not measurable by air quality monitoring and would be termed ‘negligible’ using industry standard guidance for modelling the impacts of development

Medium- a change could be predicted using an air quality model such as ADMS, but unlikely to be measurable by air quality monitoring, for example an improvement of up to 5% of the annual mean objective for NO₂ (2 µg/m³)

High- a change would potentially be monitored using standard monitoring techniques ie an improvement of more than 5% of the annual mean objective for NO₂ (2 µg/m³). It should be noted that the impact is largely based on NO₂

In order to provide an indication of cost effectiveness Table 4 has been determined using best professional judgement to clearly set out impact from table 3 (ie effectiveness) and cost in a qualitative way. Although the impacts for all the actions is judged to be low individually, as a package, and over a number of years, the impacts of the measures will cumulatively be larger.

Table 3 Summary of considerations

Action No.	Action	Assumptions for Quantification	Assumed air quality impact
1	Promotion of Car and lift sharing schemes	Unclear how many cars would be taken off the road by an increased use of lift sharing, therefore difficult to quantify, but judged to be low.	Low
2	Promotion of car clubs	Unclear how many cars would be taken off the road by an increased use in car clubs, therefore difficult to quantify.	Low
3	Prioritising low emission transport	There is currently no data on what shift this might entail as will be dependent on level of interventions.	Low
4	Encourage/facilitate home working	Unclear how many cars would be taken off the road by an increased home-working, therefore difficult to quantify.	Low
5	Active travel campaign and infrastructure	Difficult to estimate the effectiveness of active travel campaigns. While there is some research undertaken	Low

Action No.	Action	Assumptions for Quantification	Assumed air quality impact
		for low traffic neighbourhoods in London ⁴ , there are no data within Rossendale which can be used to base any quantification, and low traffic neighbourhoods are just one type of measure to increase active travel. Significant investment would be required to have a medium impact on emissions.	
6	Increase Public Awareness of air quality issues, including reducing exposure, focus on active travel and domestic solid fuel burning.	Providing information on air quality to the public would be with the aim to change behaviour, but difficult to quantify what that change might be (and hence resulting changes in emissions). Behaviour change	Low

⁴ See <http://rachelaldred.org/research/low-traffic-neighbourhoods-evidence/>

Action No.	Action	Assumptions for Quantification	Assumed air quality impact
		would generally require sustained awareness campaigns, with consistent clear messaging.	

Table 4 Cost effectiveness and feasibility of AQAP actions

Action No.	Action	Impact on Air Quality	Cost	Feasibility
1	Promotion of Car and lift sharing schemes	Low	Low	High
2	Promotion of car clubs	Low	Low	High
3	Prioritising low emission transport	Low	Low	High
4	Encourage/facilitate home working	Low	Low	High

Action No.	Action	Impact on Air Quality	Cost	Feasibility
5	Active travel campaign and infrastructure	Low	Low	High
6	Increase Public Awareness of air quality issues, including reducing exposure, focus on active travel and domestic solid fuel burning.	Low	Low	High

The analysis and Table 4 also accounts for the feasibility of implementing the measures, with those likely to progress given a higher priority than those which are acknowledged to be a challenge to implement. The feasibility score factors in influences such as accessibility to funding, resources being available and political backing.

Criteria to allow for the analysis of cost and feasibility are included below

Cost **Low** <£50k, **Medium** £50k-£500k, **High** >£500k

Feasibility High – measure has already been started, good political will and likely to be sufficient resources

Medium- possible to implement but may require some further feasibility work and/or additional support and resources

Low- difficult to implement, lack of political will to implement, time and resource intensive.

Table 4 – Consultation Undertaken

Consultee	Consultation Undertaken
Residents living in the AQMA	Y
The Secretary of State	Y
The Environment Agency	Y
The Highways Authority	Y
All neighbouring local authorities	Y
Other public authorities as appropriate, such as Public Health officials	Y
Bodies representing local business interests and other organisations as appropriate	Y

4.2 Steering Group

The Steering group consisted of Environmental Health, Public Protection Manager, Head of Environmental Services, Forward Planning, Principal Planner, Climate Change Officer and local councillors.

5 AQAP Measures

Table 5 shows the Rossendale Borough Council AQAP measures. It contains:

- a list of the actions that form part of the plan
- the responsible individual and departments/organisations who will deliver this action
- estimated cost of implementing each action if known or applicable (overall cost and cost to the local authority)
- expected benefit in terms of pollutant emission and/or concentration reduction
- the timescale for implementation
- how progress will be monitored

NB: Please see future Annual Status Reports for regular annual updates on the implementation of these measures

As the 2024 concentrations within the AQMA are now below the objective, the majority of the actions are categorised as “soft measures” according to Defra guidance⁵. Soft measures are the interventions that focus on individual / group behavioural change and do not involve measures that directly impact infrastructure with physical changes. Soft measures are usually flexible, lower in cost, and wide-reaching in their focus. Soft measures can focus on reducing source contributions and/or exposure to air pollution, commonly involving raising awareness and/or encouraging or facilitating behavioural change.

It is usually difficult to make assumptions of the impacts of soft measures on vehicle numbers (and ages of vehicles used), and therefore they are more difficult to quantify in terms of emission reductions and as such, this has been undertaken in a

⁵ LAQM.TG(22) Supplementary Guidance England excl. London - Determining the impact of air quality improvement measures (September 2024)

qualitative manner. Because of difficulties in quantification and 2024 compliance with air quality objectives, undertaking detailed modelling of actions is not considered proportional.

Table 5 – Air Quality Action Plan Measures

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
1	Promotion of Car and lift sharing schemes	Alternatives to private vehicle use	Car and lift sharing schemes	2024	ongoing	Local Authority Lancashire County Council	N/A	No	Not funded	<£10k / £10k	Planning phase	Likely only a small reduction in emissions, emissions reduction can be maximised by targeting workplace schemes. Likely <1% reduction in NOx emissions.	Increased uptake of schemes (if possible to track)	Planning phase	There may be no schemes to promote
2	Promotion of car clubs / encouraging car clubs to operated in Rossendale	Alternatives to private vehicle use	Car and lift sharing schemes	2024	ongoing	Local Authority Lancashire County Council	N/A	No	Not funded	<£10k / £10k	Planning phase	Likely only a small reduction in emissions, emissions eg 1-2% reduction in NOx emissions.	numbers of members of car clubs	Planning phase	There may be no car clubs to promote or operators willing to start schemes in Rossendale
3	Prioritising low emission transport	Promoting low emission transport	Company vehicle procurement	2024	ongoing	Local Authority Lancashire County Council	N/A	No	Not funded	unknown	Planning phase	Council fleet represents a small proportion of vehicles on the network – likely very small reduction in total emissions.	Reduction in business mileage travelled by staff in diesel or petrol vehicles – shown as a percentage	Planning phase	Resources
4	Encourage/facilitate home working	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Encourage/facilitate home working	2021	ongoing	All organisations	N/A	No	Not funded	Nil	Ongoing implementation	Potential reduction in emissions due	Increase in days of home-working	Ongoing	N/A

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
												to reduction in car trips. Likely to be small.			
5	Active travel campaign and infrastructure	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Active travel campaign and infrastructure	Already in place	ongoing	Lancashire County Council	N/A	No	Not funded	N/A	Ongoing implementation	Potential reduction in emissions from moving trips from cars to active modes. Difficult to quantify.	Number of public campaigns run.	Ongoing	None
6	Increase Public Awareness of air quality issues, including reducing exposure, focus on active travel and domestic solid fuel burning.	Public Information		2024	Ongoing	Local Authority	N/A	No	Not funded	Nil	Planning phase	Difficult to quantify as over long time period and will work in collaboration with other actions	Number of campaigns launched	Occurring	None

Appendix A: Response to Consultation

Table A.1 – Summary of Responses to Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement on the AQAP

Consultee	Category	Response
Forward Planning	Local Authority	Suggested some action plan measures
Principal Planner	Local Authority	Suggested some action plan measures
Local Councillors	Residents Living in the AQMA	Suggested some action plan measures
Residents	Residents living in the AQMA	Suggested some action plan measures

Appendix B: Reasons for Not Pursuing Action Plan Measures

Table B.1 – Action Plan Measures Not Pursued and the Reasons for that Decision

Action category	Action description	Reason action is not being pursued (including Stakeholder views)
Traffic Management	Turn the whole length of Grane Road to 30mph	Financially unviable
Traffic Management	Make a small section of Grane Road outside the properties one way	Financially unviable
Traffic Management	Make parking available outside the properties to widen the distance to the traffic	Not feasible
Traffic Management	Add sleeping policemen speed humps on Grane Road	Not feasible
Traffic Management	Close the access from the A56 onto Grane Road	Not feasible
Traffic Management	Add a roundabout at the Holcombe Road and the Grane Road junction	Not feasible

Traffic Management	Introduce an additional average speed camera before the exit to Holcombe Road, as drivers exiting there from the Haslingden direction are able to speed without hitting the second camera which is much further up beyond the junction	Not feasible
Traffic Management	Install a zebra crossing near the bus stops near Gas Street/Greaves Street	Not feasible
Traffic Management	Plant pollution absorbing trees on council land in the vicinity	No suitable land in the vicinity of the AQMA

6 Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	Description
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan - A detailed description of measures, outcomes, achievement dates and implementation methods, showing how the local authority intends to achieve air quality limit values'
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area – An area where air pollutant concentrations exceed / are likely to exceed the relevant air quality objectives. AQMAs are declared for specific pollutants and objectives
AQS	Air Quality Strategy
ASR	Air quality Annual Status Report
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EU	European Union
LAQM	Local Air Quality Management
NO ₂	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
PM ₁₀	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10µm (micrometres or microns) or less
PM _{2.5}	Airborne particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5µm or less

Report Title:	Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan Update		
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	18 th March 2026
Report of:	Climate Change Team	Cabinet Portfolio	Environment and Corporate Services
Cabinet Lead Member	Councillor Lythgoe	Wards Affected	Borough-wide
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	Special Urgency
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Kwabena Osei Poku Natalie Whitham	Telephone:	01706252551
Email:	Kwabenapoku@rossendalebc.gov.uk nataliewhitham@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan were agreed in July 2020 and work has progressed over the past five years to deliver the agreed actions.
- 1.2 The Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) was updated in 2024 and approved by Council in March 2025.
- 1.3 The preliminary CCAP was revised to ensure that proposed actions are clear Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) actions that are informed by latest evidence and feedback from senior officers across all service areas of the Council.
- 1.4 Over the past year, the Council has secured **£1.5m** in external funding to support delivery of the Climate Change Strategy. Since 2020, operational emissions have reduced by **36.74%**. Current projects are expected to generate annual energy cost savings in excess of **£73,744** and carbon savings of **226.86 tCO₂e** per annum.
- 1.5 Alongside this, the Council has delivered the innovative Net Zero Terrace Streets programme, achieved improved borough wide air quality performance, and progressed significant tree planting and biodiversity gain.

1.6 This report provides an update on the activities and initiatives undertaken by the Council this past year to implement the four policy themes detailed in the Council's Climate Change Strategy and deliver the updated CCAP.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Cabinet notes the progress in year five of the Climate Change Strategy, including:

- a 36.74% reduction in operational emissions since 2020
- £1.5m secured in external decarbonisation funding
- delivery of the innovative Net Zero Terrace Streets programme
- improved borough-wide air quality performance
- significant tree planting and biodiversity gain

3. BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

3.1 In September 2019, Rossendale Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency and set out its Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan covering the following four policy themes:

- Efficient Energy Consumption
- Sustainable Transport
- Waste and the Wider Environment
- Working together in Partnership

3.2 The Strategy and Action Plan were approved in July 2020. The Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) was later revised in 2024 and formally approved by Council in 2025.

3.3 The Council is taking a wide range of direct actions in the past five years, set out in the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan, which will contribute to reducing emissions in Rossendale and help to deliver the vision for Council operations to be net zero carbon by 2030.

3.4 Years one to four have shown significant progress in establishing the Council's pathway towards a net zero carbon position by 2030 and have delivered notable reductions in the Council's carbon footprint. Details are set out in the annual updates for Years 1 to 4, included as Appendices 1 to 4.

3.5 The ten year plan was always designed to be a marathon, not a sprint and year five has seen considerable progress in planning and developing measures to future proof Council owned assets, and to ensure that any carbon and energy saving initiatives provide value for money, measurable and sustainable reductions in our carbon output.

3.6 In the first half of the Climate Change Action Plan's life, we have been focusing on decarbonising the Council's operations and services as much as possible. As we move into the second-half of the plan, we shall be focusing more on the wider aspiration of creating a Net Zero Carbon Valley by working with households, businesses, schools and community groups to deliver this shared goal.

3.7 The implementation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is intended to contribute towards addressing the Climate Emergency declared in 2019, aligning with the strategic priorities in the Corporate Plan 2021–2025, and supporting progress towards the Council’s stated net zero ambition for 2030.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN – DELIVERY AND PROGRESS UPDATE

4.1 The priority actions document (**Appendix 5**) highlights key projects delivered or progressing within the 2025/26 financial year.

4.2 Emissions reporting

Council operational emissions

4.2.1 Rossendale Borough Council has collected scope 1 and 2 emissions data for its operations since 2019. Scope 1 emissions are the direct greenhouse gas emissions that are owned and controlled by the council, specifically those from the council’s transport fleet and the heating of buildings. Scope 2 emissions are the indirect greenhouse gas emissions that result from the generation of purchased energy, specifically electricity. Greenhouse gas emissions are reported as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), which refers to the impact of different greenhouse gases in terms of the amount of CO₂ that would have the same warming effect.

4.2.2 Council operational emissions have reduced by **36.74%** between 2020 and 2025, falling from **2,010.84 tCO₂e to 1,272.13 tCO₂e**. This represents a significant reduction over a five year period and reflects the impact of energy efficiency measures and low carbon interventions implemented across Council operations.

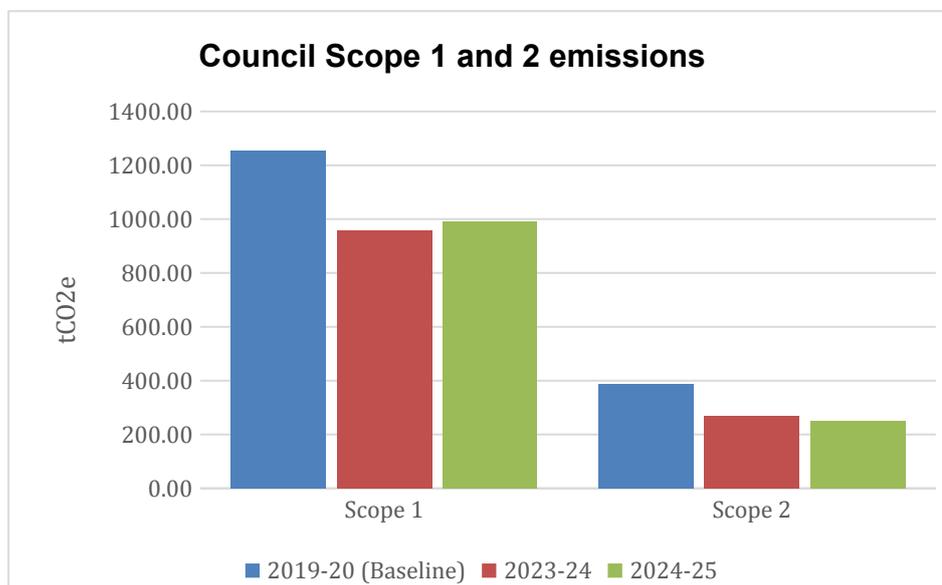


Figure 1 Rossendale Borough Council scope 1 and 2 emissions

4.2.3 Figure 1 presents the Council’s emissions data across scopes. Scope 1 and 2 emissions remain well below the 2019/20 baseline, demonstrating sustained progress in reducing operational carbon emissions.

4.2.4 Scope 2 emissions continue to decrease year-on-year, reflecting grid decarbonisation and the impact of energy efficiency measures. Overall, the trend confirms continued progress in

reducing operational emissions, with Scope 2 showing the most consistent decline. Delivery of planned decarbonisation projects is expected to reinforce this trajectory and enable further reductions in the next reporting period.

4.2.5 Scope 3 emissions are the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from upstream and downstream activities such as purchased goods and services and leased assets. These emissions are hard to quantify and activities are underway in the council to report on them annually.

4.2.6 A comprehensive report on the Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is scheduled for publication by summer.

Territorial emissions

4.2.7 The borough-wide greenhouse gas emissions data shows an overall downward trend since 2019, indicating gradual progress in reducing emissions across Rossendale.

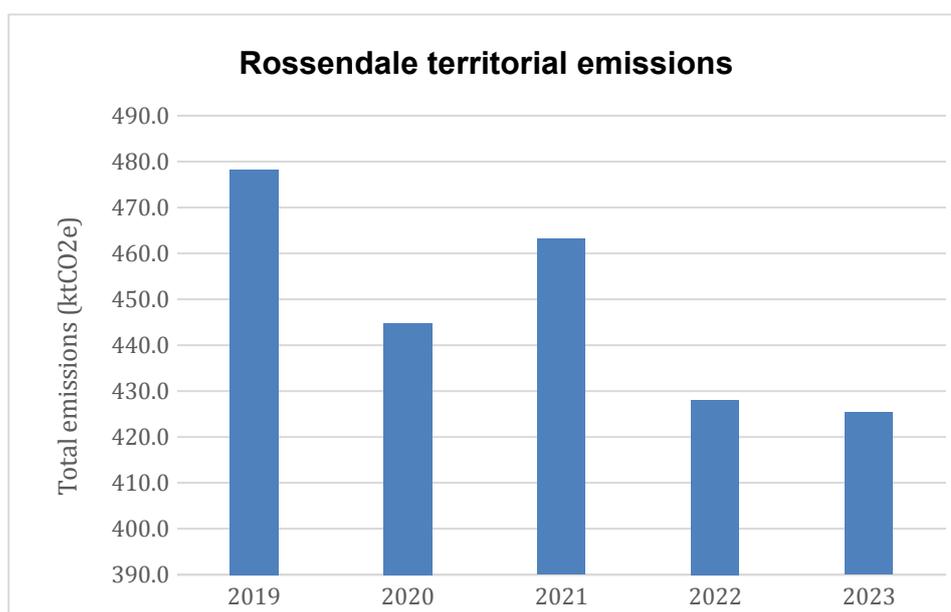


Figure 2 Rossendale Borough territorial emissions from 2019 to 2023

4.2.8 As indicated in Figure 2, total emissions decreased from approximately 478 ktCO₂e in 2019 to around 425 ktCO₂e in 2023, representing a reduction of roughly 11% over the period.

4.2.9 While emissions fell notably in 2020, there was a temporary increase in 2021. This fluctuation is consistent with national patterns, where emissions rebounded following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, increased travel and economic activity resuming after lockdown periods. As such, the 2021 rise is widely understood to reflect post pandemic recovery effects rather than a reversal of longer-term decarbonisation progress.

4.2.10 From 2021 onwards, emissions resumed a downward trajectory, with 2022 and 2023 showing continued reductions. The trend suggests that while year to year variation can occur due to external factors, the longer term direction of travel is downward. Continued local climate action, alongside national decarbonisation policies, will be important in sustaining and accelerating this progress toward net zero.

Air quality

4.2.11 The Council continues to review air quality data alongside the borough's identified air quality hotspot locations including Grane Road, as well as additional sites at Haslingden, Bacup Road, Rawtenstall and Waterfoot. This helps ensure that improvements are consistent across all areas of concern and that targeted interventions can be applied where required.

4.2.12 Our air quality monitoring station recorded a significant improvement in air quality last year. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels fell below national objectives for the first time since monitoring began, with 2024-25 results showing concentrations below 40 micrograms per cubic metre. This represents a significant milestone, given the well-established health impacts associated with nitrogen dioxide, including respiratory and cardiovascular disease, as well as emerging evidence of links to neurological conditions.

4.2.13 The reduction is attributed to a combination of factors, including increased uptake of electric vehicles and the sustained promotion of active travel across the borough. The Annual Status Report has now been published, formally reflecting the improved air quality position across the borough.

4.3 Efficient Energy Consumption

Decarbonising Council Assets

4.3.1 Emissions from energy use in our buildings account for over 50% of the Council's operational greenhouse gas emissions. The Council has therefore prioritised identifying appropriate alternatives to fossil fuel heating systems, improving energy efficiency across its buildings and increasing on site renewable energy generation.

4.3.2 To support this work, funding totalling £1.4m has been secured from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (Phase 4), the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund (Phase 5) and the Swimming Pool Support Fund in the past year. This funding has enabled the completion of several projects and the progression of others currently underway to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's corporate estate. Measures include the removal of gas heating systems and the installation of energy efficiency improvements such as LED lighting, insulation, and solar PV where appropriate.

4.3.3 Heat decarbonisation studies provide a pipeline of opportunities ensuring we are ready for the next wave of investments and grant opportunities. Supported by the public sector Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) Phase 5, the Council has developed a Building Heat Decarbonisation Plan (BHDP) that gives a detailed profile of the Council estate including the required recommendations to decarbonise each building, reducing the carbon footprint and total energy usage. We are actively building on our successful approach to securing funding and will continue to use the reports to apply for grants (such as the Swimming Pool Support Fund) to bolster our decarbonisation programme.

4.3.4 Our biggest project to decarbonise council buildings is the decarbonisation project at Marl Pits Leisure Centre. This building our largest energy consumer, needing a substantial amount of power to keep the pool and gym running. A detailed programme is underway and there have already been some successes. Supported by the Swimming Pool Support Fund, phase one of the project focused on installing new pool covers and replacing the gas fired air handling unit with a new low-carbon heat pump ready air handling unit with a heat recovery system. Phase two of the project will use Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (Phase 4)

funding to replace the existing gas fired heating system with heat pumps, upgrade the lighting to LED and expand the solar PV capacity. The first stage of phase two which involved completing the detailed designs for the decarbonisation works is complete and the procurement process is ongoing to appoint a contractor to complete final stage of phase two from April 2026. The overall scheme is estimated to reduce the Council's operational emissions by approximately 210 tCO₂e and save more than £50k in energy costs per annum.

4.3.5 As part of a wider building decarbonisation project, low-carbon and energy efficiency measures have been planned or undertaken across several Rossendale Borough Council buildings:

- Works have been completed to replace existing lighting with high efficiency LED systems at Haslingden Sports Centre, The Whitaker, Bacup Library, The Ashcroft and Maden Rec Changing Rooms in Bacup. This project is expected to reduce the council's annual operational emissions by 31.60 tCO₂e and provide an estimated cost savings of £13,403.64 per annum.
- The Building Energy Management System at Futures Park has been upgraded which will enable the facilities team to efficiently monitor and regulate the building's heating system and this is expected to significantly improve energy efficiency in the building and reduce running costs.
- Insulation and window upgrades have been installed at the A, B & D Centre in Bacup to improve energy efficiency.

Renewable Energy

4.3.6 Solar system efficiency upgrades to repair and optimise existing solar installations at Marl Pits Leisure Centre and Futures Park have now been completed. These works have improved system performance at both sites and are expected to deliver energy cost savings for the Council.

4.3.7 Proposals for a 100 kW solar PV installation at the Adrenaline Centre have been approved by Cabinet, with works expected to be completed in the 2026–27 financial year.

4.3.8 A feasibility study is currently underway to assess the viability of developing a solar farm at the Cribden Hill site near the Haslingden tip. The site was identified as having renewable energy potential through the Council's Asset Review.

Community Decarbonisation

Net Zero Terrace Streets Project

4.3.9 Working in partnership with Rossendale Valley Energy (RVE) and a specialist consortium, the Net Zero Terrace Streets programme is a place-based approach to decarbonising older terraced housing at street and neighbourhood scale. With around 14,000 terraced homes representing over 40% of Rossendale's total housing stock, this property type is critical to achieving local carbon reduction ambitions and addressing fuel poverty.

NZTS is designed not simply as a technical retrofit scheme, but as a complete delivery model that integrates optimised fabric improvements, suitable low carbon heating infrastructure,

smart local energy integration, community engagement, governance structures, financing mechanisms and an investable consumer proposition which avoids upfront costs.

4.3.10 Through Innovate UK's Net Zero Living programme, NZTS was awarded £2.5m in 2024 and a further £150k in 2025 to deliver live demonstrator activity in Rossendale, build the enabling tools and methodology, and assess scalability across Rossendale, Rochdale and Bridgend.

4.3.11 The demonstrator phase has now delivered three completed and tenanted homes in Rossendale. These homes incorporate fabric upgrades and shared ground source heating infrastructure alongside monitoring systems that are collecting real time data on temperature, humidity, indoor air quality, performance and running costs. This evidence is building a live performance dataset to inform the next phase of scale up and to demonstrate the household experience of the model.

4.3.12 Beyond the physical properties, the project has delivered:

- An end-to-end delivery pathway tested in live, occupied terraced streets, including procurement, contracting, permissions, highways coordination and resident engagement
- A techno-economic model testing the affordability and no upfront cost approach
- A structured step by step methodology and enabling tools to support replication by other local authorities and community organisations
- The establishment of Looped Energy Communities CIC as the national body overseeing the wider NZTS model

Building on demonstrator delivery, the Council and its partners are now refining the commercial, governance and delivery arrangements required to enable a wider roll out in Rossendale. Work is underway to identify potential street clusters, develop the investment model and continue resident engagement to support future phases. This ensures that the programme moves beyond pilot homes towards a scalable, street based retrofit pathway for the Borough.

Through this work Rossendale continues to position itself as a leading local authority in developing practical, scalable solutions for the decarbonisation of terraced housing.

Community Support Programmes

4.3.13 Delivery of national grant schemes and offers has been progressed through partnership. The Council continues to work with Cosy homes Lancashire, Rhea projects and Homewise to administer the ECO4-Flex scheme, Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) and Warm Homes Local Grant through which people living in fuel poverty may access energy performance upgrades to their homes. Between January 2025 and January 2026, 103 projects had been completed.

4.3.14 The Council continues to work with Rossendale Valley Energy to deliver energy advice to residents in the borough. Originally funded through the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero's Local Energy Advice Demonstrator, the programme has since secured funding via Ofgem's Energy Redress Scheme to maintain and extend this provision.

4.4 Sustainable Transport

- 4.4.1 The Council continues to progress its fleet decarbonisation programme, transitioning fossil fuel-powered vans and small vehicles to electric vehicles (EVs) where feasible. Diesel-powered trucks, including refuse collection vehicles, are being transitioned to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) where electrification is not currently viable. This approach has contributed to a sustained reduction in transport emissions over the past three years, with a 67% reduction in Council operational transport emissions in 2023 compared with the 2019 baseline year.
- 4.4.2 The Climate Change Team is currently developing an EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy to ensure the Council delivers the right chargers, in the right locations, at the right time, in a fair and cost-effective manner. Data from Council-owned EV chargers already installed show a consistent increase in utilisation, reflecting growing EV uptake across the borough over the past five years. The strategy will form the basis for further EV charging infrastructure expansion across the borough over the next five years.
- 4.4.3 Officers are also working with Lancashire County Council to deliver an EV charging infrastructure project funded through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme, aimed at addressing the needs of residents without access to off street parking or home charging. The project is currently at the procurement stage, and Lancashire County Council estimates that over 100 EV charge points could be installed across the borough as part of this initiative.

4.5 **Waste and the Wider Environment**

Recycling

- 4.5.1 Over the past year, Rossendale Borough Council has continued to deliver reliable waste and recycling services while preparing for significant future improvements. This consistent performance provides a strong foundation for the next phase of service enhancements that will support the Council’s climate and environmental ambitions. The Council is also building on the success of the *Check Before You Chuck* campaign, maintaining resident engagement to encourage correct recycling and reduce contamination.
- 4.5.2 A major step forward is the planned introduction of weekly household food waste collections from 2026 under national recycling reforms. As food waste forms a significant proportion of household rubbish, separate collection and treatment through processes such as anaerobic digestion will increase recycling rates and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is expected to deliver a meaningful uplift in recycling performance while enabling residents to play a direct role in climate action.
- 4.5.3 The new low-carbon waste transfer station will further improve environmental performance by reducing transport distances, lowering vehicle emissions and improving operational efficiency.

Circular Economy

- 4.5.4 The Council is strengthening its approach to the circular economy, recognising its role in reducing carbon emissions, minimising waste and supporting local communities. Officers are progressing the development of a Rossendale circular economy network to bring together community groups, businesses and institutions to collaborate on initiatives that keep

materials in use for longer. Planned activities include repair cafés, clothes-swapping and tool-sharing schemes, helping to reduce waste while building community resilience.

4.5.5 The climate change team has engaged with several organisations already delivering circular economy activities in the borough, including Storehouse (furniture redistribution), Haslingden and Whitworth Men’s Sheds (repair cafés and repair sessions), Stubblelee Community Greenhouses, Groundwork Rossendale and the Beacon Dementia Group. Engagement is ongoing, with joint initiatives planned to commence later this year.

Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

4.5.6 The planning and climate change team are working on potential opportunities to create in borough biodiversity enhancement and off site BNG provision in the borough at Staghills Wood, grassland near the Halo in Haslingden, and Cribden Moor. These sites were highlighted as having potential to deliver meaningful biodiversity improvements while also addressing the current reliance on out of borough solutions.

4.5.7 The Council is working constructively with developers to ensure that planned growth is accompanied by measurable biodiversity enhancements, thereby supporting sustainable development and strengthened Biodiversity Net Gain outcomes.

4.5.8 The Council published its first Biodiversity Considerations Report in January 2024. A further statutory report, setting out what actions have been taken in response to the biodiversity duty, will be published by end of March 2026.

4.5.9 Rossendale Borough Council has contributed local data and officer input to the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy which has been prepared by Lancashire County Council. The strategy which maps existing important habitats across the county and identifies priorities and opportunities for future nature recovery has been approved by Lancashire County Council Cabinet and was published on 16th January 2026. The LNRS is a material consideration for plan making and planning decisions, including its role in shaping Biodiversity Net Gain outcomes.

Tree Planting

4.5.10 The Council has continued to build on the Rossendale Forest initiative, which successfully planted 16,000 trees between 2022 and 2024 and established a strong foundation for long-term woodland creation in the borough. Tree planting remains a key nature-based solution within the Council’s climate response.

4.5.11 Over the past year, a total of 10,834 trees have been planted across the borough, including 1,550 trees delivered directly through Rossendale Borough Council projects, covering approximately 3,329 m² of land. Planting has focused on a diverse mix of native and fruit-bearing species, including quickthorn, rowan, hazel, oak, silver birch, goat willow and alder, alongside orchard varieties such as apple, pear and plum. These species support biodiversity, strengthen ecosystem resilience, enhance landscape character and provide long-term carbon sequestration.

4.5.12 This sustained approach delivers multiple benefits, including habitat enhancement, natural flood management and protection of communities from flash flooding, improved air quality

and positive community wellbeing outcomes, reinforcing the borough's commitment to a greener and more climate resilient future.

4.6 Working Together in Partnership

- 4.6.1 Three meetings of the Officer and Lead Member Climate Action and Biodiversity Group were held in the past year. These meetings provide a forum for officers and lead members to review progress, share updates and engage with ongoing climate action activities. They also enable member and officer input into key strategies and plans and help identify practical opportunities to reduce the Council's environmental impact, including within office operations.
- 4.6.2 The Climate Change Team actively participates in the Lancashire Climate Officers Group and the Lancashire Climate Action Network meetings and associated programmes. These forums bring together officers, experts and stakeholders from across Lancashire to collaborate on climate related work and share learning. Participation provides opportunities to contribute to and help shape regional climate initiatives, ensuring alignment with wider county priorities and maximising opportunities for collaborative action.
- 4.6.3 The Council continues to work closely with regional and local partners to deliver net zero projects and climate action across the borough. Key partners include Rossendale Valley Energy, Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council, Cosy Homes Lancashire, the North West Net Zero Hub, the Local Government Association, Lancashire Women, Homewise Energy Saving Trust, City of Trees and Newground Together. Through these partnerships, the Council supports the delivery of energy advice, warm home assistance, nature recovery and tree planting initiatives, helping to reduce emissions while providing wider social and environmental benefits.
- 4.6.4 The Climate Change Team has attended a range of local and regional programmes over the past year, including the Greater Manchester Retrofit Expo, the LGC Net Zero 2025 conference, and other sector events and webinars. Through participation in both in-person and online events, the team has engaged with over 500 stakeholders nationally, helping to share learning, build partnerships and keep the Council informed of best practice and emerging opportunities in climate action.

Carbon Literacy Training

- 4.6.5 5 members of council staff from key departments including economic development, planning, operations and facilities completed the ISEP Pathways to Net Zero Course and have gained carbon literacy accreditation after passing the required exams. The Climate Change Programme Officer also completed the ISEP Foundation Certificate in Sustainability & Environmental Management. The final stage of carbon literacy training this financial year will be for members of the corporate management team. These courses have created the foundation for the Climate Change Team to deliver carbon literacy training to council staff in 2026/27 financial year.

Awards and Recognition

- 4.6.6 The Council was shortlisted at the Regen Green Energy Awards last year, and its partners Electricity North West and Rossendale Valley Energy won the Electrical Industry Awards in

recognition of the Council-led Net Zero Terrace Streets project, which is pioneering innovative solutions to decarbonise terraced homes across the country.

5. RISK

5.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- A risk register has been developed for the strategy as part of the Council's programme management process and these risks are monitored regularly. A public commitment has been made by the Council to do what it can locally to tackle climate change. This report limits the risk of not delivering on that commitment by putting the resources in place to ensure delivery. This report identifies ways in which the risk of non-delivery can be mitigated.

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

6.1 Council approved a £1m capital Carbon Reduction Fund in February 2021, phased over 4 years commencing in 2021/22 to be spent on Decarbonising RBC assets. The remainder of the fund will be allocated to support the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Where appropriate, reports will be developed to support this allocation of funds.

7. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. Each project will be subject to its own considerations on a case-by-case basis.

7.2 All of the projects/activities included in the CCAP which are underway, have had their legal implications assessed. Future planned activities will need to have their legal implications considered at the relevant stages, as appropriate.

8. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No adverse impacts have been identified. The actions within this update are expected to deliver positive environmental and community benefits. Impact assessments will be undertaken where necessary as projects progress.

9. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and national net zero policy direction.

10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This update report does not give rise to any immediate local government reorganisation implications. The climate change activities outlined are consistent with national policy direction and established local authority priorities.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Document	Place of Inspection
Appendix 1. Annual Report year 1	Annual Report year 1
Appendix 2. Annual Report year 2	Annual Report year 2
Appendix 3. Annual Report year 3	Annual Report year 3
Appendix 4. Annual Report year 4	Annual Report year 4
Appendix 5. Priority actions 2025/26	Council Offices

Report Title:	Resident Survey 2025		
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	18 th March 2026
Report of:	Head of People and Policy	Cabinet Portfolio:	Environment and Corporate Services
Cabinet Lead Member:	Councillor Lythgoe	Wards Affected:	All
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Clare Law	Telephone:	01706 252457
Email:	clarelaw@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the 2025 Residents Survey and proposes priority themes for improvement based on residents' feedback. It also sets out how the results will be used to inform service planning, performance improvement and the ongoing development of the Council's strategic priorities.
- 1.2 The 2025 Residents Survey is the Council's fourth annual residents survey. It gathered insight into residents' perceptions, priorities and satisfaction with Rossendale as a place to live and with the services provided by the Council.
- 1.3 The 2025 survey received 8072 total responses, increasing by 42% when compared to 2024 (5,688 responses).
- 1.4 Overall satisfaction with Rossendale as a place to live remains strong at 77%, above the Local Government Association (LGA) benchmark (74%). Residents rate walks and cycle routes (86%), parks (72%), and community events (79%) positively. Perceptions vary by town centre, with Rawtenstall viewed most favourably, while Haslingden and Bacup attract more negative feedback relating to retail mix, vacancy and vibrancy.

Regeneration work will continue to progress across the Borough, including specific projects in Bacup, Haslingden and Waterfoot, aimed at improving attractiveness, vitality and vibrancy across all town centres.

- 1.5 Service perceptions are mixed, satisfaction is high for waste and recycling (79%) and park cleanliness (81%), but lower for roads and pavements (44%) and neighbourhood cleanliness. Residents feel safe during the day (92%) but less so after dark (52%).

Many comments provided in response to questions about the cleanliness of roads related instead to the maintenance and condition of the roads, which may have influenced the results. Responsibility for road surface maintenance lies with Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council is responsible for street cleaning and maintaining road cleanliness. As a result, some of the dissatisfaction expressed in this area reflects issues that fall outside the Borough Council's direct service responsibilities.

Work will also continue with the Police and the Community Safety Partnership to address issues such as anti-social behaviour and to help improve residents' perceptions of safety, particularly after dark

- 1.6 Residents contacting the Council, 70% found it easy to contact and 86% rate staff positively. Overall service satisfaction is 56%, with stronger performance in Council Tax/Benefits (84%) and lower satisfaction in Planning and Environmental Health, with comments indicating that concerns are more often related to processes and procedures rather than the quality of customer care provided by staff.

- 1.7 Communications and engagement remain areas for improvement, 37% of respondents feel informed about what the Council is doing, 25% agree that the Council listens to residents' concerns, and 20% feel involved in decision-making. Social media continues to be the most used channel for accessing Council information (48%).

Key areas for improvement will include strengthening feedback to residents through clearer updates, including the use of 'You said / We did' communications to demonstrate how resident feedback is being considered and acted upon.

- 1.8 Awareness of Local Government Reorganisation remains low, with 73% respondents stating they were not aware of LGR proposals. In addition, 74% indicated that they would like more information about what LGR means for Rossendale and its residents. Any key updates relating to LGR will therefore be communicated to residents clearly and in a timely manner as further information becomes available.

- 1.9 The findings will inform strategic planning, performance management and targeted improvement activity in 2026/27.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Cabinet to acknowledge the findings of the 2025 Residents Survey and approve the themes for improvement identified within the survey report.**

- 2.2 **Cabinet to agree the use of the survey results to guide strategic and service planning, ensuring residents' views are reflected in setting priorities and actions for continuous performance improvement.**

3. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 The Residents Survey provides a mechanism for residents to share their views on Rossendale as a place and on Council services. It supports transparency and accountability, informs improvement planning, and helps the Council to track progress against its priorities.

- 3.2 The survey approach is designed to maximise engagement and representativeness. Promotion of the survey includes the Council website, social media, local press, posters with QR codes in key locations, internal communications, councillor networks, outreach to community groups and businesses, and sixth form colleges.
- 3.3 The survey is structured around two broad themes: (1) About the Place – Rossendale, and (2) About Us – The Council. Questions include satisfaction, perceptions, priorities and free-text suggestions for improvement. Additional questions were also included in relation to Local Government Organisation (LGR).
- 3.4 Monitoring information is collected (where provided) and compared with Census data to understand the demographics represented in the responses and to inform future engagement activity.
- 3.5 The Council should be an organisation that listens to residents, using feedback to inform decisions about priorities, value for money, and service delivery. Annual surveying supports performance management, trend analysis and benchmarking.
- 3.6 The results of the survey highlight the need for continued focus and targeted action to address areas of dissatisfaction on infrastructure and roads, town centre regeneration, youth activity provision, community safety, customer service response, communication and engagement.
- 3.7 An Action Plan will be developed to set out how we will respond directly to what residents have told us. The Council’s quarterly performance management monitoring will continue to track progress against the Council’s overall vision

4. RISK

- 4.1 The Resident Survey is an important tool for maintaining public trust, identifying service improvement opportunities and monitoring progress against Council priorities. Failure to listen and act on residents’ feedback presents reputational and service delivery risks.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report. Any future improvement activity will be considered through normal budget and business planning processes.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising directly from this report.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment is not required for acknowledging the survey findings and agreeing improvement themes. Any subsequent changes will be assessed appropriately.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The survey findings will inform the Council’s strategic planning and performance improvement framework, including the development and review of corporate priorities and service plans. The agreed themes for improvement will be aligned to the Council’s priorities and performance measures.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Any implications for local government reorganisation in Lancashire will be kept under review. Survey insight may support transition planning by evidencing resident priorities and satisfaction with local services.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Appendix 1 – Resident Survey 2025 Full Report
Appendix 2 – Resident Survey 2025 infographic summary



Resident Survey Analysis

2025



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The Approach

Introduction

Undertaking a residents survey provides Rossendale Borough Council (the Council) with the opportunity to gauge resident satisfaction in relation to Rossendale as a place to live and the services provided by the Council.

The questions included within the 2025 survey will be used to measure the delivery of the Council's 4 priorities outlined with the Valley Plan 2025-2029 – Our Place, Our Plan.

The survey also included a short section on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).



The Survey

The 2025 survey was split into 3 main themes; About the Place – Rossendale, About Us – The Council and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The 2025 survey included a total of 20 main questions. Ten follow-up questions were linked to these main questions and were displayed or skipped depending on the respondent's answers. In addition, five monitoring questions were included.

Survey questions were presented in a range of different formats including drop downs, multiple choices and free texts.

Monitoring information was collected from respondents and compared to the [2021 Census data](#) to demonstrate the demographics represented within the data.

Where available, questions from previous Residents Surveys (2023 and 2024) and the Local Government Association's (LGA) Resident Satisfaction Survey 2024 (LGA) were incorporated to provide longitudinal comparison and benchmarking against the national performance of local authorities.

Further questions focused on gathering data in relation to:

- Rossendale's town centres;
- Rossendale's visitor economy and facilities offer;
- Rossendale's cleanliness and resident safety;
- the Council's customer service;
- and the delivery/satisfaction of Council services.

Additional questions have been added to this year's survey to help the Council better understand residents' awareness of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Rossendale.

The full survey questions are detailed within **Appendix 1 – The Questions**.

Publishing and Promotion

The survey was created on SmartSurvey.com, an online platform where the response remained anonymous and were collated into a centralised database. The survey was live throughout October 2025 (Wednesday 1st October – Friday 31st October).

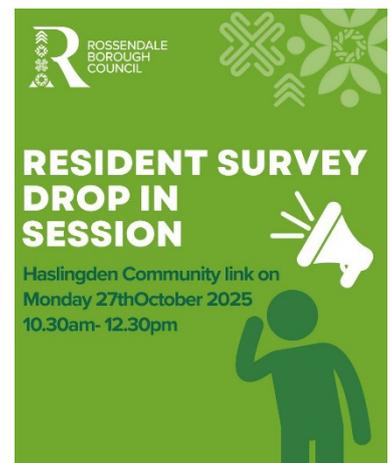
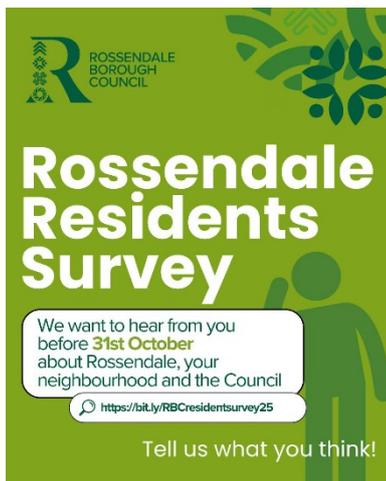
To maximise engagement, the Council increase the promotion of the survey to reach as many demographics as possible.

- Social media posts were shared across Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and LinkedIn.
- Posters with QR codes were displayed in key community locations, including bus stops, libraries, doctors surgeries, shops and community centres.
- Daily message emails were sent to all staff and councillors.
- Text and emails were sent to registered voters within the borough.
- The Council’s Economic Development Team engaged local businesses, encouraging participation.
- Fieldworkers represented the Council on a weekly basis at Rawtenstall Market
- The Economic Development Team engaged in ‘drop-in’ sessions in Haslingden and Rawtenstall to increase the survey’s face-to-face promotion.



Residents Survey 2025

Your views are important in helping us understand what matters most to local residents and how we can improve the services we provide. Please help us by completing the [Residents Survey](#)



Residents Survey Campaign Summary

The Residents Survey campaign achieved strong results and demonstrated excellent value for money. The Bitly link for the survey received 7,209 click-throughs in total.

On Meta (Facebook and Instagram), the paid advertising campaign reached over 21,000 people and generated more than 69,000 views over a 22-day period, with a total spend of £219.49. The cost per landing page view was just £0.21, indicating efficient performance and strong audience interest.

The campaign recorded over 1,500 engagements and 1,400 link clicks, with the majority of users completing the journey through to the survey page. Most engagement came via the Facebook mobile feed, while Instagram contributed minimal interaction — expected given its younger audience demographic.

The Response

The 2025 survey received **8,072** total responses, increasing by 42% when compared to the 2024 Survey (5,688 responses). Of the 8,072 responses, 55% (4,411) were partially completed and merged into the results to maximise the data analysis.

The 2025 Resident Survey recorded an increase in overall response rates, alongside a slight decline in reported resident satisfaction. This may, in part, reflect the impact of ongoing improvement works across the Borough’s town centres and local areas. The Council continues to work proactively with key partners to enhance the Borough as a place to live, including collaboration with Lancashire County Council on public highway repairs and with the police to address and reduce anti-social behaviour

For the purpose of this report, tables and graphs may only include relevant information and percentages may not add to 100%. For example, ‘prefer not to say’ and ‘no opinion’ have been removed from percentage calculations to improve data analysis. Full details of the data can be found within **Appendix 2 – The Results**.

The further analysis breaks down the respondents who answered the question by their place of residence—for example, those who live in Bacup compared with those who live outside Bacup. This is why the data may differ from what is shown in the graph.

About Rossendale – The Place

Living in Rossendale

29% of respondents lived within the East of the Borough (Bacup, Whitworth) and 70% of respondents lived within the West of the Borough (Edenfield, Haslingden, Rawtenstall, Waterfoot).



Figure 1: Percentage of respondents from each Rossendale area

Rossendale’s towns and villages were grouped together into overarching areas. In comparison to 2024, 24% of respondents lived within the East of the Borough (Bacup, Whitworth) and 74% of respondents lived within the West of the Borough (Edenfield, Haslingden, Rawtenstall, Waterfoot).

59% of respondents have lived in the borough for more than 20 years, this is similar to the 2024 survey of 58%. The majority of respondents have lived in these areas for more than 20 years; Bacup (41%), Edenfield (37%), Haslingden (50%), Rawtenstall (44%) and Waterfoot (48%) and Whitworth (36%).

77% of respondents were satisfied with Rossendale as a place to live, slightly higher than the LGA average of 74%.



Figure 2: Level of satisfaction with Rossendale as a place to live

Further analysis shows that respondents living in Bacup (48%) and Haslingden (50%) were satisfied living in their respective area. Although these areas reported the lowest satisfaction rates when compared to Rossendale’s other areas, the overall satisfaction remains high. This suggests that despite potential challenges effecting these communities, the majority of residents continue to view their living experience positively.

The three primary areas of dissatisfaction with Rossendale as a place to live were the quality of roads, traffic issues and a perceived lack of attention to town centres, with the exception of Rawtenstall. These concerns mirror the findings of the 2025 resident survey.

Rossendale’s Town Centres

Attractiveness of Rossendale

Rawtenstall (89%) continues to be rated as most attractive, however Rossendale’s other town centres continue to be rated as unattractive, impacting on Borough’s overall attractiveness.

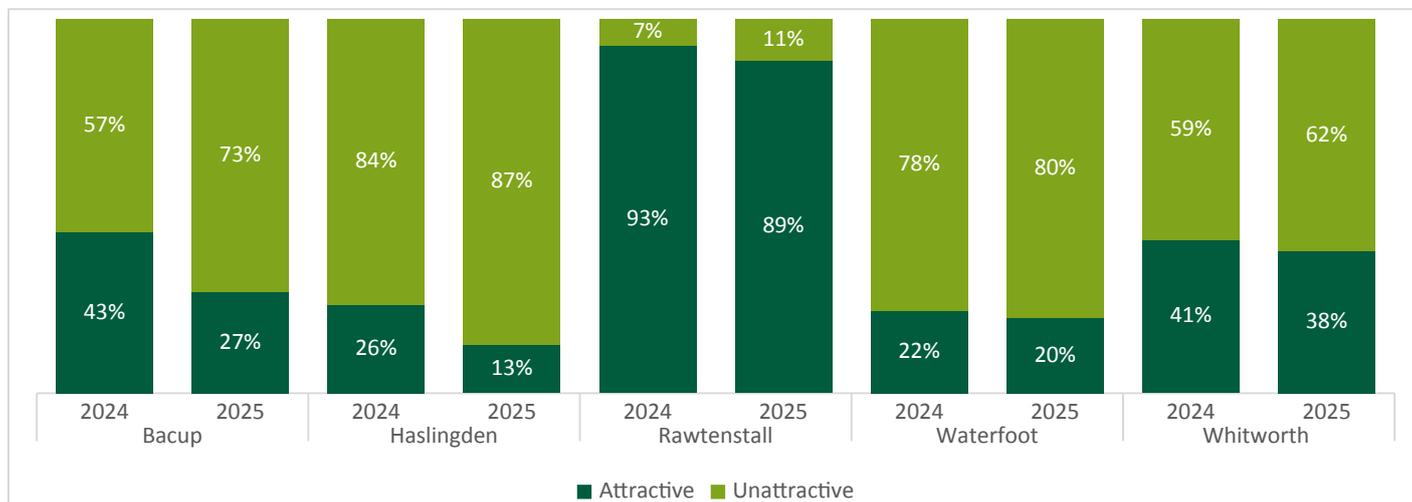


Figure 3: Level of attractiveness of Rossendale's town centres

Further breakdown of the response demonstrates that the respondents living in Rawtenstall (94%) and Whitworth (63%) rated their respective town centre as attractive. In contrast the majority of residents living in Bacup (61%), Haslingden (90%) and Waterfoot (88%) rated their respective town centre as unattractive. The three main themes contributing to perceptions of Rossendale’s town centres being unattractive were concerns about the overall mix and quality of shops, the limited variety of retail options and the number of vacant buildings.

Vibrancy of Rossendale

Rawtenstall (92%) continues to be rated as most vibrant, however the rating of Rossendale’s other town centres continues to impact the overall Valley’s vibrancy. Bacup (17%), Haslingden (10%), Waterfoot (16%) and Whitworth (24%) are all perceived as being dull.

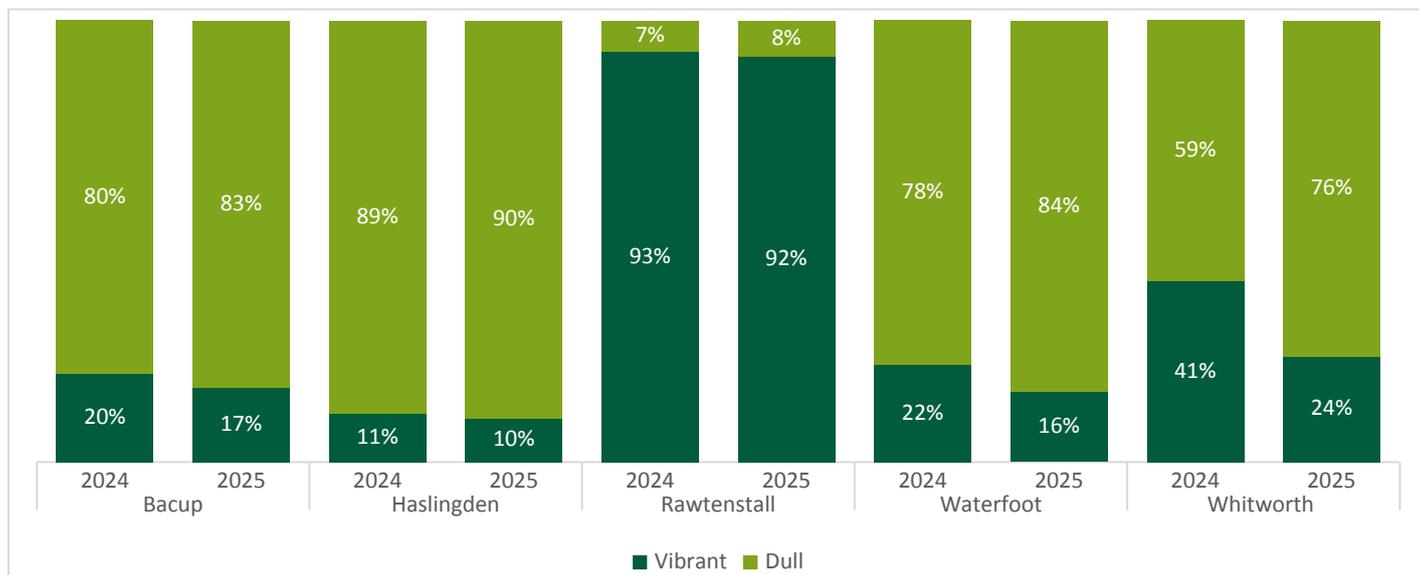


Figure 4: Level of vibrancy of Rossendale's town centres

Further breakdown of the response demonstrates that respondents living in Rawtenstall (95%) rated their respective area as vibrant. However, respondents living in Bacup (83%), Haslingden (88%), Waterfoot (84%) and Whitworth (70%) rated their respective town centre as dull.

Rossendale’s Facilities

Rossendale’s parks and garden (72%) and walks and cycle routes (86%) continue to be rated as most satisfactory by respondents. Community events and festivals (79%) has shown the most significant improvement when compared to the 2024 survey.

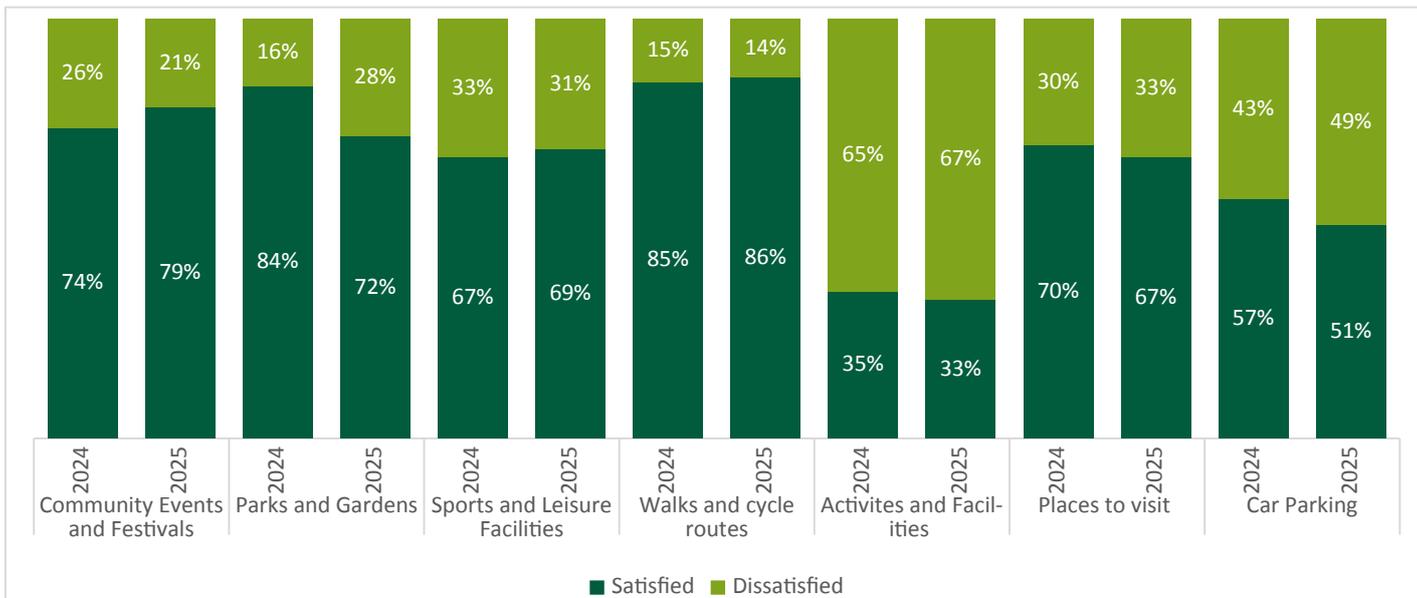


Figure 5: Level of satisfaction with Rossendale's facilities

Activities and Facilities (67%) continues to be rated as dissatisfactory which remains as Rossendale’s lowest-rated facility.

The three main themes relating to the dissatisfaction with Rossendale’s facilities were; lack of activities for young people (linking to anti-social behaviour) and poor parking which remains consistent with the 2024 survey.

Rossendale’s Cleanliness and Environment

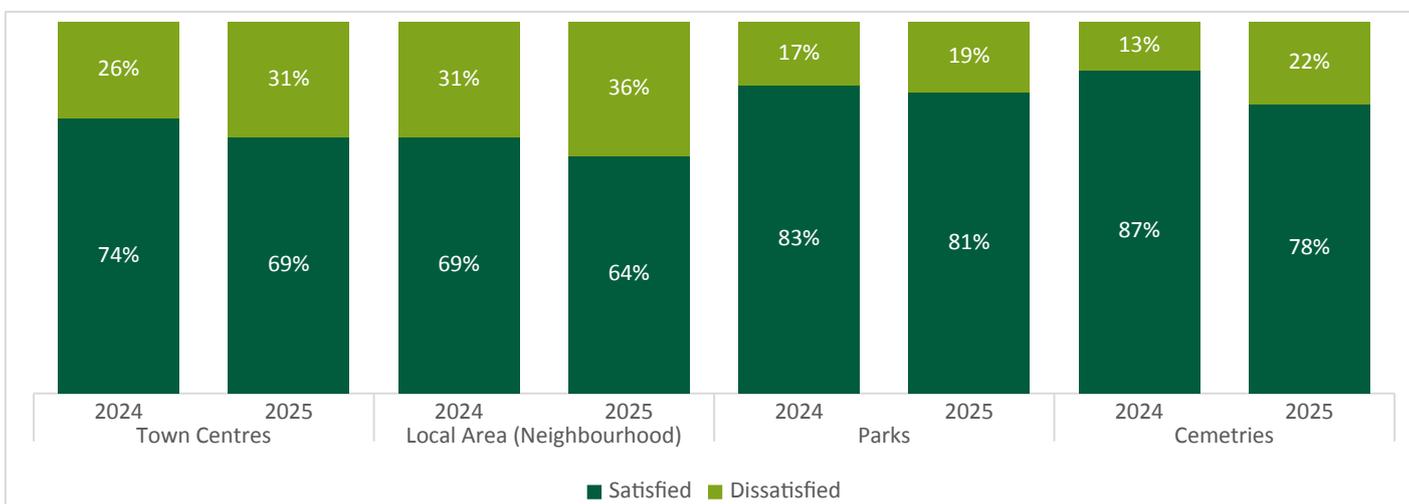


Figure 6: Level of satisfaction with the cleanliness of Rossendale

Overall, respondents expressed satisfaction with cleanliness, with 69% satisfied with Rossendale’s town centres, 64% with their local area, 81% with Rossendale’s parks, and 78% with the cleanliness of Rossendale’s cemeteries.

The three main themes relating to dissatisfaction with Rossendale’s cleanliness were concerns about the shops (as detailed above), the scruffy appearance of some areas and the lack of atmosphere at markets.

Respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness of their local area (64%). Further analysis highlights that respondents living in Bacup (57%), Haslingden (53%), Edenfield (77%), Rawtenstall (78%), Waterfoot (56%) and Whitworth (66%) were satisfied with the cleanliness of their respective area.

Cleanliness of Rossendale’s roads

44% of respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness of Rossendale’s roads. Similar to the 2024 Survey, the comments regarding the cleanliness of Rossendale’s roads focused on the quality of roads, potholes and traffic management rather than the cleanliness. These factors may influence the perceived level of satisfaction.

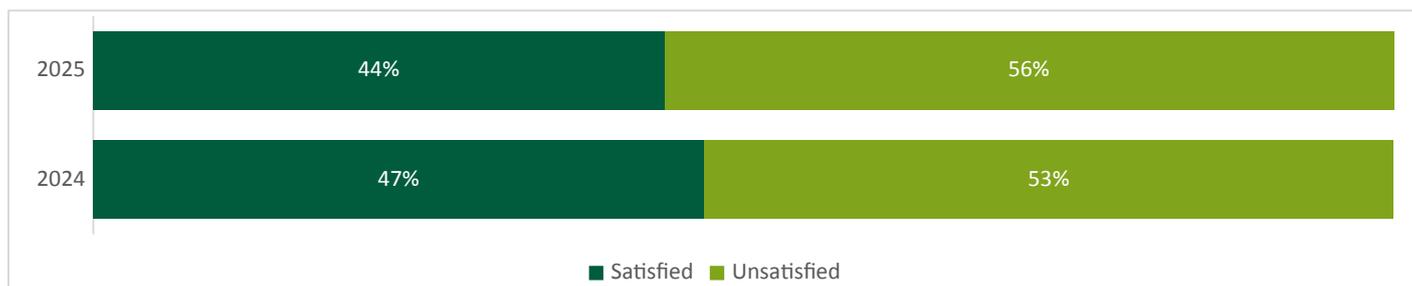


Figure 7: Level of satisfaction with the cleanliness of Rossendale

Rossendale’s waste and recycling service

79% of respondents were satisfied with the Council’s waste and recycling service.

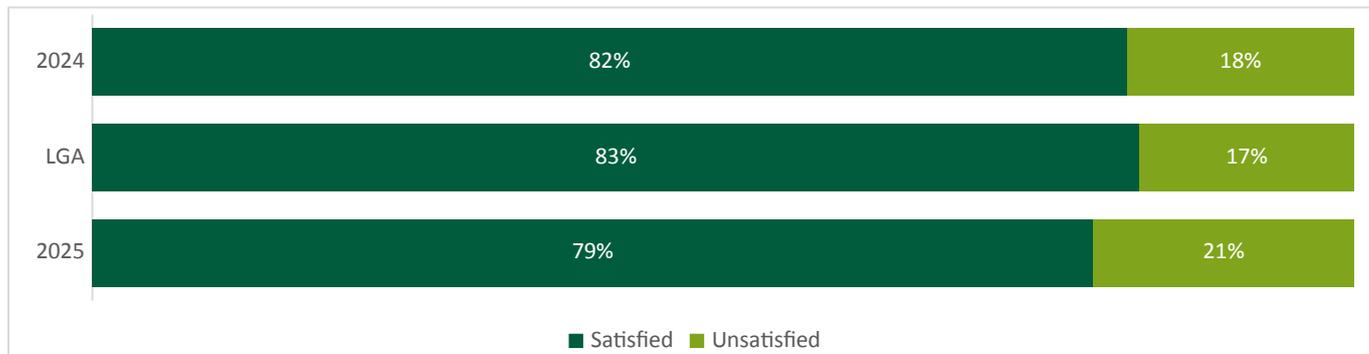


Figure 8: Level of satisfaction with Rossendale's waste and recycling service

Further breakdown of the responses demonstrates a low percentage of respondents living in Rawtenstall (17%) are unsatisfied with the service. Dissatisfaction amongst with respondents living in Haslingden (22%), Bacup (23%), Edenfield (24%), Whitworth (22%) and Waterfoot (22%), remain consistent across the towns.

Rossendale’s fly-tipping service

61% of respondents felt fly-tipping was not an issue in their local area.

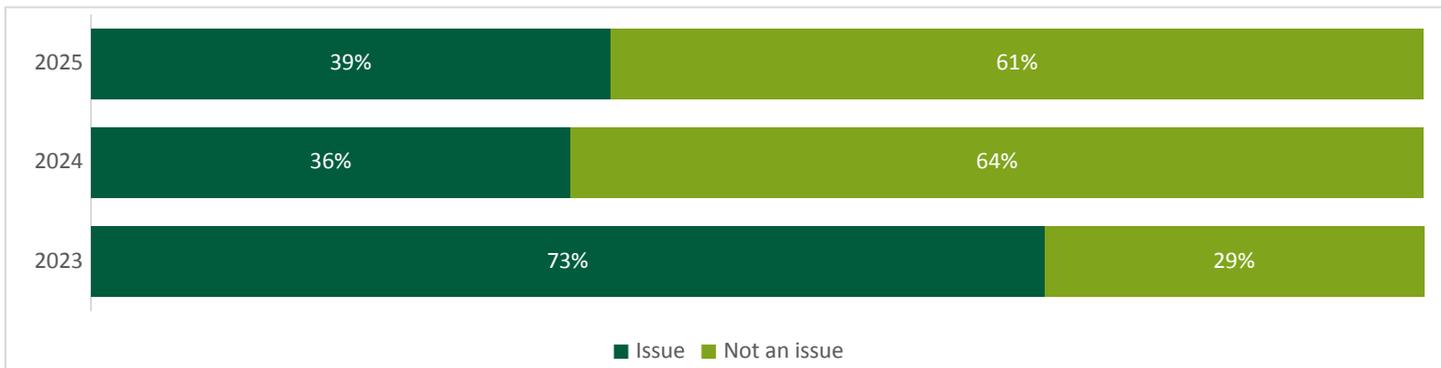


Figure 9: Issue of fly-tipping in the local area

Further analysis highlights respondents living in Bacup (60%), Haslingden (55%), Waterfoot (67%), Whitworth (53%), Edenfield (71%) and Rawtenstall (79%) felt fly-tipping was not an issue in their respective area.

Rossendale’s Safety

Feeling safe during the day

92% of respondents felt safe in their local area during the day.

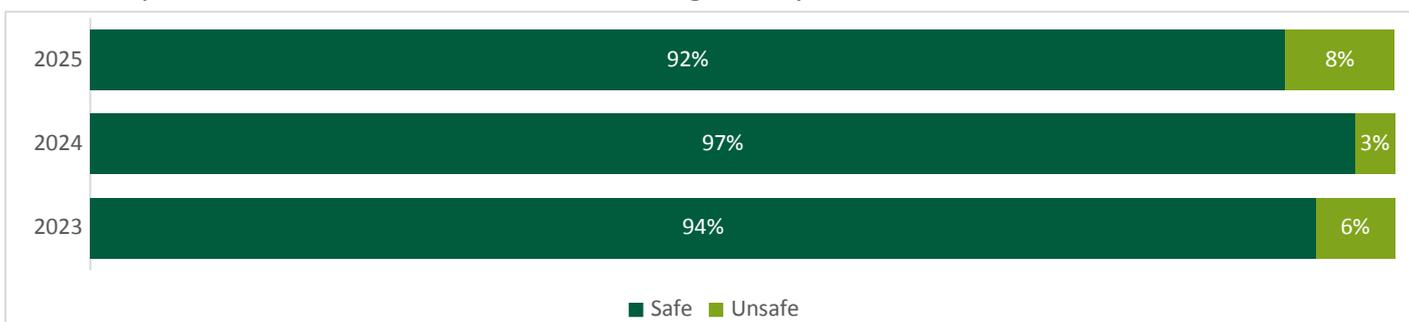


Figure 10: Feeling of safety during the day

Age analysis of the respondents feeling unsafe during the day reveals that those within the 35 to 64 age group (9%) reported the highest feeling of unsafety. Further breakdown of the response shows respondents living in Rawtenstall (97%) and Edenfield (98%) felt safe in their respective area during the day. While slightly lower, respondents living in Bacup (85%), Haslingden (87%), Whitworth (95%) and Waterfoot (95%) also had a high feeling of safety during the day in their respective area.

Responses by sex indicate that 90% of women feel safe during the day, compared with 93% of men who report feeling safe in their local area during the daytime.

Feeling safe after dark

52% of respondents felt safe in their local area after dark.

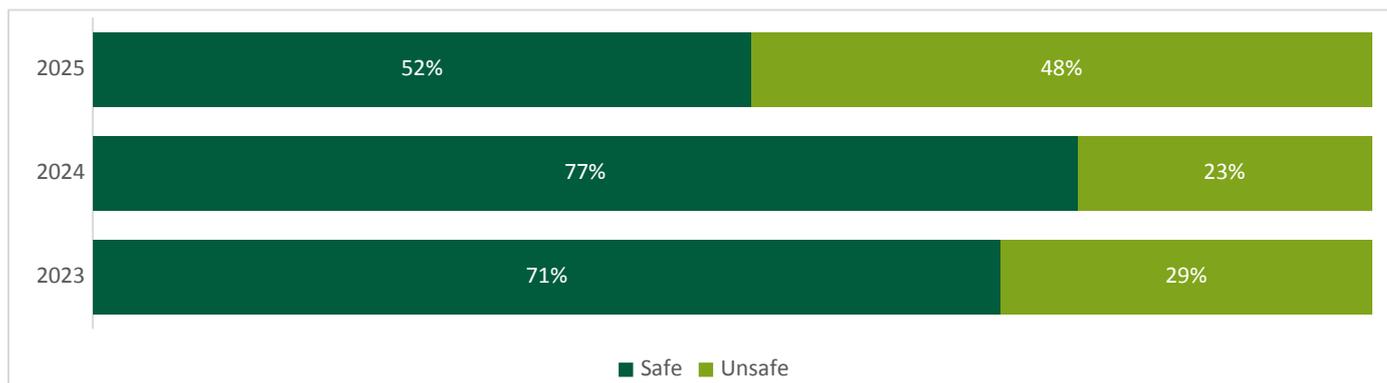


Figure 11: Feeling of safety after dark

Age analysis shows that feelings of being unsafe after dark were reported by 50% of respondents aged 18–34, 47% of those aged 35–64 and 48% of those aged 65+. Although these figures indicate a noticeable increase in perceived risk compared with daytime, they are substantially lower than the 2024 survey results, where 74% of 18–34s, 78% of 35–64s and 78% of those aged 65+ reported feeling unsafe after dark.

Further analysis highlights respondents living in Edenfield (82%) felt the safest in their area after dark. Similarly, respondents living in Rawtenstall (70%) and Whitworth (62%) felt safe after dark, while those living in Rossendale’s other town centres had a greater feeling of unsafety; Bacup (27%), Haslingden (37%) and Waterfoot (54%).

Responses by sex indicate that half of women (50%) feel safe in their local area at night, while the other 50% do not. In comparison, 72% of men report feeling safe in their local area during the nighttime.

Feeling safe walking and cycling

94% of respondents felt safe walking or cycling in their local area, this is 7% higher than 2024.

Further breakdown of this response reveals consistent levels of perceived safety from respondents living in; Bacup (96%), Edenfield (92%), Haslingden (95%), Rawtenstall (94%), Waterfoot (94%) and Whitworth (96%).

Responses by sex indicate that the majority of men (95%) and women (94%) feel safe when walking and cycling locally (within 20 minutes).

The main themes contributing to feelings of being unsafe included a perceived lack of police presence, concerns about groups of young people and inadequate lighting in some areas.

About Us – The Council

Contacting the Council and Customer Service

Methods used to Contact the Council

34% of respondents had contacted the Council, or requested a service in the last 6-months. Telephone, email and the Council’s website continue to be the main used methods of contact.

The most used and preferred method to contact the Council, or to request a service was via telephone (32% and 41%).

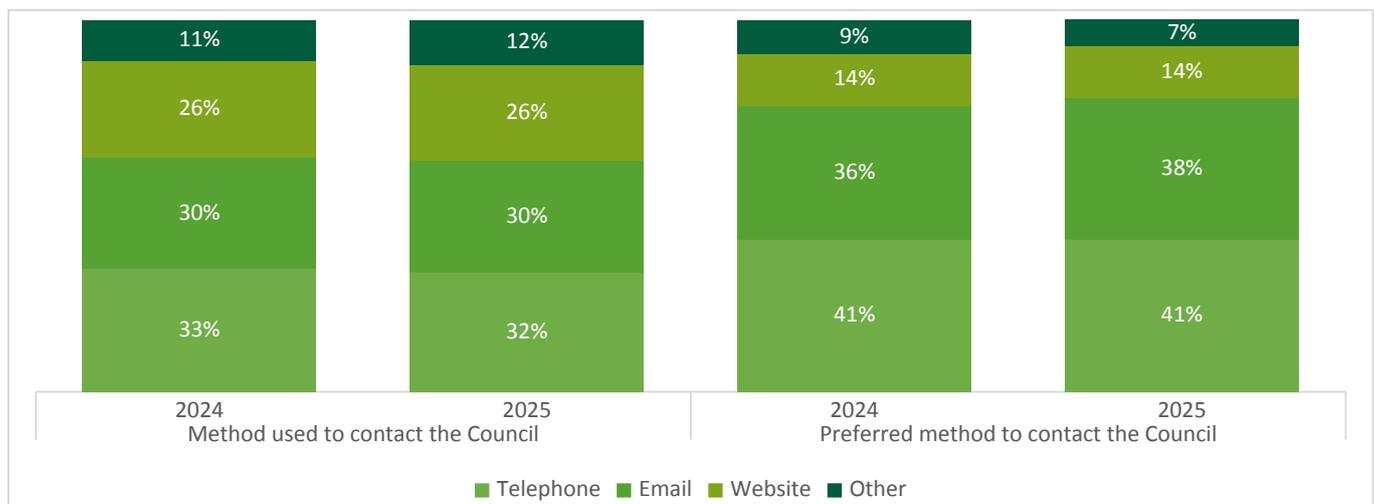


Figure 12: Methods used and preferred methods used to contact the Council

*Other includes; social media, letter, in-person and through a Councillor.

Use of the Council’s website to contact the Council or request a service mirrors the 2024 Survey and has increased by 15% since 2023, with 26% of respondents using this method.

Engagement levels were broadly consistent across age groups, with 25% of respondents aged 18–34, 36% of those aged 35–64 and 32% of those aged 65+ reporting contact with the Council.

Contacting the Council

70% of respondents felt the Council was easy to contact and 86% of respondents felt the Council’s staff were friendly and polite.

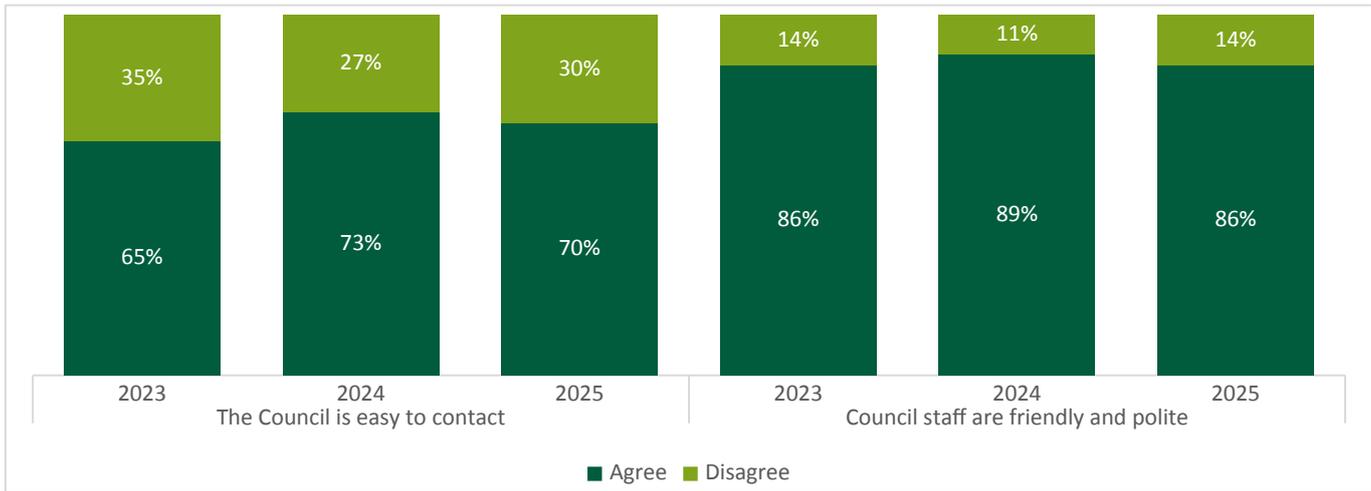


Figure 13: Experience when contacting the Council

67% of respondents felt their enquiry and/or service was dealt with in a timely manner, 4% higher than 2024.

The Council's customer service

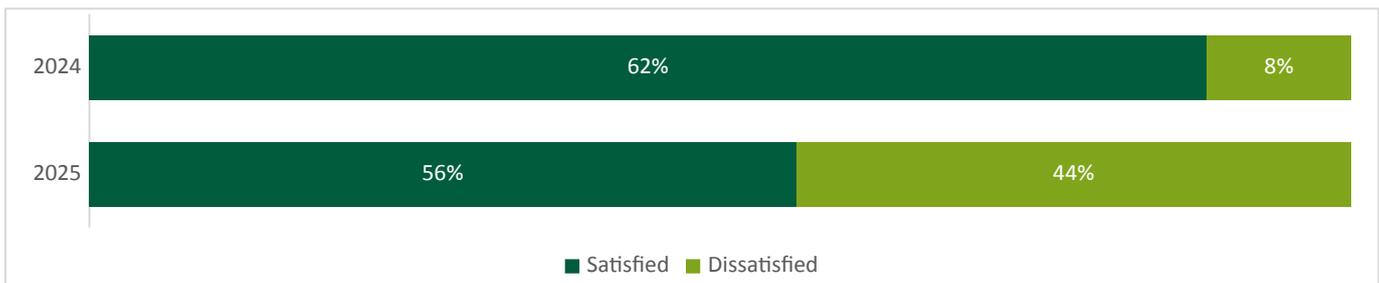


Figure 14: Level of satisfaction with the Council's service

56% of respondents were satisfied with the service they received however, 44% were dissatisfied.

Of the dissatisfied respondents, 55% felt the Council was not easy to contact, 21% felt Council staff were not polite and friendly and 73% felt their enquiry and/or service was not dealt with in a timely manner – all of which could be contributing factors towards the dissatisfaction.

Planning, including Building Control, and Environmental Health saw the highest levels of dissatisfaction amongst the respondents who have made service requests. 64% of Planning, including Building Control, users and 66% Environmental Health users reported being dissatisfied. Additional comments relating to dissatisfaction highlighted long response times, lengthy waits on the phone and the need to chase for updates. However, some respondents referred to the outcome of their enquiry rather than the service they received, which may have influenced how they rated their satisfaction.

Council tax, business rates, benefits and revenues had the highest level of satisfaction with 84% of users satisfied with their service.

The Council's website

78% of respondents felt the Council's website was informative while 82% felt that the website was easy to use, in comparison to 76% in 2024.

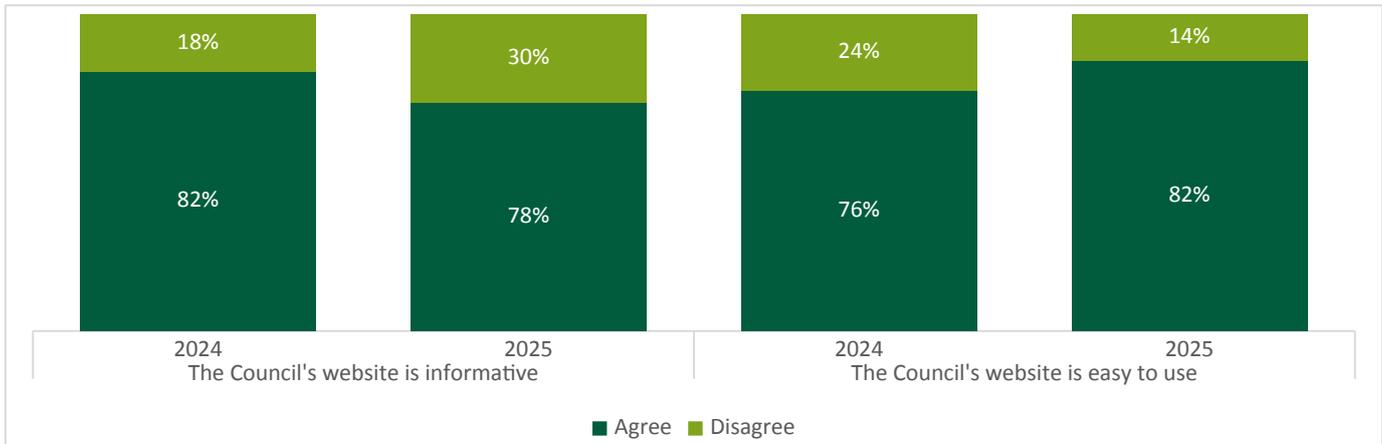


Figure 15: Experience when using the Council's website

Engaging with the Council

Feeling informed

37% of respondents felt informed about the Council's activities.

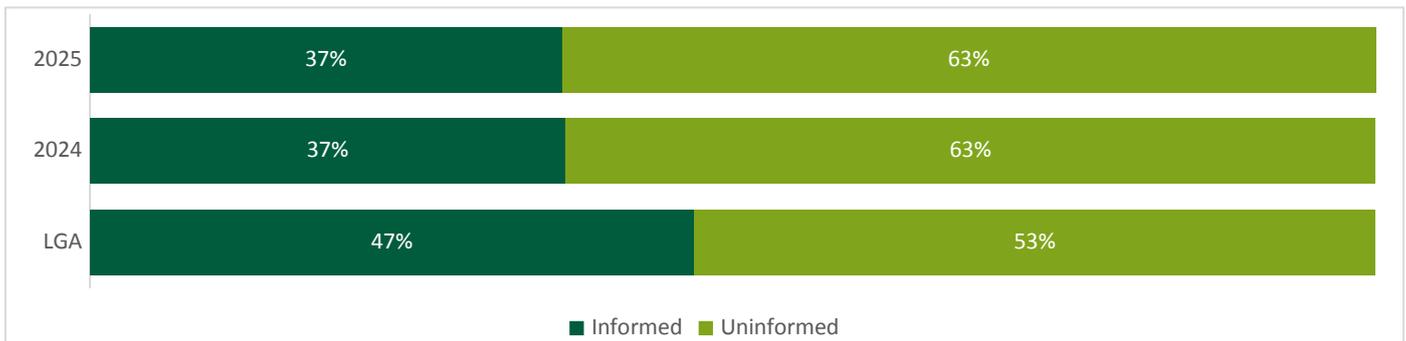


Figure 16: Feeling informed about what the Council is doing

The main theme within the additional comments related to the Council's use of social media, with many respondents expressing that they value receiving regular information through them.

Methods used to find out what the Council is doing

48% of respondents find out what the Council is doing via social media. This has increased by 17% when compared to the 2024 Survey.

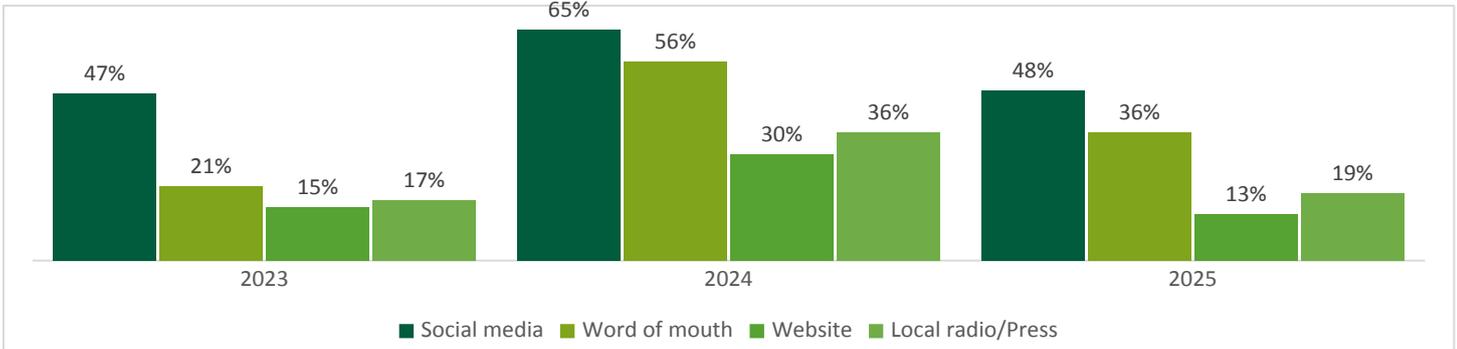


Figure 17: Methods used to find out what the Council is doing

*Percentage will not add up to 100% as the question was formatted into a ranking system.

Engaging with residents

Overall, 25% of respondents felt the Council listens to residents' concerns and feedback, 20% felt involved in the Council's decision-making processes, and 13% had participated in a Council consultation within the past six months.

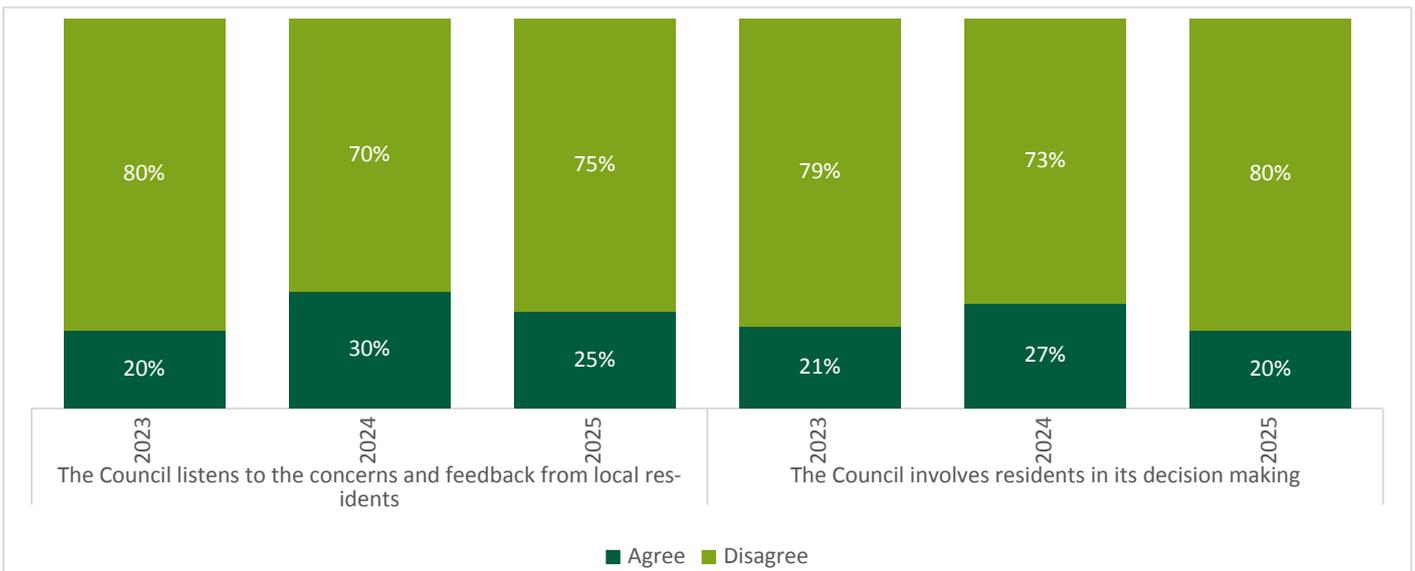


Figure 18: Experience when engaging residents

Perception of the Council

Respondents were asked to state what the Council does well. The three main themes represented within the comments were:



Waste and recycling refuse collection



Cleanliness of the town Centres



Maintenance of parks

Respondents were asked to state what the Council could do better. The three main themes represented within the comments were:



Maintenance and quality of roads and potholes



Improve Rossendale's infrastructure and traffic management



Two-way communication with residents

Respondents were asked what improvements would make Rossendale a better place to live. The key themes emerging from their comments were:

- Better roads, traffic management and public transport
- Improved infrastructure and access to housing
- A greater focus on town centres beyond Rawtenstall
- A wider variety of shops within town centres

Overall, the responses were consistent with the 2024 survey, indicating that residents' priorities and perceptions have remained largely unchanged.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Awareness of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Residents were asked if they were aware of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Rossendale. 73% are not aware of LGR in Rossendale and 74% require more information.

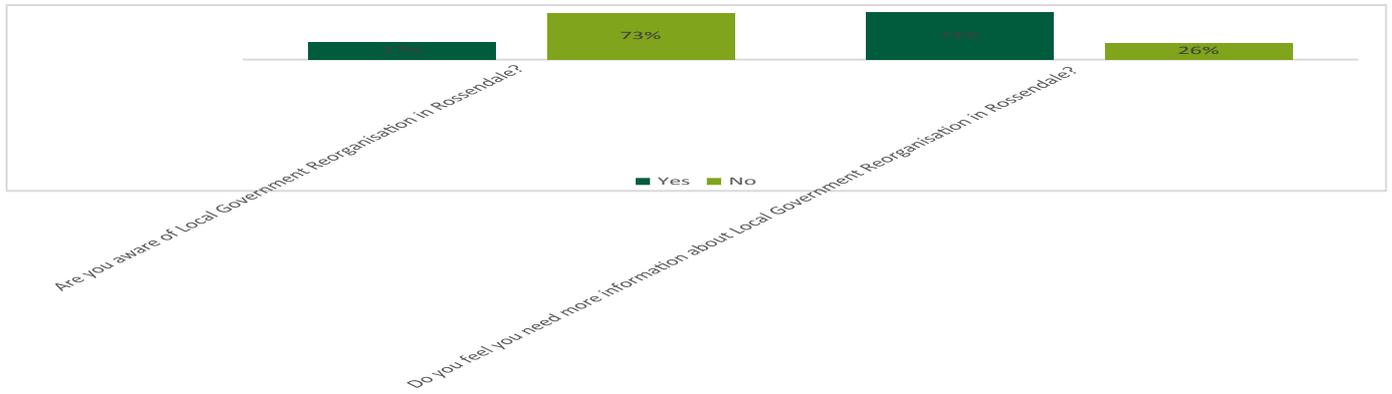
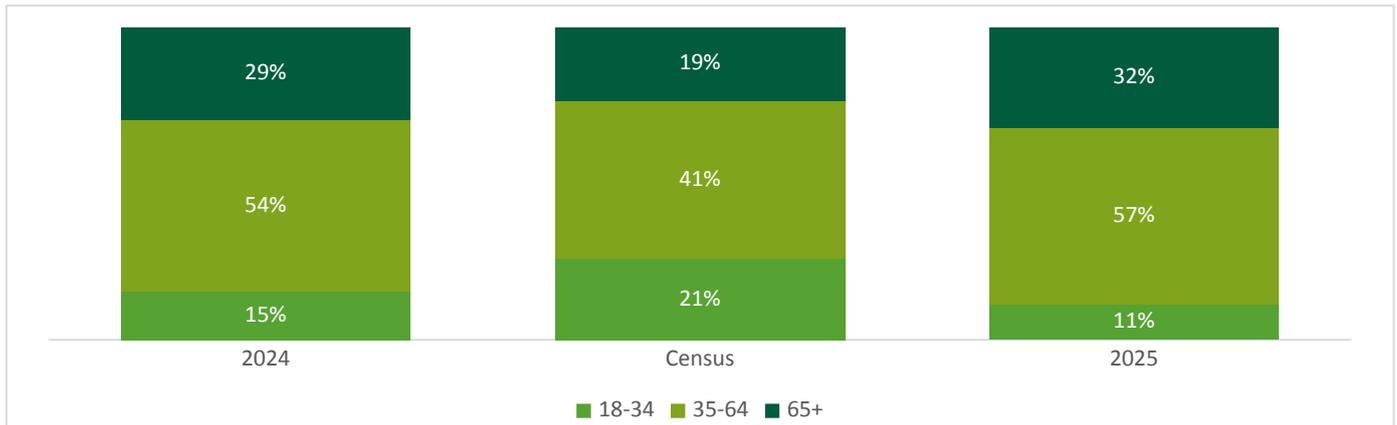


Figure 19: Awareness of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Rossendale

About You – Monitoring Information

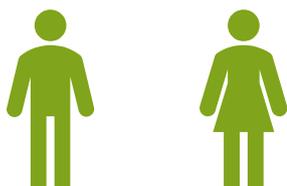


The age profile of respondents in the 2025 resident survey shows a slight shift compared with both the 2024 survey and the local Census data.

In 2025, younger residents (aged 18–34) made up 11% of respondents, down from 15% in 2024 and notably below the 21% recorded in the Census. The 35–64 age group accounted for the majority of responses at 57%, slightly higher than both the 54% in 2024 and the 41% reported in the Census. Respondents aged 65 and over represented 32%, an increase from 29% in the 2024 survey and significantly above the Census figure of 19%.

Overall, the 2025 survey sample continues to under-represent younger residents and over-represent older age groups compared to the wider census population.

Engaging younger residents will continue to be a challenge and will require targeted communication efforts to more closely align the responses to the Census data within future surveys.



55% of respondents were female and 45% were male, this aligning closely with the 2021 Census data and similar to the 2024 Survey. Further analysis highlights consistent gender representation within the different age groups of respondents.



97% of respondents were White (English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British) and 3% of respondents were BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds). This is consistent with the 2024 survey.



60% of respondents were either employed full-time, part-time, or self-employed. This is consistent with the 2024 survey.

Summary

About You - Monitoring Information

The 2025 Resident Survey shows a slight shift in respondent profile compared with 2024 and the local Census data, with younger residents continuing to be under-represented and older age groups over-represented. Residents aged 18–34 accounted for 11% of respondents (15% in 2024 survey and 21% in the local Census figure), while those aged 35–64 made up 57% (54% in 2024 survey and 41% in the local Census figure) and residents aged 65+ represented 32% (29% in 2024 survey and 19% in the local Census figure).

Gender representation remains relatively balanced and consistent with the 2024 survey and local Census results (55% female, 45% male), and ethnicity remains unchanged from 2024, with 97% of respondents identifying as White and 3% as BAME.

Employment levels are also consistent with 2024, with 60% of respondents in full-time, part-time or self-employment.

About Rossendale

Overall satisfaction with Rossendale as a place to live is 77%, which is above the national benchmark of 71% LGA average. Residents rate the Borough's walking and cycling routes (86%) and parks (72%) high. Satisfaction with community events and festivals has improved to 79%.

Perceptions vary significantly between town centres. Rawtenstall remains the strongest performer, with 89% rating it attractive and 92% rating it vibrant, however vibrancy ratings are much lower elsewhere—particularly Haslingden (10%) and Bacup (17%), with feedback commonly linked to the mix and quality of shops and vacant buildings.

Environmental perceptions are mixed. Satisfaction remains strong for cleanliness of the parks (81%) and waste and recycling (79%), but is lower for the wider public realm - 69% for town centre cleanliness, 64% for neighbourhood cleanliness, and 44% for roads, streets and pavements.

Fly-tipping is not seen as a local problem by 61% of residents, but perceptions are weaker in some areas, and concerns regarding the condition and maintenance of the roads, particularly potholes and congestion—continue to feature strongly in feedback.

Feelings of safety are high during the day (92% feel safe), but fall significantly after dark (52% feel safe), with comments frequently referencing anti-social behaviour, lighting, and visible policing. Satisfaction of activities for young people remain low with 67% dissatisfied, linked to wider concerns about anti-social behaviour.

About the Council

34% of respondents have contacted the Council in the last six months, and among these respondents, 70% said that the Council is easy to contact and 86% rated staff as friendly and polite. Satisfaction with the website continues to improve, with 82% saying it is easy to use and 78% saying it is informative.

Satisfaction with communication and involvement remains low with 37% respondents feel informed about what the Council is doing and 20% feel involved in decision-making.

Satisfaction with timeliness varies by service area. Council Tax and Benefits performs strongly with 84% of respondents satisfied, however satisfaction falls with Planning and Building Control to 84% and Environmental Health to 34%.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

In regards to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), public awareness is low and information needs are high - 73% of residents are not aware of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Rossendale, and 74% say they need more information.

The results of the survey highlight the need for continued focus and targeted action to address areas of dissatisfaction on infrastructure and roads, town centre regeneration, youth activity provision, community safety, customer service response, communication and engagement. An Action Plan will be developed to set out how we will respond directly to what residents have told us. The Council's quarterly performance management monitoring will continue to track progress against the Council's overall vision.

Addressing these areas will be critical to improving satisfaction and confidence in the Council and in Rossendale as a place to love.

The key focus areas identified for improvement in the survey are:

About You – Monitoring Information

Engagement activity will be tailored to reflect the borough's demographics and will be proportionate to the topic and its potential impact on residents. This will include targeted approaches to ensure we hear from the communities most affected, so that feedback is representative and helps shape how the Council's actions are developed and delivered.

About the Place – Rossendale

Infrastructure and Roads

Concerns relating to the maintenance and quality of roads (including potholes, traffic congestion and parking pressures) remain the most significant source of dissatisfaction across the borough. These issues continue to negatively influence residents' perceptions of Rossendale as a place to live, but also highlight that residents' may not be aware that this is the responsibility of Lancashire County Council.

Town Centre Regeneration

Rawtenstall continues to be perceived positively, however Bacup, Haslingden, Waterfoot and Whitworth remain areas of concern. Dissatisfaction centres around vacant shops, limited retail choice, poorly maintained buildings, low footfall, dark high streets and anti-social behaviour.

Youth activity provision

Parks, walking and cycling routes remain strong assets. In contrast, the provision of activities and facilities for young people continue to be the lowest rate and frequently linked by residents to anti-social behaviour.

Community Safety

Perceived safety during the day remains high, however there are public concerns about safety after dark - particularly in Bacup, Haslingden and Waterfoot. Key themes in responses include anti-social behaviour, poor lighting and perceived lack of police presence.

About the Council

Customer Service Response

Most residents report positive experiences when contacting the Council, however timeliness of response remains a key concern, particularly within the Planning, Building Control and Environmental Health service areas. Delays, lack of updates and need to chase responses were frequently used.

Communication and Engagement

The level of residents feeling informed, listened to and involved remains low, which is consistent with previous surveys. The most commonly used source of information is social media but many residents feel communication is one-way.

Local Government Reorganisation(LGR)

The level of awareness and understanding of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is low. Clear, accessible and consistent information is needed to improve awareness and understanding with a focus on plain-English messaging that explains what is changing, what it means for Rossendale, and what residents should expect next with updates provided through a mix of channels, so residents can stay informed and confident throughout the process.

Appendix 1 – The Questions

The Questions

About Rossendale – The Place

1. Which town centre is closest to where you live?
For example, if you live in Crawshawbooth select Rawtenstall, or live in Weir select Bacup. If you are unsure, please select other.
 - If answers – ‘I don’t live in Rossendale’ – finish survey.
2. How long have you lived in Rossendale?
3. How satisfied are you with Rossendale as a place to live? (**LGA**)
4. How attractive are Rossendale's main town centres? (Bacup, Haslingden, Rawtenstall, Waterfoot, Whitworth)
5. How vibrant is the atmosphere in Rossendale's main town centres? (Bacup, Haslingden, Rawtenstall, Waterfoot, Whitworth)
6. How satisfied are you with the following across Rossendale? (Community events and festivals, parks and gardens, sports and leisure facilities, walks and cycle routes, activities for young people, places to visit, car parking)
7. How satisfied are you with the cleanliness of the following areas across Rossendale? (town centres, local area, parks, cemeteries, road, streets and pavements)
8. How satisfied are you with the Council’s waste and recycling collection service? (**LGA**)
 - If answers – ‘dissatisfied, very dissatisfied’ – Please state why you are unsatisfied with the Council’s state and recycling collection service.
9. How much of a problem, if at all, is fly-tipping in your local area?
10. How safe do you feel around your closest town centre during:
 - The Day
 - After Dark
 - Walking/cycling locally (within 20 minutes)

About Rossendale – The Council

1. Have you contacted the Council or requested a service in the last 6 months?
 - **Yes** – How did you last contact the Council or request a service? (in-person, telephone, email, social media, letter, through a councillor, website/online, other)
 - **No**- use skip logic and ask: If you were to contact the Council, what would be your preferred method? (In person, telephone, email, social media, website/online, letter, through a Councillor)
 - If answers – ‘in-person, telephone, email, social media’ – To what extent do you agree with following after contacting the Council: (the Council is easy to contact, Council staff are friendly and polite, my enquiry and/or service request was dealt with in a timely manner) (**LGA**)
 - If answers- website/online- How do you rate the following: (the Council’s website is easy to use; the Council website is informative)

- What service did you request?
 - How satisfied were you with the service you received?
 - If answers – ‘dissatisfied, very dissatisfied’ – please state why you were not satisfied with the service you received:
2. How informed do you feel about what the Council is doing? (**LGA**)
 3. What are your main ways of finding out what the Council is doing? – select the most used methods (local radio, council website, free press, social media, word of mouth, letter/email from councillor, I’m unaware of what the Council is doing, other) (**LGA**)
 4. To what extent do you agree with the following: (The Council listens to the concerns and feedback from local resident, The Council involves residents in its decision making) (**LGA**)
 5. Have you participated in any of the Council’s consultations within the last 6 months?
 - Yes – Which consultation have you participated in?
 6. What does the Council do well?
 7. What could the Council do better?
 8. What would make Rossendale a better place to live?

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

1. Are you aware of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Rossendale? (yes or no)
2. Do you feel you need more information about Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Rossendale? (yes or no)

Monitoring Information

1. Would you be willing to join the Rossendale Panel to receive information and updates from the Council and to take part in future surveys and consultations about the Council and the wider borough?
2. What age band are you in?
3. What is your sex?
4. What is your ethnic group?
5. What is your employment status?

Appendix 2 - Results

About Rossendale – The Place

1. Which town centre is closest to where you live? For example, if you live in Crawshawbooth select Rawtenstall, or live in Weir select Bacup. If you are unsure, please select other.

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Bacup	20.8%	1316
2	Edenfield	4.1%	261
3	Haslingden	23.6%	1491
4	Rawtenstall	31.1%	1963
5	Waterfoot	11.4%	722
6	Whitworth	7.8%	491
7	I don't live in Rossendale	0.2%	14
8	Other	1.0%	61
If other, please specify:			169
Total			6319

Other responses include:

- Helmshore 28
- Haslingden 14
- Ramsbottom 13
- Rawtenstall 11
- Crawshawbooth 11
- Waterfoot 11
- Bacup 9
- Stacksteads 8
- Loveclough 5
- Rochdale 5
- Water 4
- Newchurch 4
- Stubbins 3
- Cowpe 3
- Weir 2
- Edenfield 1
- Heywood 1
- Whitewell Bottom 1
- Accrington 1
- Lumb 1
- Sharneyford 1
- Rossendale 1
- Shawforth 1
- Whitworth 1
- Burnley 1
- Bury 2
- Rising Bridge 2

2. How long have you lived in Rossendale?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Less than a year	3.1%	148
2	Between 1 and 5 years	13.1%	625
3	Between 5 and 10 years	11.6%	553
4	Between 10 and 20 years	13.6%	651
5	More than 20 years	58.6%	2796

3. How satisfied are you with Rossendale as place to live?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Satisfied	18.4%	877
2	Satisfied	54.8%	2611
3	No Opinion	6.3%	298
4	Dissatisfied	16.3%	778
5	Very Dissatisfied	4.3%	203
If you are dissatisfied, please state why:			1007
			answered 4767

If you are dissatisfied please state why:



4. How attractive are Rossendale's main town centres?

Answer Choices	Very Attractive	Attractive	No Opinion	Unattractive	Very Unattractive	Response Total
Bacup	1.09% 52	15.87% 754	38.15% 1812	34.88% 1657	10.00% 475	4750
Haslingden	0.67% 32	7.83% 372	33.85% 1608	39.12% 1858	18.53% 880	4750
Rawtenstall	13.57% 645	62.89% 2989	13.70% 651	8.39% 399	1.45% 69	4753
Waterfoot	0.67% 32	11.89% 564	38.15% 1809	34.35% 1629	14.93% 708	4742
Whitworth	1.39% 66	11.83% 561	65.56% 3108	15.63% 741	5.59% 265	4741
					answered	4765

6. How satisfied are you with the quality of the following across Rossendale?

Answer Choices	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	No Opinion	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Response Total
Community events and festivals	4.48% 212	40.95% 1937	34.38% 1626	15.90% 752	4.29% 203	4730
Parks and Gardens	14.51% 686	58.74% 2778	10.89% 515	12.50% 591	3.36% 159	4729
Sports and Leisure Facilities	6.91% 327	44.78% 2119	24.60% 1164	17.62% 834	6.09% 288	4732
Walks and Cycle Routes	18.18% 859	49.40% 2334	20.99% 992	8.70% 411	2.73% 129	4725
Activities and Facilities for young people	1.90% 90	14.23% 673	50.99% 2412	22.16% 1048	10.72% 507	4730
Places to visit	5.08% 240	43.17% 2040	27.61% 1305	18.47% 873	5.67% 268	4726
Car Parking	4.73% 224	37.05% 1753	17.96% 850	25.99% 1230	14.26% 675	4732
					answered	4733

If you are dissatisfied please state why:



7. How satisfied are you with the cleanliness of the following areas across Rossendale?

Answer Choices	Very satisfied	Satisfied	No Opinion	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Response Total
Town Centres	7.03% 331	53.05% 2497	12.64% 595	20.82% 980	6.46% 304	4707
Local Area (Neighbourhood)	8.76% 412	48.79% 2295	9.89% 465	24.19% 1138	8.38% 394	4704
Parks	10.64% 500	56.11% 2637	17.30% 813	12.00% 564	3.96% 186	4700
Cemeteries	5.72% 269	29.98% 1409	54.00% 2538	6.68% 314	3.62% 170	4700

Roads, Streets and Pavements	3.23% 152	35.45% 1667	11.93% 561	32.62% 1534	16.78% 789	4703
					answered	4713

If you are dissatisfied please state why:



8. How satisfied are you with the Council's waste and recycling collection service?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied	17.6%	827
2	Satisfied	54.3%	2552
3	No opinion	9.4%	443
4	Dissatisfied	12.5%	588
5	Very dissatisfied	6.2%	292
		answered	4702

9. Please state why you are unsatisfied with the Council's waste and recycling collection service:



10. How much of a problem, if at all, is fly-tipping in your local area?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Not a problem at all	21.5%	950

2	Minor Problem	39.4%	1741
3	Moderate problem	25.6%	1132
4	Serious problem	9.9%	439
5	Very serious problem / widespread issue	3.6%	158
		answered	4420

11. How safe do you feel in and around your closest town centre during:

Answer Choices	Very safe	Safe	No opinion	Unsafe	Very unsafe	Response Total
The Day	30.13% 1310	56.03% 2436	6.00% 261	6.49% 282	1.36% 59	4348
After Dark	6.35% 275	35.82% 1552	18.14% 786	28.13% 1219	11.56% 501	4333
Walking/cycling locally (within 20 minutes)	12.28% 531	48.14% 2081	24.15% 1044	11.57% 500	3.86% 167	4323
					answered	4348

If you do not feel safe, please state the area and why:



About Rossendale – The Council

12. Have you contacted the Council or requested a service in the last 6 months?

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Yes	34.1%	1452
2 No	65.9%	2806
		answered
		4258

13. How did you last contact the Council or request a service?

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 In person	4.1%	59
2 Telephone	32.0%	460

Council staff are friendly and polite	15.17% 198	45.67% 596	29.20% 381	6.67% 87	3.30% 43	1305
My enquiry and/or service request was dealt within a timely manner	15.10% 197	38.54% 503	9.73% 127	20.46% 267	16.17% 211	1305
					answered	1305

If you disagree, please state why:



16. What service did you request?

Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1 Council tax, business rates, benefits and revenues	11.1%	155
2 Waste services, cleansing, parks and open spaces	43.7%	609
3 Planning and building control	9.4%	131
4 Environmental health	8.4%	117
5 Housing	2.2%	30
6 Other (please specify):	25.3%	353
answered		1395

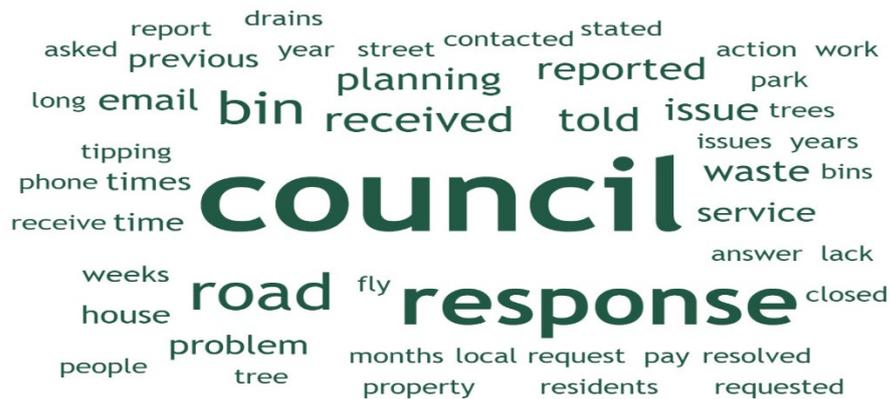
Other included:

- Roads & Highways – 72
- Potholes – 10
- Parking & Vehicles – 20
- Trees & Vegetation – 18
- Bins & Waste – 17
- Drains & Flooding – 14
- Cemeteries & Bereavement – 9
- Noise & Nuisance – 7
- Planning & Property – 10
- Licensing – 6
- Fly-tipping & Street Cleaning – 9
- Council Tax & Voting – 14
- Pavements & Footpaths – 12
- Lighting – 6
- Garages & Parking Areas – 7
- Complaints & Antisocial Behaviour – 10
- Social & Community Services – 6
- Parks & Public Spaces – 6
- Other / Miscellaneous – 12

17. How satisfied were you with the service you received?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied	18.6%	260
2	Satisfied	32.3%	450
3	No opinion	9.2%	128
4	Dissatisfied	19.1%	267
5	Very dissatisfied	20.8%	290
answered			1395

18. Please state why you were dissatisfied with the service you received:



19. If you were to contact the Council, what would be your preferred method?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	In Person	4.9%	137
2	Telephone	40.9%	1144
3	Email	37.6%	1054
4	Social Media	0.5%	15
5	Website/Online	13.8%	386
6	Letter	1.0%	28
7	Through a Councillor	1.3%	36
answered			2800

20. How informed do you feel about what the Council is doing?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very informed	1.9%	76
2	Informed	24.6%	1005
3	No opinion	28.0%	1144
4	Uninformed	35.0%	1432
5	Very uninformed	10.5%	429
If you feel uninformed, please state why:			1061
answered			4086

If you feel uninformed, please state why:



21. How do you usually find out what the Council is doing? Select up to three methods you use most often

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Local radio	3.6%	145
2	Council website	12.8%	521
3	Free Press	14.7%	599
4	Social media	47.9%	1955
5	Word of mouth	36.0%	1470
6	Letter/email from Councillors	16.4%	668
7	I am unaware of what the Council is doing	28.0%	1145
8	Other (please specify):	3.5%	144
		answered	4082

Other responses included:

- Social media – 45
- Newsletters & emails – 14
- Local news & papers – 10
- Councillors– 9
- Word of mouth & community – 10
- Seeing it happen – 13
- Council website & notices – 7
- Unaware / after the fact – 8
- Other – 6

22. To what extent do you agree with the following:

Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Response Total
The Council listens to the concerns and feedback from local residents	0.91% 37	13.53% 552	41.71% 1702	26.71% 1090	17.15% 700	4081
The Council involves residents in its decision making	0.74% 30	11.30% 461	40.14% 1638	29.38% 1199	18.45% 753	4081
					answered	4081

3	Aged 35 to 64	54.9%	2011
4	Aged 65 or Over	31.1%	1140
5	Prefer not to say	2.8%	104
answered			3660

32. What is your sex?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male	43.8%	1603
2	Female	52.5%	1922
3	Prefer not to say	3.7%	135
answered			3660

33. What is your ethnic group?

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	91.1%	3333
2	White - Irish	1.4%	52
3	White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1%	4
4	White - Roma	0.1%	2
5	Any other White background	1.2%	45
6	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African	0.3%	10
7	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean	0.1%	3
8	Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	0.0%	1
9	Asian / Asian British - Indian	0.3%	12
10	Asian / Asian British - Pakistani	0.5%	18
11	Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.4%	15
12	Asian / Asian British - Chinese	0.1%	3
13	Any other Asian background	0.1%	4
14	Mixed / Multiple Ethnic background - White and Black Caribbean	0.3%	10
15	Mixed / Multiple Ethnic background - White and Black African	0.1%	3
16	Mixed / Multiple Ethnic background - White and Asian	0.2%	8
17	Any other Mixed / Multiple Ethnic background	0.2%	7
18	Other ethnic group - Arab	0.0%	0
19	Any other ethnic group	0.2%	6
20	Prefer not to say	3.4%	124
answered			3660

34. What is your employment status?

Answer Choice	Response	Response
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		Percent	Total
1	Full-time employee (31 hours or more per week, including apprenticeships)	41.4%	1514
2	Part-time employee (Less than 31 hours or more per week)	8.9%	324
3	Self-employed	7.2%	262
4	In full-time education at school, college or university	1.0%	35
5	Wholly retired from work	32.5%	1190
6	Unemployed and able for work (including looking after the home)	1.4%	52
7	Otherwise unable to work	3.1%	112
8	Prefer not to say	4.7%	171
		<i>answered</i>	3660

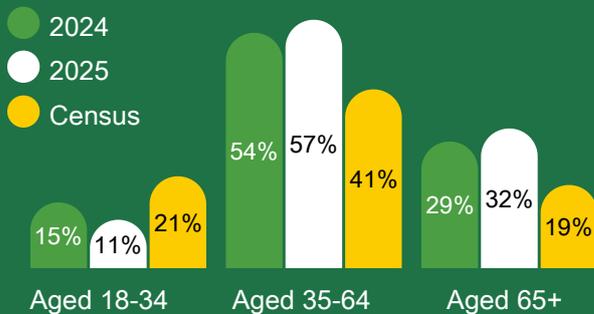
Residents Survey 2025

We received 8,072 responses, 42% more than the 2025 Survey

This data has been compared to the 2021 Census data and the Local Government Association (LGA) survey (June 2024) data to provide a national comparison.



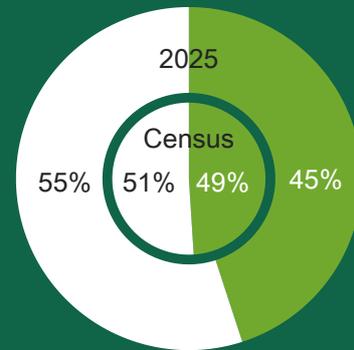
Age Representation



The 2025 Survey more aligns further from the 2021 Census data, than 2024's. Respondents aged 18-34 has decreased by 4% and those aged 35-64 and 65+ continue to be over-represented.

Gender

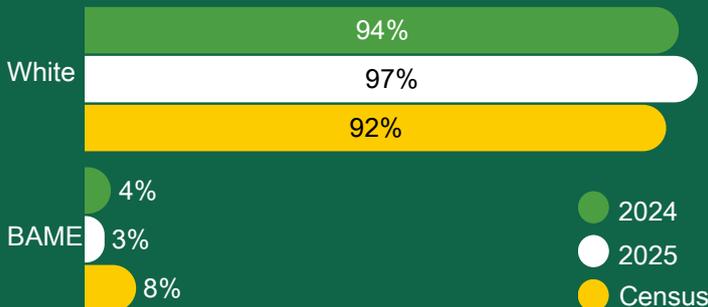
The gender representation within the response has improved from 2024 (43% Male, 56% Female).



● Female
● Male

Ethnicity

97% of respondents identified as White, while 3% identified as from Black, Asian, or other Ethnic Minority backgrounds (BAME), this aligning further from the Census data.



Borough Representation



29% of respondents lived in the East of Rosendale (Bacup and Whitworth).

70% of respondents lived in the West of Rosendale (Edenfield, Haslingden, Rawtenstall, and Waterfoot).

Promotion of the Survey

The survey was live throughout October 2025 and was promoted via social media and daily emails to all staff and councillors. Posters with QR codes were displayed at key locations, emails and texts were sent to registered voters, the Council's Economic Development team engaged local businesses to encourage participation, fieldworkers represented the Council on a weekly basis at Rawtenstall Market, and officers held weekly drop-in sessions at Haslingden, and Rawtenstall.



About Rosendale - The Place

Living in Rosendale



73% of respondents were satisfied with Rosendale as a place to live.

Vibrant and Attractive Rosendale



89% of respondents rated Rawtenstall as vibrant and attractive - making it Rosendale's most highly rated town centre.

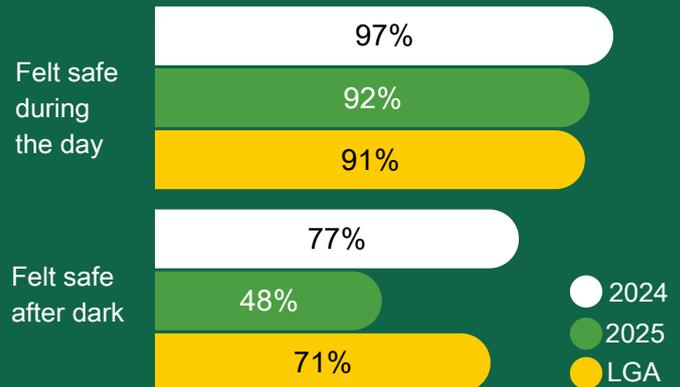
Rosendale's Safety



92% of respondents felt safe during the day.



48% of respondents felt safe after dark.



Rosendale's Facilities

Walks and Cycle Routes, and Community Events and Festivals were the highest-rated facilities, with Community Events and Festivals seeing the most improvement. Activities for Young People is the least satisfactory.



Improving Rosendale

We asked how we could improve Rosendale, here were the main suggestions



Better roads, traffic management and public transport



Increased infrastructure and access to housing



A greater focus on town centres beyond Rawtenstall



A wider variety of shops within town centres



About Rosendale - The Environment

Cleanliness of Rosendale



69% of respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness of Rosendale's town centres and 64% were satisfied with the cleanliness of their local area,

● 2023 ● 2024 ● 2025

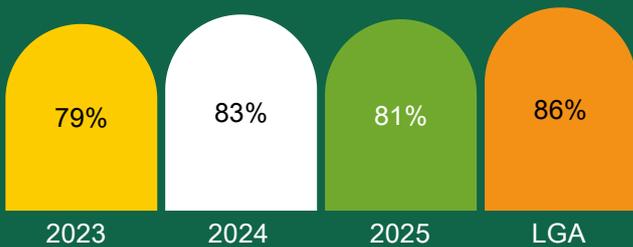
Rosendale's Roads



of respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness of Rosendale's roads.

The level of satisfaction is potentially unreliable as additional comments relate to potholes and traffic rather than cleanliness.

Rosendale's Parks



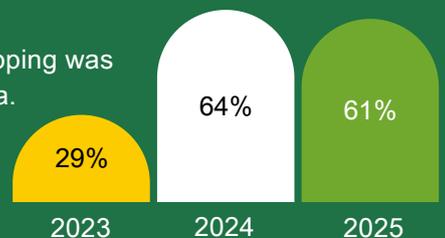
81% of respondents were satisfied with the cleanliness of Rosendale's parks.

Rosendale's Operational Services



of respondents were satisfied with Rosendale's waste and recycling collection service,

61% of respondents felt fly-tipping was not an issue in their local area.



Improving Rosendale's Environment

We asked how we could improve Rosendale's cleanliness and environment, here were the main suggestions ...



Reduce the amount litter and dog faeces on pavements



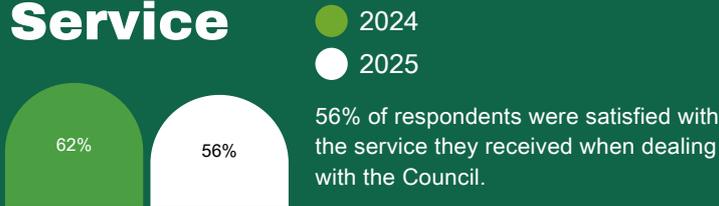
Improve the quality of pavements and roads



About Us - The Council

34% of respondents had contacted the Council in the last 6 months.

The Council's Customer Service



For the second year running council tax, business rates, and benefits and revenues service had the highest level of satisfaction, with 84% of users satisfied with their service. A 12% increase from, 2024.



The Council's Website



of respondents felt the Council's website was informative.



of respondents felt the Council's website was easy to use.

Engaging with the Council



37% of respondents felt informed about the Council's activities.

Mirroring the figure from 2024



Contacting the Council



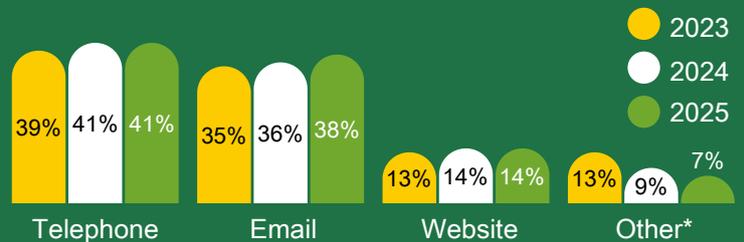
*Social media, letter, in-person, or through a Councillor

32% of respondents contacted the Council via telephone, 30% by email, and 26% by the website.

7 out of 10 respondents felt the Council was easy to contact.



of respondents felt the Council's staff were friendly and polite.



*Social media, letter, in-person, or through a Councillor

41% of respondents would prefer to contact the Council via telephone, 38% by email, and 14% via the Council's website.



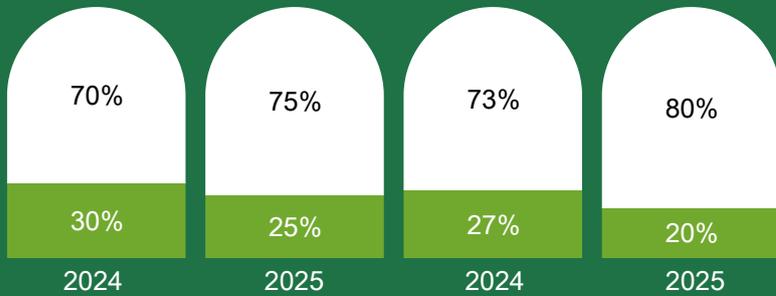
About Us - Our Service

Engaging with Residents

The Council listens to the concerns and feedback from local residents

The Council involves residents in its decision making

25% of respondents felt the Council listens to the concerns and feedback from local residents.



27% of respondents felt they were involved in the Council's decision making process.

● Agree
● Disagree



Council Services

We asked what the Council does well, here were the main suggestions ...



Waste and recycling collection



Maintenance of parks



Cleanliness of town centres

We asked what the Council could do better, here were the main suggestions ...



Quality of roads and maintenance of potholes



Rosendale's infrastructure and traffic management



Two-way communication with residents

We plan to undertake our Residents Survey on an annual basis. The feedback provided by our residents will be used to develop our priorities.

Residents Survey 2025

Local Government Reorganisation

We asked respondents if if they were aware of Local Government Reorganisation



Only 27% of residents were aware of Local Government Reorganisation in Rossendale



74% of residents require more information on Local Government Reorganisation in Rossendale



Report Title:	Publication of the first statutory Biodiversity Report (2023 -2025)		
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	18 th March 2026
Report of:	Forward Planning	Cabinet Portfolio:	Planning
Cabinet Lead Member:	Councillor A Barnes	Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency
Integrated Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes	Attached: Yes
Contact Officer:	Anne Storah/ Nat Davies	Telephone:	01706 252418/ 252415
Email:	annestorah@rossendalebc.gov.uk / nathaeledavies@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report requests approval to publish the first statutory Biodiversity Report by 25 March 2026, as required by Section 103 of the Environment Act 2021 which introduces the publication of mandatory Biodiversity Reports.
- 1.2 The Forward Planning team has worked with the Council's Green Spaces, Economic Development and the Communities teams, in drafting this Biodiversity Report.
- 1.3 The Biodiversity Report considers the following:
 - actions undertaken by the authority between January 2023 and December 2025 to conserve and enhance biodiversity
 - actions planned the next 5 years to further conserve and enhance biodiversity (2026-30)
 - actions to comply with the mandatory biodiversity net gain framework in planning
 - biodiversity gains expected from biodiversity gain plans approved by the local planning authority during the monitoring period
 - plans to continue complying with the biodiversity net gain framework for the next 5 years

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

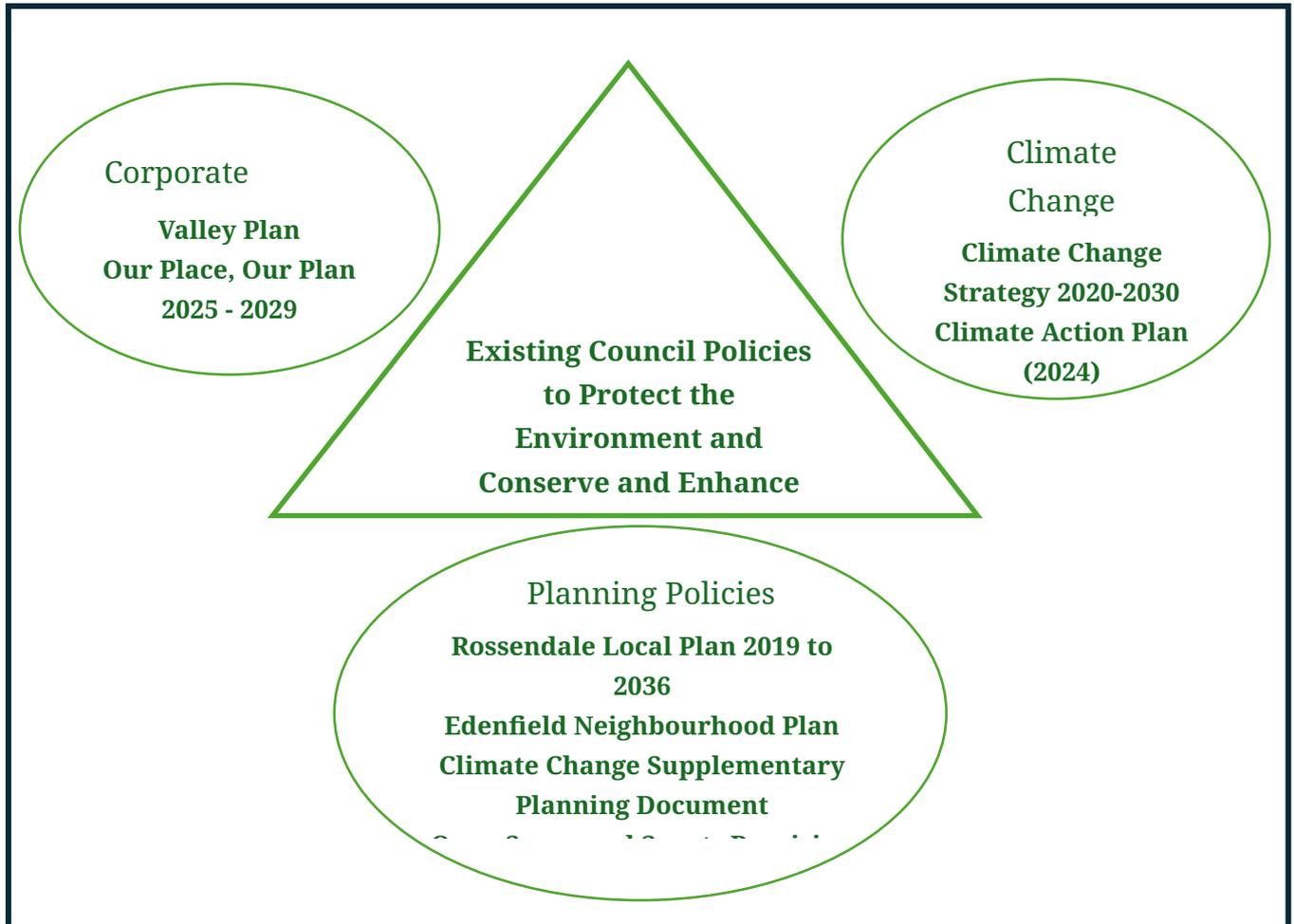
- 2.1 **Note the content of the Biodiversity Report 2023 -2025 and agree for its publication by 25 March 2026.**

2.2 Delegate minor amendments to the report to the Head of Planning and Building Control.

3. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 The [Environment Act 2021](#) places new duties on public authorities in England in regard to nature recovery and biodiversity. These duties include:
- the management of biodiversity net gain in planning
 - the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity by setting policies, objectives and actions and reporting on those actions regularly
 - the production of Local Nature Recovery Strategies by responsible authorities.
- 3.2 Specifically, Section 102 of the Act sets out the ‘general biodiversity objective’ for public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity through the exercise of their functions. This means from time to time they must consider what action they can take to progress the general biodiversity objective, create relevant policies and objectives as necessary and undertake actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Clause 1C sets out that the first considerations must be completed within one year from the day on which the Section 102 came into force (1st January 2023).
- 3.3 To comply with Section 102 of the Act, an officer-led Biodiversity Steering Group was established to discuss actions and prepare the first consideration report. This was published on the Council’s website in January 2024 ([First-consideration-report-on-the-biodiversity-duty](#)).
- 3.4 Section 103 of the Act introduces the publication of mandatory Biodiversity Reports. These reports must include the following information:
- a summary of the actions undertaken during the period of the report
 - a summary of actions the Council will undertake to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next 5 years
 - any other information the Council considers important to include.
- 3.5 For local planning authorities, the Biodiversity Report must also include:
- a summary of the actions taken by the Council to comply with the mandatory biodiversity gain framework over the period covered by the report,
 - information about any biodiversity gains resulting or expected to result from biodiversity gain plans approved by the authority during that period, and
 - a summary of the authority’s plans for carrying out those functions over the 5-year period following the period covered by the report.
- 3.6 The Biodiversity Report should cover a period of less than 3 years from the date the Council became subject to the biodiversity duty. This biodiversity report monitors actions between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2025. It must be published within 12 weeks from the end of the monitoring period, so by 25th March 2026.
- 3.7 The Biodiversity Report has been prepared using a template provided by DEFRA (Department for Food, Environment & Rural Affairs). It includes 3 mandatory sections (Section 1 to 3) and 1 out of 7 optional sections (Section 4):
- Section 1: Rossendale Borough Council Priorities, Objectives and Actions
 - Section 2: Rossendale Borough Council Future Actions
 - Section 3: Biodiversity Net Gain Information
 - Section 4: Information About Rossendale Borough Council

3.8 **SECTION 1** outlines the Council’s existing policies to improve the Borough’s environment and to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This is summarised in the figure below:



3.9 It reports on the actions carried out by the Council between January 2023 and December 2025. This is split between a summary of the actions undertaken following the publication of the First Consideration Report in January 2024 (in Appendix A of the report) and additional information on activities undertaken since January 2023 (in the main body of the report).

- 3.10 Some of the actions undertaken following the First Consideration report include:
- Supporting Lancashire County Council in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
 - Improvements to parks
 - Woodland and tree management
 - Invasive non-native species management
 - Sharing information contained in the Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Study
 - Organising meetings of the Biodiversity Steering Group.

- 3.11 Additional information is then provided on the following topics:
- **Land and Estate Management**
 - Green Spaces Team projects such as wildflower meadow trails, Japanese Knotweed management, management of trees affected by Ash dieback, tree planting as part of the Rossendale Forest project, parks improvements.
 - Property Services team project including working in partnership with Lancashire County Council on site affected by the Larch disease and investigating site opportunities for biodiversity improvements.
 - **Planning and Development** – securing biodiversity net gains ahead of the mandatory framework using Local Plan policies, commissioning and managing a Biodiversity Net Gain feasibility study, supporting Lancashire County Council in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

- **Raising Awareness** internally and externally – organising Biodiversity Steering Group meetings and advertising a workshop from the Irwell Catchment Partnership on Green Finance Opportunities for Farmers.

3.12 **SECTION 2** then outlines how the Council is planning to meet its biodiversity duty in the next 5 years (2026 to 2030). The future actions have been divided in 4 categories:

- Planning, Development and Economic Regeneration – actions specific to the BNG approach in planning are outlined in Section 3, projects from the Economic Regeneration such as the Rawtenstall Masterplan’s (including one of its aims to reconnect the town with nature) and the Higher Deardengate public realm works in Haslingden aiming to deliver nature alleyways and rain gardens this year have been highlighted
- Land and Estate Management – securing funds for park improvements, continuing woodland and tree management, further investigating opportunities for biodiversity enhancement on Council owned land such as at Staghills Wood and Cribden Moor
- Raising Awareness Internally and Externally – merging the Biodiversity Steering Group with the Climate Change Action group, supporting the work of the Irwell Catchment Partnership and seeking collaborations with other organisation on environmental projects
- Monitoring – continuing the monitoring of actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity, preparing Authority Monitoring reports to track progress of local plan policies (including the environmental and biodiversity enhancement policies)

3.13 **SECTION 3** of the report relates to information on the Biodiversity Net Gain approach in planning. Here the biodiversity report summarises:

- the actions carried out to meet BNG obligations – it is estimated that 16 out of 497 (3%) permissions granted between 12 February 2024 and 31 December 2025 were subject to mandatory BNG. This is because the majority of applications submitted are exempt from BNG (e.g. householder applications). Biodiversity enhancement secured via planning conditions on these 16 planning permissions are expected to be delivered on-site or as a combination of on-site and off-site gains.
- details of BNG resulting or expected to result from biodiversity gain plans approved – so far only one biodiversity gain plan has been approved in the monitoring period, The development is expected to deliver approximately: a 10% net gain in area habitats units, a 46% net gain in hedgerow units and 10% net gain in river units.
- how we plan to meet the BNG obligations in the next 5 years – procuring a software to assist with the monitoring of BNG delivery, keeping up-to-date with expected changes in legislation and guidance, considering the published LNRS to inform decisions on planning applications and to guide local plan policies and site allocations

3.14 Finally, **SECTION 4**, refers to the First Consideration Report for information on Rossendale Borough Council and how its activities can affect biodiversity.

SUMMARY

3.15 The Environment Act in 2021 introduced the strengthened biodiversity duty for all public bodies in England to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The first consideration of the actions that the Council needed to undertake for biodiversity was completed as required by 1 January 2024. The Council is now publishing its first Biodiversity Report, which reports on the actions it is undertaking that will help to improve the environment. All non-exempt developments that require planning permission must achieve a 10% net gain for biodiversity and implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is also recorded in the Biodiversity Report.

4. RISK

4.1 The Biodiversity Report is statutory, introduced by Section 103 of the Environment Act 2021. It must include a set of mandatory information and be published within 12 weeks from the end date of the reporting period (in this case 31 December 2025). There is a risk of non-compliance with existing legislation if the report does not contain the mandatory information or is not published within the timeline.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

5.1 There are no implications to this report.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

6.1 The Council's first biodiversity report has been drafted to include the required information set out in Section 40A of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 amended by the Environment Act 2021. It covers a period of less than 3 years from the date the Council became subject to the biodiversity duty (1st January 2023 to 31st December 2025) and is intended to be published within 12 weeks from the end of the monitoring period in accordance with subclause 6 of Section 40A.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 No implications have been identified for any protected or specific groups.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Biodiversity Report 2023-2025 is a statutory report which shows how the Council is meeting its Biodiversity Duty. It has links to a number of other documents including:

- the Environmental Improvement Plan (DEFRA, 2025)
- the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2026)
- the Valley Plan 2025 to 2029
- the Rossendale Local Plan 2019 to 2036
- the Climate Change Strategy 2020 to 2030 and Action Plan (2024).

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no implications at this stage. The second biodiversity report must be published within five years and at this point it might be published by the new unitary authority.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Draft Biodiversity Report 2023 – 2025 (please see attached)

10.2 First Consideration Report (2024): [First-consideration-report-on-the-biodiversity-duty](#)



Biodiversity Report

2023-2025

March 2026



A High Quality Environment

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Summary

This is Rossendale Borough Council’s First Biodiversity Report. As required by the Environment Act of 2021, this Report considers:

- actions undertaken by Rossendale Borough Council between January 2023 and December 2025 to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- actions planned in the next 5 years to further conserve and enhance biodiversity (2026 to 2030);
- actions undertaken to comply with the mandatory biodiversity net gain framework in planning;
- biodiversity gains expected from biodiversity gain plans approved by the local planning authority during the monitoring period; and
- plans to continue complying with the biodiversity net gain framework for the next 5 years

Responsible Service	Forward Planning	Version/Status	Version 3
Responsible Author	Forward Planning	Date Agreed/ Agreed At	
Date last Amended	03.03.2026	Due for Review	March 2031

Rossendale Borough Council is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion to eliminate unlawful discrimination. To support this other format of this document are available upon request. Please contact PeopleandPolicy@rossendalebc.gov.uk.

Section 1: Rossendale Borough Council Policies, Objectives and Actions

1.1 Policies and Objectives

1.1.1 Corporate Plan Policies and Objectives

Rossendale Borough Council's Corporate Plan, the Valley Plan – Our Place, Our Plan 2025-2029

This plan¹ aims:

“To have a thriving economy, built around our changing town centres, creating a quality environment for all and improving the life chances of all those living and working in our borough.”

Providing a high quality environment is one of the Council's four priorities.



Figure 1 - Valley Plan 2025-29 Key Priorities

The Council is committed to protect and enhance Rossendale's green spaces and Pennine landscapes to create a greener, healthier and more sustainable borough.

1.1.2 Climate Change Policies and Objectives

Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Rossendale Borough Council declared a 'Climate Emergency' in September 2019 and pledged to take action. The Strategy² seeks to promote energy efficiency consumption, sustainable transport

¹ Valley Plan – Our Place, Our Plan 2025 -2029. Available to view at:
<https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/19111/valley-plan-2->

² Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030. Available to view at:
https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/16648/rossendale_council_climate_change_strategy

options, focus on waste and the wider environment (including enhancing biodiversity and increasing tree coverage) and work with partners to achieve its goals.

The Climate Change Action Plan revised in July 2024 includes the following actions for biodiversity:

- Implement the Biodiversity Net Gain approach in planning;
- Explore opportunities for the Council to be a biodiversity and carbon offset provider on Council owned land
- Increase tree cover of Rossendale Forest by 2 hectares per year



Figure 2 - Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030

1.1.3 Planning Policies

Rossendale Local Plan 2019 – 2036

The Rossendale Local Plan³ designates land for development and areas that should be protected for community uses, their environmental or heritage value. It also set out policies for how development should look like and how it should fit with its surroundings.

Chapter 4 of the Local Plan focusses on the environment, Strategic Policy ENV1: High Quality Development in the Borough aims to:

- Protect existing landscape features and natural assets;
- Seek no adverse impact to the natural environment, biodiversity and green infrastructure unless suitable mitigation measures are proposed and the Council will seek biodiversity net gain consistent with the current national policy;
- Ensure designs are adaptable to climate change, incorporate energy efficiency principles and adopt principles of sustainable construction including Sustainable Drainage Systems

³ Rossendale Local Plan (2019 to 2036). Available to view at:

<https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/17076/rossendale-local-plan-2019-to-2036-written-statement>

Policy ENV4: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Ecological networks introduces the sequential approach to development to avoid harm and where possible enhance biodiversity, and where not possible, to provide appropriate mitigation and, as a last resort, on and off-site compensatory measures to offset the impact of development. It makes clear that “*all development proposals should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity, and will be requested to quantify any net gains*”.

The Policies Map identifies sites of importance for biodiversity including:

- 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Lower Red Lees Pasture; Lee Quarry; Hodge Clough and the West Pennine Moors) of national importance
- 1 Local Nature Reserve (Healey Dell)
- 56 Biological Heritage Sites of county importance
- 8 Local Geodiversity Sites of county importance
- 34 Important Wildlife Sites of district importance

The Policies Map designates green and blue infrastructure. Green infrastructure includes woodland and grassland ecological networks as well as ‘Greenland sites’ (identified in previous Local Plans). Blue infrastructure comprises ditches, streams, rivers, ponds, lodges and lakes.

Policy ENV5: Green Infrastructure Networks encourages new developments to:

- Retain and replace the function and connectivity of the green infrastructure (including the blue infrastructure)
- Provide new or enhance existing green infrastructure
- Avoid any unacceptable impact on amenity, surface water or nature conservation

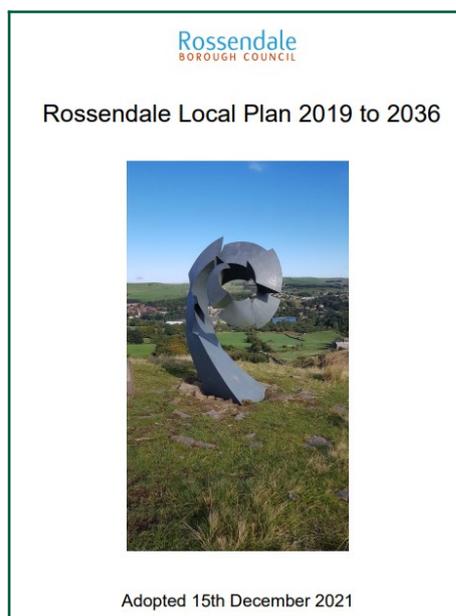


Figure 3 - Rossendale Local Plan 2019 to 2036

Edenfield Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan for Edenfield⁴ was made in April 2025 following a local referendum. It introduces Local Green Spaces designations and sets out how development should look like in the Edenfield Neighbourhood Area.

Its Policy D1 (Design and amenity standards and village character) sets out that developments will be supported if they include “landscape design and green infrastructure that contribute to a sustainable sense of place, such as wild areas for outdoor play, shelters, biodiversity buffers and wildlife corridors, and which softens the impact of the built form and is reflective of distinctive local landscape features”.

Policy NE3 (Development and landscape and topography) highlights that development will be expected to provide for biodiversity net gain in line with national policies. It reiterates the legislation requirements to demonstrate a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain as mandated by the Environment Act 2021.

Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document

The Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document⁵ adopted in December 2022 seeks to:

- Reduce the dominance of fossil-fuelled vehicles via encouraging sustainable transport and active forms of travel
- Improve energy efficiency of existing and new properties and promote the provision and use of renewable energy
- Ensure development is resilient to current and future flood risk considering the effects of Climate Change
- Encourage the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and the green infrastructure in new developments

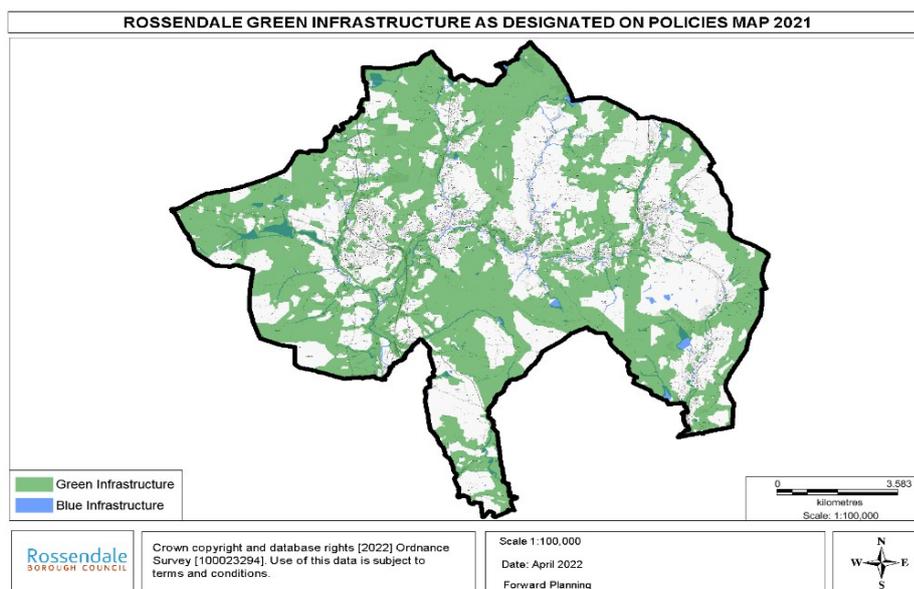


Figure 4 - Rossendale Green and Blue Infrastructure

⁴ Edenfield Neighbourhood Plan. Available to download at: <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/local-plan/neighbourhood-plan/3>

⁵ Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (2022). Available to download at: https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/download/11615/climate_change_spd

Open Space and Sports Provision Supplementary Planning Document

The Open Space and Sports Provision Supplementary Document⁶ was adopted in November 2024. It sets out the methodology to calculate open space and sports provision requirements for major residential development. Within the design section of the SPD, it encourages developers to consider the National Design Guide for guidance on well-designed natural environment and public spaces as well as Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework. The voluntary use of the Urban Green Factor is also introduced.

1.2 Actions

Monitoring actions undertaken by the Council have been split into two categories:

- Actions identified in the First Considerations report since January 2024
- Additional information on actions carried out between January 2023 and December 2025

1.2.1 Summary of Actions Undertaken Identified in the First Considerations Report since January 2024

The Council's First Considerations Report⁷ was published in January 2024 and included a table of potential biodiversity actions. [Appendix A](#) reports on the actions undertaken between January 2024 and December 2025.

Following the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in February 2024 for major applications and April 2024 for other non-exempt applications, a total 12 of planning applications were approved between September 2024 and December 2025 that were subject to mandatory BNG. One Biodiversity Gain Plan was approved.

Other actions included supporting Lancashire County Council in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which was published on 16 January 2026.

The Appendix provides details of where the Council has protected and enhanced biodiversity on Council land, such as habitat enhancement works at play areas, and eradicating diseased trees and replanting with native broad leaf on unmaintained sites across the Borough. Other actions include improving and sharing knowledge of the biodiversity value of Council owned land, helped by the BNG Feasibility Study. An officer Biodiversity Group was established, closer ties established with the Climate Change Group, and Biodiversity Impact Assessments were reintroduced to allow the assessment on biodiversity of new Council policies and strategies.

1.2.2 Additional Information on Actions Carried Out Between January 2023 and December 2025

⁶ Open Space and Sports Provision SPD (2024). Available to download at:

https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/download/10810/open_space_and_play_equipment_contributions

⁷ Rossendale Borough Council's First Consideration Report on the Biodiversity Duty. Available to view at:

<https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/18394/first-consideration-report-on-the-biodiversity-duty>

This section provides more detailed updates of work carried out by the Council, between these dates.

Land and Estate Management

Wildflower Meadow Trials

The Green Spaces Team carried out Wildflower Meadow Trials in 2023 and 2024 on 14 Council owned sites using a wildflower seed mix containing Yellow Rattle. Unfortunately, the germination was not as successful as expected due to the competing existing grass. Since then the Green Spaces Team is not using any weed killer in order to reduce pollution and prevent harm to habitats and species, and equipment will be needed to remove existing grass prior to seeding to allow for a better outcome.

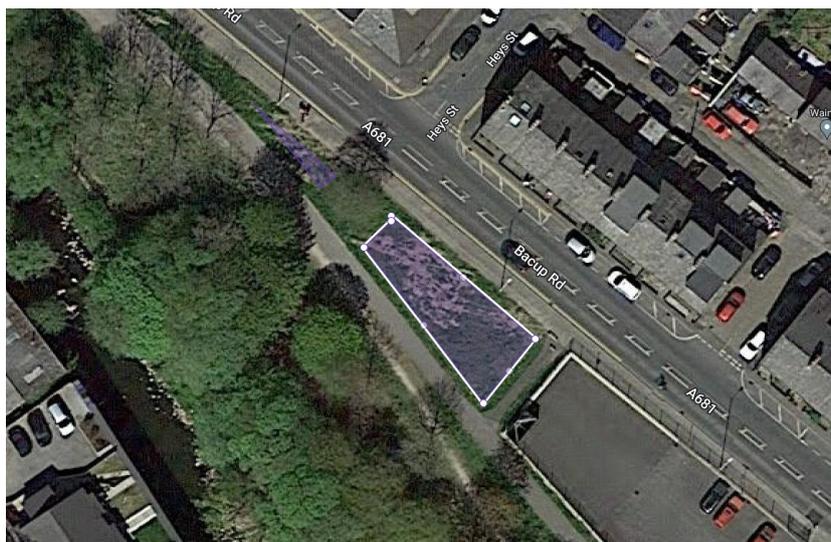


Figure 5 - Example of wildflower meadow trial location (Bacup Road)

Invasive Non-Native Species Management

The Council is seeking to eradicate Japanese Knotweed discovered on a number of Council owned sites. Table 1 overleaf shows the number of sites where contractors applied treatments to remove Japanese Knotweed. The number of sites treated has reduced since 2024, meaning the species has been eradicated on some sites.

Table 1 - Number of Council owned sites treated for Japanese Knotweed

Year	Number of sites treated for Japanese Knotweed
2025	66
2024	82
2023	72

Tree Management

The Council owns various woodlands, parks and green spaces with mature trees. Several Ash trees have been affected by ash dieback and the Green Spaces Team has prioritised pruning and felling such trees in public open space or near public rights of way. There were 177 trees identified with

Ash dieback, 33 needing urgent work and 76 a high priority. The Council is commissioning contractors to assist with this work.

Another site between Britannia and Shawforth has been affected by the Larch disease and the Forestry Commission issued a tree felling order. The Property Services Team is working in partnership with Lancashire County Council who is leading on the tree felling and replanting project.

Tree planting

The Council's Rossendale Forest project started in 2021. It pledged to plant a tree for every child in the Borough over three years. In partnership with other organisations, including the Ribble River Trust, a total of 10,834 trees were planted, covering an area of 3,329 m². Species planted included Quick thorn, Rowan, Hazel, Common Oak, Silver Birch, Goat Willow, Common Alder, Bramley Apple, Plum Czar, Conference Pear, Apple Katy, Plum Victoria and Pear Beth.



Figure 6 - Volunteers at a Tree Planting Event

Park improvements

Three of the Borough's green spaces have been awarded the internationally accredited Green Flag Award for 2025:

- Rawtenstall Library Gardens
- Whitworth Memorial Garden
- Stubblelee and Moorlands Park



Figure 7 - Green Flag Award Photos

One of the criteria considered for the Green Flag Award is the appropriate management of natural features, wild fauna and flora.

In addition, the Council is working in partnership various groups such as Civic Pride, Friends of groups and Proffitts CIC to deliver parks and green spaces improvements. Below are some of the projects carried out between 2023 and 2025.

- Tricketts Memorial Park

Civic Pride Rossendale, Proffitts CIC and a group of volunteers worked on enhancing the features of the Park between 2016 and 2024. This included work to trees and to facilitate access to the Park (e.g. steps leading up to the site entrance, handrail, steps to the memorial stone, a memorial bench, information boards and picnic tables).

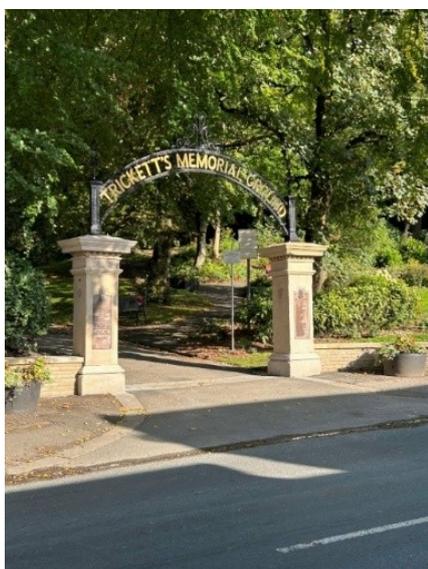


Figure 8 - Trickett's Memorial Ground Enhancements (Source Proffitts CIC)

- Lane Head Lane, Bacup

In partnership with Proffitts CIC, Bacup Pride and Newground Together the Council is assisting with a project to improve Lane Head Lane. A masterplan has been drawn and consulted on in 2025 to add history information boards for visitors, ledger stones, new pathways, planting native wildflowers and hedgerows as well as carrying out tree works and woodland surveys.



Figure 9 - Lane Head Lane Masterplan

- Stubblee Park, Bacup

The Council, with Proffitts CIC and the Friends of Stubblee Park, has drafted and consulted on several versions of a masterplan in 2025 to guide the next phase of improvements. This include creating new wetland habitats, planting fruit trees and shrubs to the mini orchard, increase biodiversity in and around the pond, selective tree felling and replanting to diverse both the age range and species mix, new woodland understorey planting in the Dell including fens, bulbs and shade tolerant shrubs. The next step is to start looking for funding to deliver the proposed works.



Figure 10 - Third version of Stubblee Park's Masterplan (<https://www.proffittscic.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Stubblee-Masterplan-v3.pdf>)

• Whittaker Park, Rawtenstall

In 2023, the Council in partnership with Proffitts CIC prepared and consulted on a masterplan for Whittaker Park. The proposed enhancements include the creation of a bog garden where the former pump track is as a sustainable urban drainage system and the delivery of a wildflower meadows to the north of the Bowling Green and along the eastern boundary of the park.



Figure 11 - Volunteers at Plug Planting Event (Source Proffitts CIC)

- Weir Play Area

In May 2024, children from Northern Primary School, staff and parents helped plant hundreds of wildflower plugs at Weir Play Area. This project was delivered in partnership with Proffitts CIC.



Figure 12 - Plug Planting Event at Weir Play Area (Source Proffitts CIC)

- Haslingden Graveyard

Working with Proffitts CIC, Rossendale Borough Council carried out enhancement to the graveyard by clearing weeds and debris, refreshing seating areas and planting new trees and wildflowers. Children from Haslingden Primary School participated to the project by design signs at the entrance of the graveyard. This urban greenspace enhancement was carried out as part of The Big Lamp

Project lead by the Economic Regeneration Team at the Council and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



Figure 13 - Haslingden Graveyard Prior to the Enhancement Works

Planning and Development

- Decision-making

As stated in Section 1, the Rossendale Local Plan has a planning policy seeking biodiversity net gain (BNG) for new developments. As such before the implementation of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain in 2024, natural habitat enhancements and measures to support wildlife were already being sought for new development.

Six planning applications submitted prior to the mandatory BNG and granted approval between January 2023 and December 2025 were required to provide biodiversity net gain. More information is provided in the table below.

Table 2 - Planning permissions granted between January 2023 and December 2025 seeking biodiversity enhancements prior to mandatory BNG

Planning Application Reference No.	Site Address	Biodiversity Enhancements to be delivered on-site, off-site or both	How have they have been secured?
2021/0275	Haweswater Aqueduct Valve House, Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall	Subject to Biodiversity Impact Assessment (probably both)	S106
2024/0085	Land off Lee Road, Stacksteads, Bacup	On-site	Condition
2022/0543	Fieldfare Way, Bacup	Both	S106
2023/0396	Development adj Pinfold and Blackburn Road and Development adj Burnley Road, Edenfield	Both	S106
2023/0462	Land South of Hardman Avenue, Rawtenstall	On-site	Conditions
2022/0451	Land West of Market Street, Edenfield	Both	S106

- BNG Feasibility Study

The Forward Planning Team commissioned a study in 2023 to assess 20 council-owned sites in the borough. The study provided the following outcomes:

- Understanding of existing biodiversity value on the 20 sites,
- Options to improve the biodiversity value on those sites (one option looking at maximising biodiversity uplift and another looking at maximising wider environmental benefits),
- Habitat enhancements and management needed to sustain the biodiversity enhancement for at least 30 years and associated cost estimates

The study was shared with the Green Spaces Team and Property Services Team to inform their projects. Information is also provided on request to developers wishing to consider the use of Council owned land to deliver mandatory BNG for new developments.

- BNG Monitoring fees

Fees for monitoring BNG were introduced in the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023-2024⁸ and updated in the 2024-2025 report. These are to ensure the Council has the resources to monitor the delivery of BNG secured by Section 106 Agreements or by planning conditions.

- Planning Policies

The Forward Planning Team has worked with Lancashire County Council to support the preparation of the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Geospatial information was shared regarding the designation of local wildlife sites in Rossendale as well as Local Plan designations, including the green and blue infrastructure and allocations for development. Officers attended Steering Group meetings and workshops to shape the priorities and objectives of the strategy. Consultation responses to the draft strategy and to the pre-publication notice were also sent to influence and support the strategy.

Raising Awareness Internally and Externally

A Biodiversity Steering Group was created in 2023 to discuss policies, objectives and actions that would enable the Council to meet its biodiversity duty. The group comprises officers from various teams in the Council, including Green Spaces, Climate Change, Economic Development, and Communities. It met 8 times between 2023 and 2025.

In terms of raising awareness externally, the Council took part in and advertised a 'Green Finance Opportunities for Farmers' workshop, which was organised by the Irwell Catchment Partnership, of which RBC is a member. The event took place at Cowpe Community Hall on 22 October 2024.

The Council also advertised the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy public consultation on its website in summer 2025 and provided a response to the consultation.

Section 2: Rossendale Borough Council Future Actions

⁸ Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023-2024. Available at <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/18852/infrastructure-funding-statement-2023-to-2024>

The Council is intending to fulfil its biodiversity duty over the next five years by undertaking the following actions set out below.

Planning, Development and Economic Regeneration

Please see [Section 3](#) of this report for the actions to be undertaken by the local planning authority.

The Economic Development Team is leading on several town centre improvement projects and masterplans. They are considering environmental and biodiversity enhancements where possible.

The Higher Deardengate Project in Haslingden will deliver a dedicated events space and public realm improvements including two nature alleys with shade tolerant planting, rain gardens and tree planting. Works on the landscaping element of the project are expected to start in 2026.

The Rawtenstall Masterplan prepared in 2024 by Planit outlines the following objectives:

- Bring Communities Together
- Have Safe and Vibrant Streets and Spaces
- Be a Welcoming Town
- Re-stitch the Town and
- Reconnect the Town with Nature

One of the proposed actions is a new 'Green Spine' on St Mary's Way to enhance biodiversity, create a series of pocket parks, and improve accessibility with new pedestrian routes, crossing points, and install a new bus stop.

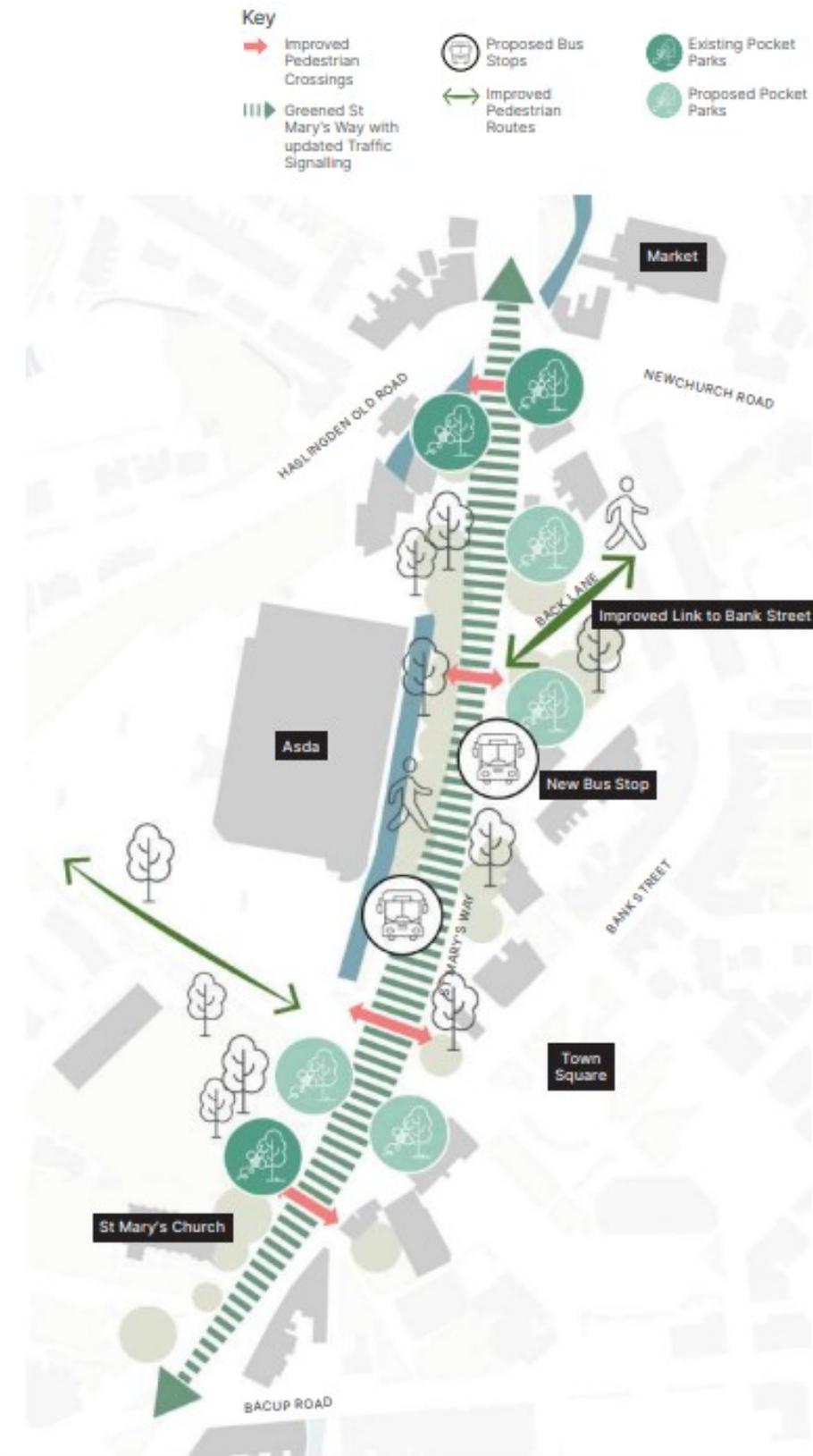


Figure 14 - A New Green Spine (St Mary's Way) - Vision Diagram from the Rawtenstall Spatial Masterplan (Planit 2024)

Another action involves 'drawing in nature' by enhancing the connection of the town's green spaces to the wider moorland and also improving the public realm alongside the town's rivers. These actions will be explored in the coming years.

Land and Estate Management

The Green Spaces team aims to secure funding to continue works on park improvements to enable the implementation of the masterplans for Whittaker Park, Stubblelee Park and Lane End Lane.

In addition to this, monitoring of trees affected by ash dieback will continue, prioritising the pruning and felling of those identified in public open space or near public rights of way.

The Property Services Team and the Green Spaces Team are also working with Lancashire County Council regarding a tree felling and replanting project on a site affected by larch disease. The felling of the diseased trees is expected in 2026 followed by a replanting scheme using broad leaf species.

The Council is also investigating opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements on Council owned land such as woodland improvements at Staghills Wood (through the biodiversity net gain framework in planning) and degraded blanket bog restoration at Cribden Moor (via an application to the Scout Moor habitat Enhancement Fund).

Raising Awareness Internally and Externally

Due to the close alignment between the Biodiversity Steering Group and the Climate Change Action group, a proposal was made to merge these two groups. The first Climate Change and Biodiversity Action Group met in December 2026 and it is intended that the meetings will continue every quarter.

The Council will continue to support the Irwell Catchment Partnership. This also entails attending general meetings and specific sub-group meetings.

The Council is keen to work in partnership with other organisations to deliver environmental enhancements in the borough. To this effect, organisations were invited to a first meeting Rossendale Nature Resource Group meeting expected to take place in February 2026.

Additional communications are also planned in summer 2026 to raise awareness of the Scout Moor Habitat Enhancement Fund⁹, which is available to farmers and land managers to improve upland habitats as well as moorland fringe habitats that could benefit upland birds. Applications to the Fund for improvement projects located within the grant area, which covers Rossendale and neighbouring areas, are considered on a regular basis.

Monitoring

The monitoring of the actions identified within the First Considerations Report and in this Biodiversity Report will continue.

The annual Authority Monitoring Report¹⁰ which outlines the progress of the Local Plan against a number of indicators will also provide relevant information on the effectiveness of the environmental policies of the Local Plan, including those aiming to protect and enhance biodiversity.

⁹ Scout Moor Habitat Enhancement Fund. https://gmlrc.org/scout_moor_habitat_enhancement_fund/

¹⁰ Rossendale Borough Council Authority Monitoring Reports. Available to view at:

https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/download/10832/authority_monitoring_reports

Section 3: Biodiversity Net Gain Information

Actions carried out to meet BNG obligations

The Council has embedded mandatory BNG requirements within its planning decision-making since it came into force on 12 February 2024 for major applications and on 2 April 2024 for non-major applications.

Between 12 February 2024 and 31 December 2025, in total 497 permissions¹¹ were approved by Rossendale Borough Council. Of these, 16 (or 3%) were subject to mandatory BNG (Figure 1).

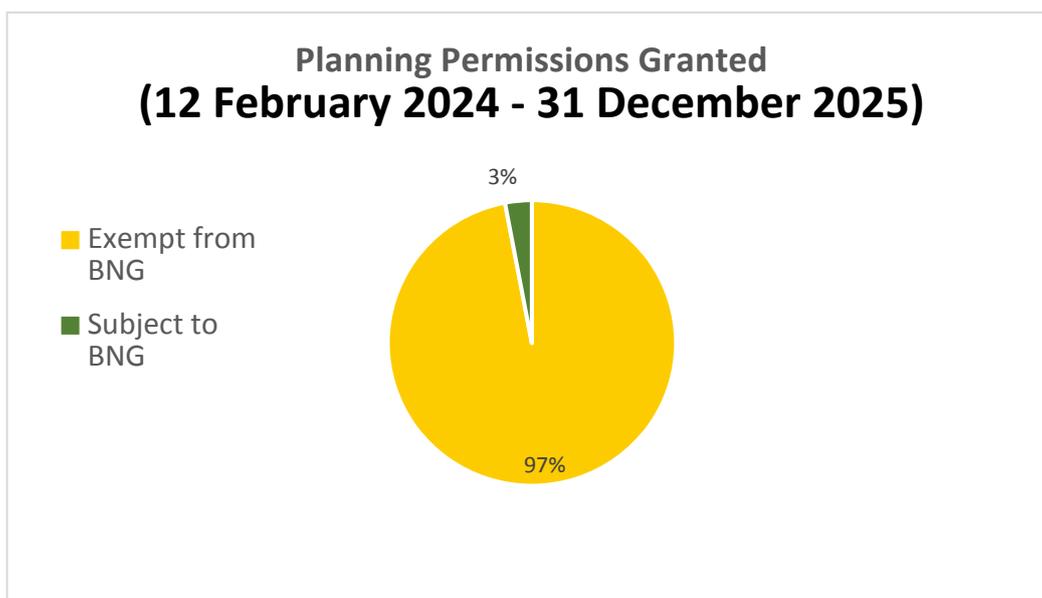


Figure 15 - Percentage of Permissions Subject to BNG between 12 February 2024 and 31 December 2025

The bulk of permissions granted by the Council are for householder developments and these are exempt from BNG requirements. There are also other types of development which are exempt from BNG. More information on the permissions approved between 12 February 2024 and 31 December 2025 is available in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Number and Percentage of Planning Permissions Exempt or Subject to BNG

Planning Permissions Granted (12 February 2024 – 31 December 2025)	No. of Permissions Granted	Percentage
Subject to BNG	16	3
Exempt - Householder	183	37
Exempt - Permitted Development (Prior Notification, Lawful Development Certificate)	129	26
Exempt - De minimis	84	17
Others Not subject to BNG (Variation of Conditions, Permission in Principle, Submitted before 12 February 2024)	33	7
Exempt - Transitional arrangements for non-major	29	6
Exempt - Retrospective planning permission	12	2
Exempt - Self-build	11	2
	497	100

¹¹ These exclude permissions for works to trees, applications for discharge of conditions reserved by conditions, non-material amendments and listed building consents etc.

Total		
-------	--	--

The largest proportion of exempt planning permissions were householders, followed by permitted development and the *de minimis* exemption.

The 16 permissions subject to mandatory BNG secured biodiversity enhancements via planning conditions. The enhancements are expected to be either on-site or as a combination of on-site and off-site improvements. None of the permissions are expected to rely on buying Statutory Credits from the Government to achieve a 10% gain. More information on the expected gains will be available through the submission of Biodiversity Gain Plans.

Details of BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans approved

One Biodiversity Gain Plan was approved in 2025. This is expected to result in the following net gains:

- Area Habitats: 2.74 units or 10.01%
- Hedgerows: 1.33 units or 46.93%
- Rivers: 0.23 units or 10.56%

The first monitoring report for this application is due in summer 2026.

How we plan to meet BNG obligations in the next five years

As set out in Section 2 of this report, the Planning Unit will continue to implement BNG in its decision-making process. Further changes to BNG are expected in 2026 such as the start of mandatory BNG for National Significant Infrastructure Projects, further exemptions for sites of less than 0.2 hectares and a consultation on a proposed exemption for brownfield sites. The team will ensure it continues to implement BNG according to existing and upcoming legislation and guidance.

Focus will also move towards monitoring the delivery of BNG secured by Section 106 Agreements that the Council is a party to and enhancements secured via planning conditions. The Council is intending to procure a software to assist with the monitoring of BNG delivery.

Now that the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been published on 16 January 2026, it must be considered to inform decisions on planning applications as well as on site allocations and local plan policies. The LNRS geospatial information will be added to the corporate mapping system to ensure adequate consideration of the strategy.

Section 4: Information About Rossendale Borough Council

Information about Rossendale Borough Council and how its activities can affect biodiversity is available in Section 1 of the First Considerations Report¹² (2024).

¹² Rossendale Borough Council First Considerations Report (2024) Available at: <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/18394/first-consideration-report-on-the-biodiversity-duty>



Appendix A – Monitoring the Actions Identified in the First Considerations Report

FUNCTION	OBJECTIVES FOR CONSIDERATION	OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME	Actions Undertaken (January 2024 - December 2025)
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	Protecting and seeking biodiversity net gain through planning and development, including regeneration projects	Embedding biodiversity enhancement in local planning policies and requiring biodiversity net gains in new development proposals in accordance with national and local planning policies	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 planning applications subject to mandatory BNG were granted between September 2024 and December 2025 • 1 Biodiversity Gain Plan approved
	Protecting and improving biodiversity	Assisting Lancashire County Council (LCC) in preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing with the LNRS Team at LCC • Attending Steering Group meetings and workshops • Responded to public consultation and notification of publication • LNRS published on 16 January 2026 by LCC



FUNCTION	OBJECTIVES FOR CONSIDERATION	OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME	Actions Undertaken (January 2024 - December 2025)
LAND AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT	Protecting and enhancing biodiversity through the management of the Council's land and properties	Improving biodiversity through the management of maintained land (natural play areas, grass verges, parks, cemeteries and other open spaces) including rewilding opportunities, tree planting, reducing the spread of invasive non-native species and plant diseases, making sites available for off-site biodiversity net gain, limiting the use of pesticides and using peat-free soil.	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat enhancement works at Trickett's Memorial Park, Moller Ring Play Area, Weir Play Area and Haslingden Graveyard • Tree planting through Rossendale Forest project which started in 2021 and finished in 2024 (10,834 trees planted in partnership with other organisations) • From 82 to 66 sites treated to eradicate Japanese Knotweed • No weed killer or peat used for green spaces management • Wildflower meadow trials on 14 sites
		Management of unmaintained land, including woodland management, moorland restoration and considering making sites available for off-site biodiversity net gain	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering a Council owned site to provide BNG, using information from the BNG Feasibility Study • Working in partnership with LCC regarding felling trees affected by Larch disease and replanting broad leave species • 177 Ash trees identified with Ash dieback that require pruning or felling
		Considering the biodiversity value of sites prior to agreeing their disposal or lease	April 2024 (New financial year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding ecological designations are available on the internal mapping system
		Consider findings of the BNG Study and promote specific Council-owned sites where measurable BNG can be achieved from Council-led and other developments	April 2024 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results from the BNG study have informed discussions with developers looking for biodiversity off-site
RAISING AWARENESS INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY	Continuing and formalising a biodiversity steering group meeting bi-annually/quarterly	Discuss and agree corporate actions to protect and enhance biodiversity	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 meetings held between January 2024 and December 2025

FUNCTION	OBJECTIVES FOR CONSIDERATION	OPPORTUNITIES	TIMEFRAME	Actions Undertaken (January 2024 - December 2025)
	Re-introducing a Biodiversity Impact Assessment checklist/statement for reports to CMT and Committee Meetings	Assessing and mitigating the impact on biodiversity of new/amended Council strategies, policies and projects	April 2024 (New financial year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Biodiversity Impact assessment submitted alongside reports introducing new policies
	Incorporating biodiversity enhancement and nature-based solutions into the updated Climate Change Action Plan	Consider tree planting as well as other habitat enhancement/restoration (e.g. grassland and blanket bog) to help absorb more carbon dioxide and reduce flood risk	April 2024 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action Plan (revised in July 2024) includes the aim to identify areas for the enhancement of biodiversity and climate change mitigation schemes • It also includes the following actions: implement BNG approach in planning; explore opportunities for the Council to be a biodiversity and carbon offset provider; increase tree cover by 2 hectares per year
MONITORING	Reviewing actions undertaken	Preparing biodiversity reports in accordance with Section 103 of the Environment Act 2021	By March 2026 and then every 5 years thereafter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing Biodiversity Report to be published by March 2026

Integrated Impact Assessment

The council carry out Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) to analyse the effects of our decisions, policies or practices. Throughout this document, policy refers to any policy, strategy, project, procedure, function, decision or delivery or service. The IIA should be undertaken/started at the beginning of the policy development process before any decisions are made. Policies are developed and reviewed using a consultative approach involving relevant internal and external stakeholders. Officers must consider what action needs to be taken to help overcome or minimise any disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic will experience in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and socio-economic disadvantage.

Name of policy:	Biodiversity Report for Rossendale (2026)
Lead officer name	Anne Storah / Nathaele Davies
Job title	Principal Planner / Senior
Service area	Planning
Telephone contact	01706 252418 / 252415
Email contact	annestorah@rossendalebc.gov.uk ; nathaeledavies@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Date Assessment commenced	15.12.2025
Date assessment completed	10.02.26

The main aims/objectives of this policy are:

The Biodiversity Report 2023-2025 The Biodiversity Report considers the following:

- actions undertaken by RBC between January 2023 and December 2025 to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- actions planned the next 5 years to further conserve and enhance biodiversity (2026-30)
- actions to comply with the mandatory biodiversity net gain framework in planning
- biodiversity gains expected from biodiversity gain plans approved by the local planning authority during the monitoring period
- plans to continue complying with the biodiversity net gain framework for the next 5 years

Indicate the status of the policy or decision

New/proposed Modified/adapted Existing

Indicate protected characteristics have been assessed

Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion/belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy/maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marriage or civil partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Indicate socio-economic disadvantage has been assessed

1. Identify any positive or negative impacts on protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage

Protected characteristic	Positive/Negative	How does it impact?
Age		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Disability		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Gender reassignment		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Marriage and civil partnership		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Pregnancy and maternity		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Race		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Religion or belief		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Sex		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people
Sexual orientation		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any protected group in a different way to other people

Socio-economic		Biodiversity Report will not impact on any socio-economic group in a different way to other people
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2. Explain and provide examples of any evidence/data used (add additional rows if needed)

Evidence	How does this have an impact on the protected characteristic?
	The document reports on actions previously identified and sets out new actions for the next 5 years. It also discusses how Biodiversity Net Gain is being introduced in Rossendale. As such it will have no impact on any group more than any other.

3. Outcome of IIA

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take?	Please indicate
Outcome 1- The IIA has not identified any potential for negative impact on the protected characteristics. Progress to EIA approval – section 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 2- The IIA has identified a possibility for negative impact on the protected characteristics. An IIA Action Plan must be completed to mitigate the negative impact – section 4 before approval section 5	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. IIA action plan

Based on the above impact assessment, findings/evidence and outcomes identified, please complete the Action Plan below. The action plan should address:

- Any gaps in findings/evidence research including any consultation or engagement regarding the policy and its actual/potential impacts
- How you will address any gaps
- What practical changes/action that will help reduce any negative impacts identified
- What practical changes/action that will help enhance any positive contributions to equality

Negative impact identified	Action required	Lead officer	To be completed

<p>Monitoring and reviewing the effect of the policy</p> <p>Please state how you will monitor the impact and effect of this policy</p>

5. IIA approval (to be completed by the relevant Head of Service/Director)

- Outcome of IIA agreed/approved by Management Team: (date)
- Published on council website: (date)

Signed: (Head of Service/Director) (date)

Report Title:		Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2025/26	
Report to:		Cabinet	Date: 18 th March 2026
Report of:		Head of Financial Services	Cabinet Portfolio: Resources
Cabinet Lead Member:		Councilor Walmsley	Wards Affected: All
Key Decision:		<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Integrated Impact Assessment:		Required: No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:		Kimberly Haworth	Telephone: 01706 252409
Email:		kimberlyhaworth@rossendalebc.gov.uk	
Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an indicative estimate of the Council's General Fund Revenue outturn, Collection Fund performance and Capital outturn for the year ended 31 March 2026.
- 1.2 At 31 December 2025, the Council is estimating a favourable variance of £575.6k against an approved net budget for the year of £11,535k. Combined with additional funding of £93k this results in a forecast contribution to reserves of £118.2k.
- 1.3 The approved Capital Programme for 2025/26 was agreed in the sum of £24,272k, to this was added prior year slippage of £8,510k. An additional £3,105k has been approved in the current year making a revised capital programme for 2025/26 of £35,887k. At this stage of the year the estimated capital outturn for the year is £13,618k.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the content of the Q3 financial monitoring report.

3. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR THE DECISION

3.1 In February 2025 the MTFs set a balanced Budget of £11,535k for the year based on the assumptions made at that time and supported by £574k from reserves. The pay award, inflation rates, vehicle fuel costs and high utility costs resulted in the requirement to use reserves to fund the budget gap.

Revenue

3.2 The December monitoring report for 2025/26 is forecasting a favourable variance of £575.6k when compared to an original budget of £11,535k.

3.3 The most notable variances are:

- Income relating to Bank Interest is greater than anticipated and is expected to have a favourable variance of £475k against the budgeted income of £225k.
- Interest on borrowing is expected to be less than budgeted. This is due to the timing of Capital projects beginning later than planned. This is estimated to give savings of £250k on borrowing interest. It should be noted that once agreed Capital projects start then borrowing is likely to be required in future years.
- Temporary Accommodation is forecast to be within budget. The Housing Options team has worked proactively to reduce the Council's spend on bed and breakfast accommodation. Through timely homelessness decisions, thorough needs assessments, effective support in temporary accommodation, and efficient use of the Council's own temporary accommodation stock, the average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation has decreased, resulting in a cost saving for the Council.
- Staff cost savings are estimated to be £446k to the year-end position, this is £321k greater than the vacancy savings target of £125k.
- The Planning fee income is showing an overachievement of £253k; during the year there has been major planning application fees received which were not anticipated.
- Operational Functions (including Parks) are forecast to overspend by £179.3k, mainly due to Vehicle Maintenance and Professional Fees. The Vehicle Maintenance overspend reflects the ongoing costs of maintaining an ageing Refuse and Street Sweeping fleet, alongside price increases during the year. The Professional Fees overspend relates to unbudgeted costs incurred to address health and safety requirements across the service.
- Fuel 'pump prices' continue to be monitored, Budgets for Fuel in 2025/26 remained at substantial levels totalling £345k which includes any premium for the use of HVO. The Council policy is to purchase HVO when the price differential is less than 5% compared to white diesel. As the two fuel types can be mixed, the decision regarding which fuel to use can be made on an order-by-order basis.
- The estimated contribution by the council for a possible pension deficit is not required which will give additional savings of £157k.
- The benefits granted outturn shows an adverse variance of £77k. This is due a shortfall between the housing benefits paid and the subsidy received.

3.4 Full details and explanations are included in appendix 1.

CAPITAL

- 3.5 The Capital Receipts brought forward at 1st April 2025 totalled £2,141k.
- 3.6 The approved Capital Programme for 2025/26 was agreed in the sum of £24,272k, to this was added prior year slippage of £8,510k. An additional £3,105k has been approved in the current year making a revised capital programme for 2025/26 of £35,887k. At this stage of the year the estimated capital outturn for the year is £13,618k.
- 3.7 On current assumptions, the Capital Receipts Reserve is expected to total £2,781k at the year-end 2025/26, reflecting the most cost-effective method of financing the Council's future Capital Programme.

TREASURY

- 3.8 At the end of December, the bank balances were £25.2m. These resources continue to be relatively high due to various grant funding, i.e. UKSPF fund, CRP etc. Although interest rates have recently fallen, the Bank Rate has remained high over the past two years. Because of this, and with temporary cash balances available for investment, the Council continues to take a proactive approach to managing its cash in 2025/26. This aims to increase income beyond budget expectations and help offset rising costs caused by ongoing inflationary pressures. Interest income is currently expected to exceed the budget for the year.
- 3.9 Details are included in Appendix 1.

COLLECTION FUND

- 3.10 Council Tax collection levels are recovering. However, they are still not back to pre-pandemic levels. Business rate collection appears to have struggled to return to typical levels experienced pre-Covid, however there were two major appeals in 2022/23 which have distorted the comparative figures.

The Council Tax account is predicting a surplus of £175k for Rossendale.

- 3.11 For Business Rates however, the situation is harder to gauge as collection rates were distorted in 2022/23 by the Covid relief the Government distributed. 2023/24 was also distorted by the transitional reliefs given to businesses due to the Business Rates revaluation, which kicked in from April 2023. As at end of year the collection rates in 2024/25 were in line with previous years which is positive and the start of 2025/26 initially was significantly below previous years however this is recovering monthly and is much more in line as at December 2025.
- 3.12 The NNDR collection fund is predicting a deficit of £237k with the Council's share being £95k.
- 3.13 Current estimates are that the Council will benefit from a pooling gain of £1,178k in 2025/26 through being a member of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool.

3.14 Details are included in Appendix 1.

EARMARKED RESERVES

3.15 The total cash-backed earmarked reserves brought forward at 1st April 2025 were £12,743k. The Earmarked Reserves closing balance at the 31 March 2026 are estimated to be £12,491k.

4. RISK

All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- 4.1 The cost of goods and services continue to increase. General inflationary increases are being experienced across all contracts that are linked directly to RPI and CPI. High inflation and interest rates are also impacting on the capital programme. On average vehicle replacement costs are running c20% over and above the estimates included in the capital programme. Rising inflation is also having an impact on the construction industry - pushing up costs, increasing tender prices.
- 4.2 Financial monitoring of General Fund service departments focuses on the key risk areas of employee costs, income, implementation of agreed budget savings, emerging issues (eg inflationary pressures and rising living costs) and opportunities, in particular service department net expenditure.
- 4.3 Budget setting for future years is now treated as an integral part of financial monitoring during the current year and the impact of variances being reported will be considered by officers when preparing the detailed 2026/27 budgets.
- 4.4 The council must explore ways of bridging its forecast annual funding gap. Amongst other things this may include becoming more commercially aware, aiming to grow its resources alongside the challenges to its cost base.
- 4.5 If the level of Council Tax support claims increase as a result of the current economic climate or the level of Council Tax bad debt increases, this will have an adverse impact on the income the Council receives.
- 4.6 The level of future Government funding is currently awaiting the outcome of the Fair Funding Review.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

5.1 Robust monitoring of the General Fund and MTFs is essential to control risks expressed in section 5 above and the Council continues to undertake this.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENT(S) (LEGAL)

6.1 Unless specifically commented upon within the report, there are no specific implications for consideration.

7. INTERGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The financial implications are fully set out above and in Appendix 1.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific implications for consideration. Staffing issues have been discussed with colleagues in the People & Policy team.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Financial Monitoring Report Quarter 3 2025/26: Appendix 1



Appendix 1

Financial Monitoring Report

2025/26 as at end of December 2025

Including a Glossary of terms on page 39

General Fund Revenue Operations – pages 4 to 22

Despite the current economic climate continuing to have a significant impact on the Council in Q3, the financial performance has been favourable compared to budget. The provisional out-turn position is a favourable variance of £575.6k on the General Fund when compared to the original budget of £11,535.4k. Combined with additional unbudgeted income of £93k, this forecast will result in a contribution to reserves in the year of £118.2k. The significant budget variations are highlighted on pages 4 and 5.

Earmarked Revenue Reserves – page 23

The total cash-backed Earmarked Reserves brought forward at 1st April 2025 were £12,743k. The opening balance on the Transitional Reserve was £5,910k. The indicative closing balance of earmarked reserves at the 31st March 2026, is estimated at £12,491k. Based on current plans and forecast commitments, and if nothing else changes, at the time of this report, available earmarked reserves are anticipated to be sufficient to support the budget for the current MTFS. The earmarked reserves figure includes ringfenced sums of £1,759.8k, this means that the funding was received for specific projects and may be subject to clawback.

Government Grants Unapplied – page 24

The opening value of Government Grants Unapplied at the 1st April 2025 was £6,343k of which £2,083k related to Disabled Facilities Grants. The balance carried forward into 2025/26 relates to previous years' slippage. The allocation of Better Care funding for DFGs for 2025/26 is £1,439k, giving total DFG resources available of £3,522k. Of this, £2,600k is estimated to be utilised in the year resulting in a carried forward balance of £922k. There are also balances brought forward of £3,069k relating to the Capital Regeneration Programme, £493k relating to the Local Authority Housing Fund, £528k relating to the DEFRA Waste Capital Fund and £170k relating to Long Term Plans for Towns. All of these grants are expected to be used in 2025/26.

Staff Monitoring – page 25

The table on page 25 shows the forecast staffing variances for the year based on Q3 actuals. The projected underspend for the year is £406k. Additional leave contributes a further £40k. An annual savings target of £125k has been included in the current year. Based on the year-to-date, savings of £321k we are currently exceeding the target.

Treasury & Cash Management - page 26 to 31

At the end of December, the bank balances were £25.2m. These resources continue to be relatively high due to various grant funding, i.e. UKSPF fund, CRP etc. Although interest rates have recently fallen, the Bank Rate has remained high over the past two years. Because of this, and with temporary cash balances available for investment, the Council continues to take a proactive approach to managing its cash in 2025/26. This aims to increase income beyond budget expectations and help offset rising costs caused by ongoing inflationary pressures. Interest income is currently expected to exceed the budget for the year.

The provision for doubtful debt at the 1st of April 2025 was £641.8k, plus a further £5.4k set aside for licensing debt. The Council has a provision of c. 83% for debts it considers to be at risk of remaining unpaid (impairment) and c. 50% for the total debt issued and considered overdue. Given the current collection performance at Q3, the current level of provision is considered adequate but will continue to be reviewed throughout the remainder of 2025/26.

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Capital Receipts – page 31

The total Capital Receipts rolled forward into financial year 2025/26 is £2,141k.

The total value of Capital Grants receivable in the financial year 2025/26 is £11,332k (including DFG Funding). As all figures are indicative at this point in the reporting cycle, work continues to determine the most effective method of funding the Council's Capital Programme.

On current assumptions, the Capital Receipts Reserve is expected to total £2,781k at the year-end 2025/26, reflecting the most cost-effective method of financing the Council's future Capital Programme.

Capital Programme and Funding – pages 31 to 34

The original Capital Programme for 2025/26 is £24,272k. This includes £14,078k in relation to the Capital Regeneration Projects, £1,200k for the upgrade of 3G football pitches and £1,000k for DFGs. The slippage from 2024/25 was £8,510k, including £3,902k of the Capital Regeneration Projects and £1,792k of DFGs.

The indicative capital outturn at 31st March 2026 is spend in the sum of £13,618k. The reduced outturn is mostly due to delays to the Waste Transfer Station and Capital Regeneration Programme, which has benefited from a deadline extension into the following year. The Capital Outturn will be reviewed throughout the remainder of the year.

Collection Fund 2025/26 (Council Tax & NNDR) - pages 36 to 38

Council Tax collection levels are recovering. However, they are still not back to pre-pandemic levels. Business rate collection appears to have struggled to return to typical levels experienced pre-Covid, however there were two major appeals in 2022/23 which have distorted the comparative figures.

The Council Tax account is predicting a surplus of £175k for Rossendale.

The business rates collection fund is predicting a deficit of £237k in 2025/26, the Council's share of the deficit is £95k. The Council has a Business Rate Retention Reserve to provide for any peaks and troughs in business rate income, therefore this deficit will be charged to the reserve.

Although it is anticipated the Council will suffer a collection fund loss, a pooling gain of £1,178k is estimated. The February 2025 MTFS included a pooling gain contribution of £500k, therefore if the current forecast remains at year end, it will result in a £678k deficit against that income budget, thus contributing towards pressure on the MTFS.

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General Fund Summary - Quarter 3 2025/26

Service Area	2025/26 Orig Budget	Virements Budget	2025/26 App Budget	2025/26 Q3 Outturn	2025/26 Variance (Adv)/Fav	Variance last reported	Change in Qtr 3 (Adv)/Fav
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Communities Directorate							
Customer Services and E-Government	1,864.8	-	1,864.8	2,063.2	(198.3)	(73.0)	(125.3)
Operational Functions	2,706.8	-	2,706.8	2,736.4	(29.7)	(146.8)	117.1
Parks and Cemeteries	1,006.6	-	1,006.6	1,156.2	(149.6)	(122.0)	(27.7)
Public Protection Unit	235.0	30.4	265.3	238.2	27.1	24.8	2.4
Environmental Health	242.4	-	242.4	220.4	22.0	23.5	(1.5)
Licensing & Enforcement	67.1	(30.4)	36.8	12.7	24.1	21.5	2.6
Communities Team	177.8	5.0	182.8	150.5	32.2	38.3	(6.0)
Economic Development Directorate							
Planning Services	454.7	-	454.7	273.2	181.5	208.9	(27.4)
Building Control Services	13.5	-	13.5	0.8	12.7	14.8	(2.1)
Regeneration	263.5	(5.0)	258.5	344.8	(86.3)	(53.4)	(32.9)
Property Services	220.7	-	220.7	276.2	(55.5)	9.2	(64.7)
Housing	299.5	0.0	299.5	307.5	(8.0)	(67.1)	59.1
Corporate Management Directorate							
Corporate Management	491.9	-	491.9	500.2	(8.2)	(23.3)	15.0
Legal Services	202.2	-	202.2	189.5	12.6	16.0	(3.4)
Local Land Charges	20.5	-	20.5	(1.4)	21.9	21.7	0.2
Democratic Services	611.3	-	611.3	561.0	50.3	49.3	1.0
Financial Services	588.9	-	588.9	597.5	(8.6)	75.1	(83.7)
People and Policy	945.7	(0.0)	945.6	848.3	97.3	97.3	0.1
Non Distributed Costs	235.3	-	235.3	270.4	(35.1)	79.2	(114.3)
Capital Financing and Interest	818.7	-	818.7	162.5	656.2	306.2	350.0
Leisure Services	(31.9)	-	(31.9)	9.3	(41.2)	(40.9)	(0.2)
Empty Homes Scheme	100.6	-	100.6	42.5	58.0	60.0	(2.0)
TOTAL Service Cost	11,535.4	(0.0)	11,535.4	10,959.9	575.6	519.2	56.4
Funded by							
Council Tax	(6,719.0)	-	(6,719.0)	(6,719.0)	-	-	-
Retained Business Rates	(2,436.0)	-	(2,436.0)	(2,436.0)	-	-	-
Funding Guarantee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue Support Grant	(93.0)	-	(93.0)	(111.0)	18.0	-	18.0
Services Grant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Homes Bonus	(141.0)	-	(141.0)	(141.0)	-	-	-
Collection Fund Surplus - Council Tax	(126.0)	-	(126.0)	(126.0)	-	-	-
Estimated NNDR Pooling/growth Gain	(500.0)	-	(500.0)	(500.0)	-	-	-
Extended Producer Responsibilities	(649.0)	-	(649.0)	(649.0)	-	-	-
Recovery Grant	(297.0)	-	(297.0)	(297.0)	-	-	-
Employers NI Contribution Scheme	-	-	-	(75.0)	75.0	-	75.0
LESS Estimated use of Reserves	(574.4)	-	(574.4)	118.2	(692.7)	-	(692.7)
Net Budget Shortfall	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.0	24.1	-24.1	0.0	(543.3)

The position at Q3 2025/26 shows a favourable variance of £575.6k.

The main variances are shown below: -

- Income relating to Bank Interest is greater than anticipated and is expected to have a favourable variance of £475k against the budgeted income of £225k.
- Interest on borrowing is expected to be less than budgeted. This is due to the timing of Capital projects beginning later than planned. This is estimated to give savings of £250k on borrowing interest. It should be noted that once agreed Capital projects start then borrowing is likely to be required in future years.
- Temporary Accommodation is forecast to be within budget. The Housing Options team has worked proactively to reduce the Council's spend on bed and breakfast accommodation. Through timely homelessness decisions, thorough needs assessments, effective support in temporary accommodation, and efficient use of the Council's own temporary accommodation stock, the average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation has decreased, resulting in a cost saving for the Council.
- Staff cost savings are estimated to be £446k to the year-end position, this is £321k greater than the vacancy savings target of £125k.

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- The Planning fee income is showing an overachievement of £253k; during the year there has been major planning application fees received which were not anticipated.
- Operational Functions (including Parks) are forecast to overspend by £179.3k, mainly due to Vehicle Maintenance and Professional Fees. The Vehicle Maintenance overspend reflects the ongoing costs of maintaining an ageing Refuse and Street Sweeping fleet, alongside price increases during the year. The Professional Fees overspend relates to unbudgeted costs incurred to address health and safety requirements across the service.
- Fuel 'pump prices' continue to be monitored, Budgets for Fuel in 2025/26 remained at substantial levels totalling £345k which includes any premium for the use of HVO. The Council policy is to purchase HVO when the price differential is less than 5% compared to white diesel. As the two fuel types can be mixed, the decision regarding which fuel to use can be made on an order-by-order basis.
- The estimated contribution by the council for a possible pension deficit is not required which will give additional savings of £157k.
- The benefits granted outturn shows an adverse variance of £77k. This is due a shortfall between the housing benefits paid and the subsidy received.

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Additional Narrative to General Fund Summary variances 2025/26	Q1 Fav/(Adv)	Q2 Fav/(Adv)	Q3 Fav/(Adv)	Q4 Fav/(Adv)	Total Fav/(Adv)	
Communitites Directorate						
Customer Services and e-Government						
Staff costs	7.6	(0.3)	-		7.3	
Benefits Admin Subsidy shortfall	(65.9)	16.9	(157.8)		(206.8)	
Central IT Costs	(9.1)	(20.0)	45.4		16.3	
Other minor variances	2.5	(4.6)	(13.0)		(15.1)	(198.3)
Operational Functions Including Parks						
Staff Costs (including agency and overtime)	(12.1)	61.0	14.2		63.1	
Computer Software and Equipment	-	(43.0)	30.0		(13.0)	
Professional Fees	-	(32.4)	73.0		40.6	
Fuel, Vehicle Maint and Hire	(124.5)	(3.2)	(14.8)		(142.5)	
Trade, Bulks and Residual Waste Net Income	10.0	27.5	-		37.5	
Garden Waste Net Income	(14.0)	6.7	2.3		(5.0)	
Public Open Spaces, Playfields and Playgrounds	(93.7)	6.6	(14.1)		(101.2)	
Cemeteries Net Income	(14.1)	(48.7)	(1.8)		(64.6)	
Other Minor Variances	8.1	(3.0)	0.6		5.8	(179.3)
Communities Team						
Staff Costs	37.8	(4.4)	2.3		35.7	
Other minor variances	(1.4)	6.3	(8.3)		(3.5)	32.2
Env'tal Health, PPU, Licensing and Enforcement						
Staff costs	54.0	10.2	(0.7)		63.5	
Income Shortfall	0.3	-	3.9		4.2	
Other minor variances	3.8	1.5	0.3		5.6	73.2
Economic Development						
Staff costs (net of grant & fee income)	43.9	93.4	15.1		152.4	
Economic Development	(1.6)	0.2	(56.8)		(58.2)	
Museum	(0.7)	(2.6)	-		(3.3)	
Tourism	(0.3)	(40.3)	(0.5)		(41.1)	
Market Income	(15.6)	(23.3)	(22.8)		(61.7)	
Climate Change	-	(43.7)	-		(43.7)	
Housing	(26.1)	(82.6)	88.7		(20.0)	
Planning Degree Tuition Fees	-	(13.0)	-		(13.0)	
Planning Consultancy Professional fees	(2.4)	(32.8)	(23.3)		(58.5)	
Planning Application Fee Income	23.7	228.6	1.1		253.4	
Planning Pre-apps	(1.2)	1.6	5.7		6.1	
Reimbursement relating to a planning appeal	-	-	(12.7)		(12.7)	
Building Control Fee Income	4.8	5.5	(3.8)		6.6	
Planning /Building Control misc under/over	(3.1)	2.5	(5.4)		(6.0)	
Property Running costs	(19.1)	12.3	(28.9)		(35.7)	
Business Rates	(12.0)	(7.9)	-		(19.9)	
Spinning Point bus station	1.3	(8.6)	(11.0)		(18.3)	
Estates Income	14.5	81.0	(7.8)		87.7	
Valuation Fees & Professional Fees	(13.3)	(0.4)	5.3		(8.4)	
Boilers / Alarms / lifts / emergency Lighting	(12.2)	3.4	(4.7)		(13.5)	
Business Centre rentals	(27.2)	8.1	(1.0)		(20.1)	
Tree Felling / knotweed treatment	(22.0)	-	(1.0)		(23.0)	
Other minor variances	(6.0)	5.2	(4.2)		(5.0)	44.5
Corporate Management						
Staff costs	115.6	49.2	4.6		169.4	
Legal income	1.1	(0.6)	(3.3)		(2.8)	
Legal Professional fees and ref books	5.4	-	-		5.4	
Election, Democratic Services and Member costs	19.4	(0.9)	1.4		19.9	
Land Charges income	(5.2)	2.2	0.2		(2.8)	
Land Charges Granrt Income	20.0	4.0	-		24.0	
Internal and External Audit - Finance	8.5	43.0	(62.2)		(10.7)	
Leisure Review	-	(39.3)	-		(39.3)	
Bank & Cash Collection Charges	10.0	(5.0)	(16.3)		(11.3)	
Training	1.5	-	-		1.5	
Empty Homes	59.2	0.8	(2.0)		58.0	
Conferences & Travel	-	(13.3)	5.1		(8.2)	
Annual Licences	-	(18.0)	-		(18.0)	
Other minor variances	10.1	(12.6)	(0.5)		(2.9)	182.2
Non-Distributed Costs & Capital Financing						
Original staff savings target (actuals now above)	(96.9)	35.0	(23.3)		(85.2)	
Net Interest	152.7	222.3	350.0		725.0	
Employee & Pension Costs	85.0	125.2	(20.8)		189.4	
Increase in MRP Contribution	(68.8)	-	-		(68.8)	
Other Corporate	-	(69.1)	(70.2)		(139.3)	621.1
Favourable/(adverse) variance	32.6	486.6	56.4	-	575.6	575.6

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Communities Directorate - Customer Services & IT

Period 9 (Dec)

Customer Services & ICT	2025/26 Orig Budget £000	Virements Budget £000	2025/26 App Budget £000	2025/26 Q3 Outturn £000	2025/26 Variance (Adv)/Fav £000	Variance last reported £000	Change in Qtr 3 (Adv)/Fav £000
Customer Services							
Benefits Administration	(114.2)	-	(114.2)	(125.0)	10.9	11.3	(0.4)
Benefits Granted	(122.3)	-	(122.3)	(35.9)	(86.4)	(79.5)	(6.9)
Local Tax Collection	(250.8)	-	(250.8)	(140.7)	(110.1)	9.3	(119.4)
Revenues & Benefits Partnership	1,200.0	-	1,200.0	1,221.2	(21.2)	10.0	(31.2)
Strategic Functions							
Management and Support	86.8	-	86.8	85.0	1.8	1.8	-
Service Assurance Team	122.6	-	122.6	147.8	(25.1)	(15.0)	(10.1)
Central Telephones	5.0	-	5.0	5.5	(0.5)	(0.5)	-
ICT Support	937.6	-	937.6	905.4	32.2	(10.3)	42.6
Total	1,864.8	-	1,864.8	2,063.2	(198.3)	(73.0)	(125.3)

Key changes made during the period to the full year forecast	Variance Bfwd £000	Variance this Qtr £000	Full-Yr Forecast £000
Benefits Admin			
Court fees/fines	1.7	0.8	2.5
Benefits Granted			
Benefits Admin Subsidy shortfall	(67.8)	(6.4)	(74.2)
Debit Credit Card Collection Charges	7.8	-	7.8
Business Rates Levy	-	(119.4)	(119.4)
Other minor variances	(0.7)	(1.6)	(2.3)
Revenues & Benefits Partnership			
Partnership contracts	10.0	(31.2)	(21.2)
Management and Support			
Other minor variances	1.8	-	1.8
Service Assurance Team			
SAT staffing	3.8	-	3.8
Annual Licences	(9.7)	2.9	(6.8)
Consultants Fees	(5.1)	-	(5.1)
Other minor variances	(4.0)	(12.8)	(16.8)
ICT Support			
ICT Staff	3.5	-	3.5
Other minor variances	0.6	-	0.6
Central IT Costs			
Annual Licences	(7.3)	63.5	56.2
IT Equipment Maintenance	(22.6)	(11.2)	(33.8)
Other Private contractors (Disaster Recovery)	10.1	(8.6)	1.5
Other minor variances	5.5	(1.3)	4.2
Telephones			
Other minor variances	(0.5)	-	(0.5)
TOTAL	(73.0)	(125.3)	(198.3)

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Customer Service & ICT Highlight Report – Q3 (December 2025)

Historic Issues

- None.

Current Quarter's Issues

The estimated outturn variance is £198.3k adverse, the main movements being: -

- The benefits granted outturn shows an adverse variance of £77.1k, due to the Housing Benefits subsidy being less than estimated. This is currently an estimation and will be monitored throughout the year.
- Benefits administration has made a saving of £10.9k due to additional grant income being received.
- Payments estimated to be £119.0k for 2024/25 and 2025/26 relating to the Business Rates levy have been included.
- Additional consultancy and training costs of £14.8k have been included.
- IT Equipment shows an adverse variance of £33.8k due to the purchase of additional IT equipment for use at Futures Park.
- A review of IT professional subscriptions and licences is carried out throughout the year to check for any potential overspends in this area.

Future Issues

- The Council's contract with Capita includes annual indexation increases linked to the higher of CPI or AWE.

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Communities Directorate

Period 9 (Dec)

Operations & Communities	2025/26 Orig Budget £000	Virements Budget £000	2025/26 App Budget £000	2025/26 Q3 Outturn £000	2025/26 Variance (Adv)/Fav £000	Variance last reported £000	Change in Qtr 3 (Adv)/Fav £000
Operational Functions							
Operations Admin & Vehicle Maintenance	572.4	-	572.4	566.3	6.1	(151.0)	157.1
Refuse & Recycling	1,768.0	-	1,768.0	1,721.4	46.5	110.3	(63.7)
Street Sweeping	366.4	-	366.4	448.8	(82.4)	(106.1)	23.8
Parks & Cemeteries							
Parks & Open Spaces	1,173.9	(152.9)	1,021.0	1,097.1	(76.1)	(68.0)	(8.0)
Cemeteries	(167.3)	152.9	(14.5)	59.1	(73.6)	(53.9)	(19.7)
Communities Team							
Area Forums	162.8	5.0	167.8	135.5	32.2	38.3	(6.0)
	15.0	-	15.0	15.0	-	-	-
Total	3,891.1	5.0	3,896.1	4,043.2	(147.1)	(230.5)	83.4

Key changes made during the period to the full year forecast	Variance Bfwd £000	Variance this Qtr £000	Full-Yr Forecast £000
Operations Admin & Vehicle Maintenance			
Henrietta Street Staffing	20.0	40.8	60.8
Fleet Management Staffing	111.0	0.1	111.1
Fleet Management Agency	(192.0)	20.0	(172.0)
Vehicle Maintenance (including Tyres, Parts and MOTs)	(5.5)	(6.7)	(12.3)
Professional Fees	(58.0)	58.0	-
External Printing and Canvass Payments	-	15.8	15.8
Computer Software / Equipment	(32.4)	30.0	(2.4)
Miscellaneous Variances	5.9	(0.8)	5.1
Refuse & Recycling			
Refuse Staffing and Agency	85.2	(9.8)	75.4
Fuel Costs	65.0	-	65.0
Garden Waste Income	(7.3)	2.3	(5.1)
Residual - Sacks & Bag and Sale of Green Bins	7.0	5.0	12.0
Refuse Fleet - Tyres etc	(10.0)	(5.0)	(15.0)
Vehicle Tracking Lease	(6.0)	-	(6.0)
Trade Waste - Tipping Fees	12.0	(17.0)	(5.0)
Vehicle Maintenance and MOTs	(63.6)	(8.5)	(72.1)
Trade Waste - income	8.5	(14.1)	(5.7)
Bulks Income - Professional Services	5.0	(10.0)	(5.0)
Refuse Bins	10.0	(5.0)	5.0
Miscellaneous Variances	4.5	(1.5)	3.0
Street Sweeping			
Street Sweeping Salaries and Agency	1.0	(0.3)	0.8
Vehicle Maintenance and MOTs	(55.8)	8.1	(47.7)
Hire of Vehicles and Plant	(20.8)	6.9	(13.9)
Tyres and Sweeper Brushes	(25.0)	7.5	(17.5)
Refuse Bins	(5.0)	-	(5.0)
Miscellaneous Variances	(0.6)	1.6	1.0
Parks & Open Spaces			
Parks and Open Spaces Staffing	34.9	(15.3)	20
Parks and Open Spaces - Agency Staffing	(20.0)	(21.1)	(41.1)
External Contractors	(35.0)	25.8	(9.1)
Miscellaneous Insurance Savings	6.7	-	6.7
Purchase of Tools and Equipment	5.0	-	5.0
Fuel	(10.0)	5.0	(5.0)
Tyres	4.0	-	4.0
Upkeep of Parks and Playing Fields	(11.5)	3.8	(7.7)
Public Open Space and Play Areas	12.7	-	12.7
Other Professional Fees	(50.0)	-	(50.0)
Insurance Claims Settled	-	10.0	10.0
Computer Software Purchases	-	(25.9)	(25.9)
Miscellaneous Variances	(4.7)	9.6	4.9
Cemeteries			
Cemeteries Staffing	8.8	(0.1)	8.6
Cemeteries - Agency Staffing	-	(21.3)	(21.3)
Running Costs	16.8	(4.2)	12.7
Cemetery Income & Internment Fees	(1.9)	(1.8)	(3.7)
Other Professional Fees	(65.0)	25.0	(40.0)
Direct Costs - Cemeteries General	(12.7)	(17.2)	(29.9)
Communities			
Communities staffing	33.5	2.3	35.8

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Operations Highlight Report – Q3 (December 2025)

Historic Issues

- This service has historically required support from Agency staff and this reliance is expected to continue through 2025-26, albeit at a reduced level.
- While fuel prices have exhibited volatility in recent years, they stabilised during 2023-24, and this trend has continued. Should fuel prices remain stable throughout the remainder of 2025-26, the current budget allocation is expected to be sufficient to cover the associated fuel costs for the financial year.

Current Quarter Issues

- At the end of Q3, Operations and Green Spaces have an adverse variance of £179.3k.
- A significant driver of this overspend is forecast expenditure of £90.0k associated with various health and safety related matters across the service.
- There has also been a significant overspend of £119.8k on Vehicle Maintenance due to the ongoing maintenance needs for Refuse and Street Sweep vehicles, alongside prices increases during the year. Of this total, £72.1k is attributable to Refuse vehicles, and £47.7k is attributable to Street Sweep vehicles.

Fleet

- At Q3, Fleet has a projected overspend of £73.2k for the year.
- Currently, this department has two vacant posts which are being covered by higher-cost agency staff. A projected £111.1k saving on staffing has been offset by £172.0k of unbudgeted Agency spend, resulting in a forecast overspend of £60.9k for the year.

Refuse

- At Q3, Refuse has a projected underspend of £46.5k.
- A projected saving of £81.4k is anticipated in employee-related costs, despite the need for Agency Staff to cover sickness and additional resourcing requirements.
- Garden Waste income is forecast to be £5.1k below budget, with Bulks net income also showing an underachievement of £11.0k. This is partially offset by a projected £10.0k surplus on Residual net income. Trade Waste net income is expected to be £5.7k below budget, primarily due to a £20.0k shortfall in Bulk Containers Waste.
- The most significant area of overspend relates to Vehicles, currently forecast at £22.8k. This position reflects pressures within Vehicle Maintenance (£70.0k), Tyre Renewal and Repairs (£15.0k) and the Vehicle Tracking Lease (£6.0k). These pressures are largely offset by a projected £65.0k savings in fuel, on the assumption that prices remain stable through 2025-26.

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Street Sweep

- At Q3, Street Sweep has a projected overspend of £82.4k for the year.
- The Street Sweep service is forecasting an overspend primarily due to pressures in Vehicle Maintenance (£50.0k), Sweeper Brushes (£8.5k), Hire of Vehicles and Plant (£13.9k) and Tyre Renewal and Repairs (£9.0k). These costs reflect the ongoing maintenance requirements of an ageing street sweep fleet. The two larger vehicles are scheduled for replacement in early 2026-27.

Parks

- At Q3, Parks have a projected overspend of £76.1k for the year.
- The most significant forecast overspend within Parks relates to essential health and safety works associated with tree management. This reflects a national pressure, and the Council is committed to following best practice in addressing it.
- At Q3, Playing Fields and Pitches have a forecasted overspend of £7.7k, whilst Play Areas have projected underspend of £12.7k.

Cemeteries

- At Q3, Cemeteries have a forecast overspend of £73.6k, primarily driven by unbudgeted expenditure of £40.0k in Other Professional Fees. These fees are associated with ongoing health and safety requirements.
- Staffing costs within the service are projected to exceed budget by £12.7k, reflecting the use of higher-cost agency staff to meet additional resourcing requirements.
- Cemetery income is forecast at £290.6k resulting in a £3.7k shortfall against budget. This is fully offset by a projected £12.7k underspend in cemetery running costs, primarily due to enhanced energy efficiency measures.

The Future

- The Government has stipulated that by April 2026 all households will have a weekly food waste collection. The Council remains on track to commence these collections from early April.

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Communities Directorate

Period 9 (Dec)

Public Protection	2025/26 Orig Budget £000	Virements Budget £000	2025/26 App Budget £000	2025/26 Q3 Outturn £000	2025/26 Variance (Adv)/Fav £000	Variance last reported £000	Change in Qtr 3 (Adv)/Fav £000
Public Protection Unit	235.0	30.4	265.3	238.2	27.1	24.8	2.4
Environmental Health	242.4	-	242.4	220.4	22.0	23.5	(1.5)
Licensing & Enforcement	67.1	(30.4)	36.8	12.7	24.1	21.5	2.6
Total	544.6	-	544.6	471.3	73.2	69.8	3.4

Key changes made during the period to the full year forecast	Variance Bfwd £000	Variance this Qtr £000	Full-Yr £000
PPU			
PPU Staffing / Agency	12.3	4.9	17.2
Dog boarding Services	7.9	(1.6)	6.3
Environmental Health			
Environmental Health - staffing and consultant	35.1	(8.7)	26.4
Environmental Health - Fees & Charges	(12.7)	6.7	(6.0)
Licensing			
Licensing & Enforcement - staffing	14.0	3.1	17.1
Licensing running costs	3.2	-	3.2
Taxi Licensing Income	2.4	1.0	3.5
Miscellaneous Licences	0.8	(2.0)	(1.3)
Animal Licensing			
Animal Licensing Staffing	2.8	-	2.8
Animal Licensing income	2.2	(1.8)	0.4
Pool Car	0.1	0.5	0.6
Other misc variances	1.7	1.3	3.0
TOTAL	69.8	3.4	73.2

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Environmental Health, Public Protection Unit and Licensing and Enforcement Service Highlight Report – Q3 December 2025)

Historic Issues

- Nothing reported.

Public Protection Unit

- The staffing costs are projecting a saving of £17.2k.
- The cost of dog services is currently operating within budget at Q3 with an underspend of £6.3k. The costs from the kennels and vet are lower than anticipated.

Environmental Health

- At Q3 staffing costs are Projecting an underspend of £22.0k. The service area has two long term vacant posts and a third became vacant in October. An Environmental Officer has been appointed in January 2026.
- Income streams within Environmental Health at Q3 are predicting a shortfall of £6.0k.

Licensing

- The staffing costs are projecting an underspend of £17.1k.
- All income is expected to over achieve by £3.5k.

Animal Licensing

- The staffing costs are projected to come within budget by the end of the year.
- Service area running costs are projected to be within budget.

Future Issues

- Nothing to report.

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Economic Development Directorate

Period 9 (Dec)

Economic Development & Regeneration Services	2025/26 Orig Budget £000	Virements Budget £000	2025/26 App Budget £000	2025/26 Q3 Outturn £000	2025/26 Variance (Adv)/Fav £000	Variance last reported £000	Change in Qtr 3 (Adv)/Fav £000
Planning							
Development Control	285.8	-	285.8	122.8	163.0	196.4	(33.5)
Forward Planning	168.9	-	168.9	150.3	18.5	12.4	6.1
Building Control							
Building Control - Fee Earning Account	(26.2)	-	(26.2)	(32.7)	6.5	10.8	(4.3)
Building Control - Statutory Function	35.7	-	35.7	35.1	0.7	1.0	(0.4)
Building Control - Street Signs	4.0	-	4.0	(1.6)	5.6	3.0	2.6
Regeneration							
Economic Regeneration	173.7	-	173.7	111.3	62.4	33.0	29.5
Whitaker Park Museum	34.0	-	34.0	36.3	(2.3)	(3.2)	0.9
Tourism	33.5	(5.0)	28.5	69.5	(41.0)	(0.5)	(40.5)
Markets	20.5	-	20.5	82.2	(61.7)	(39.0)	(22.8)
Climate Change	1.8	-	1.8	45.5	(43.7)	(43.7)	(0.0)
Property Services & Facilities Management							
Property Services	39.2	-	39.2	24.9	14.3	16.3	(2.0)
Corporate Estates	(320.8)	-	(320.8)	(461.0)	140.2	152.0	(11.8)
Non Domestic Estates	(120.9)	-	(120.9)	(153.3)	32.4	25.9	6.5
Office Accommodation	(16.7)	-	(16.7)	53.3	(70.0)	(65.6)	(4.4)
Operational Properties	288.1	-	288.1	392.0	(103.8)	(82.8)	(21.1)
Leisure Properties	66.6	-	66.6	87.3	(20.7)	(13.5)	(7.2)
Bus Shelters	148.3	-	148.3	140.1	8.2	7.8	0.4
Business Centre	136.9	-	136.9	192.9	(56.1)	(30.9)	(25.1)
Strategic Housing							
Housing Strategy	41.7	-	41.7	40.7	1.0	3.9	(2.9)
Private Sector Housing Renewals	11.0	0.0	11.0	8.6	2.4	12.7	(10.3)
Homelessness	246.8	-	246.8	258.2	(11.5)	(83.8)	72.4
Total	1,251.9	(5.0)	1,246.9	1,202.4	44.5	112.4	(67.9)

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Key changes made during the period to the full year forecast	Variance Bfwd £000	Variance this Qtr £000	Full-Yr £000
Planning			
Forward Planning staffing	10.6	5.9	16.5
Planning staffing	(4.1)	3.5	(0.6)
Planning Degree training costs	(13.0)	-	(13.0)
Planning Consultancy fees/ Legal fees	(35.2)	(23.3)	(58.5)
Reimbursement relating to a planning appeal	-	(12.7)	(12.7)
Planning Application Fee Income	252.3	1.1	253.4
Pre-App Income	0.4	5.7	6.1
Other Miscellaneous Variances	(0.1)	(5.0)	(5.1)
Building Control			
Building Control staffing	3.0	(0.4)	2.6
Building Control Fees	8.0	(3.8)	4.2
Building Control - Statutory Function	-	-	-
Building Control - Street Signs	2.3	2.6	4.9
Other Miscellaneous Variances	(0.5)	(3.0)	(3.5)
Regeneration			
Economic Regeneration Staffing	74.4	46.3	120.7
Economic Regeneration - Other Miscellaneous Variances	(1.4)	(56.8)	(58.2)
Tourism - Other Miscellaneous Variances	(40.5)	(0.5)	(41.0)
Markets Income Under Achieved	(39.0)	(22.8)	(61.8)
Climate Change - Staffing and Associated Costs	(43.7)	-	(43.7)
Whitaker Park Museum	(3.2)	0.9	(2.4)
Strategic Housing			
Housing Strategy Staffing	3.7	(3.0)	0.7
Private Sector Housing Renewals staffing	12.0	(9.6)	2.4
Homelessness Staffing and Agency	25.1	(16.9)	8.2
Payment of Bonds and first months rent (Savings)	19.4	17.4	36.8
Costs for Resources on Homelessness excluding B&B costs underspent	(19.8)	(3.0)	(22.8)
(B&B) Homelessness Accommodation costs	(70.0)	70.0	-
Housing Benefit monies received	191.7	(120.7)	71.0
Recharge of HB Subsidy shortfall	(230.3)	126.3	(104.0)
Other Miscellaneous Variances	0.3	(1.3)	(1.0)
Property Services Team			
Property Services staffing	12.6	(10.6)	2.0
Emergency Planning, Xmas Lights	(2.2)	-	(2.2)
Corporate Estates			
Corporate Estates rental income	89.5	(7.8)	81.7
Futures Park rental income	6.0	-	6.0
Valuation Fees	(1.9)	5.3	3.4
Professional Fees	(11.8)	1.4	(10.5)
Operational Properties			
Property Running Costs: Repairs & Maintenance	(0.5)	(7.7)	(8.2)
Gas, Electricity, Water	-	1.8	1.8
NNDR	(19.9)	7.9	(12.0)
Boilers / Alarms / Lifts / Emergency Lighting	(8.8)	(4.7)	(13.5)
Tree Felling	(20.0)	-	(20.0)
Knotweed Treatment	(2.0)	(1.0)	(3.0)
Leisure Properties	-	-	-
Bus Station / Shelters			
Spinning Point Bus Station running costs	(7.3)	(11.0)	(18.3)
Spinning Point Bus Station - Departure charges	-	-	-
Bus Shelters	(0.2)	-	(0.2)
Business Centre			
Business Centre running costs	(6.3)	(30.9)	(37.2)
Business Centre rentals	(19.1)	(1.0)	(20.1)
Business Centre Fit Tarrif	(2.0)	-	(2.0)
Other Miscellaneous Variances	4.0	(6.4)	(2.4)
TOTAL	112.4	(67.9)	44.5

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Economic Development & Regeneration Highlight Report – Q3 (December 2025)

Historic Issues

- Nothing to report.

Planning & Building Control are showing a favourable variance of £181.5k, which is broken down as detailed below: -

- Planning/Forward Planning staffing (inc agency/consultancy) costs are showing a favourable variance of £15.9k. All vacant posts have now been filled.
- Building Control staffing costs are projected to underspend by £2.6k.
- The Planning fee income is showing a surplus of £253k; during the year there have been major planning application fees received which were not anticipated.
- Pre-application fees are overachieving the income budget target by £6.1k.
- Building Control income is projected to exceed the target by £4.2k.
- A planning application won an appeal and the applicant was reimbursed £12.7k.

Economic Regeneration has an adverse variance of £86.3k, which is broken down as detailed below: -

- A projected saving of £120.6k is anticipated within Economic Regeneration staffing costs, attributable to the External Funding Recharge, which allows eligible staff costs to be recovered through external funding and grant allocations.
- The Q3 forecast outturn for Markets is £61.7k adverse to budget, covering both Haslingden and Rawtenstall which are both now fully operational. Rawtenstall market is thriving and is expected to slightly miss its budgets, while Haslingden is still developing its customer base and is forecasting a loss in its first year of trading.
- The Museum has a forecasted overspend of £2.3k, mainly driven by higher costs for Burglar Alarms and Security Systems (£2.0k), along with other essential premises-related expenditure.
- Tourism also has a forecasted overspend of £41k, due to a one-off unbudgeted cost.

Housing has an adverse variance of £8k which is broken down as detailed below: -

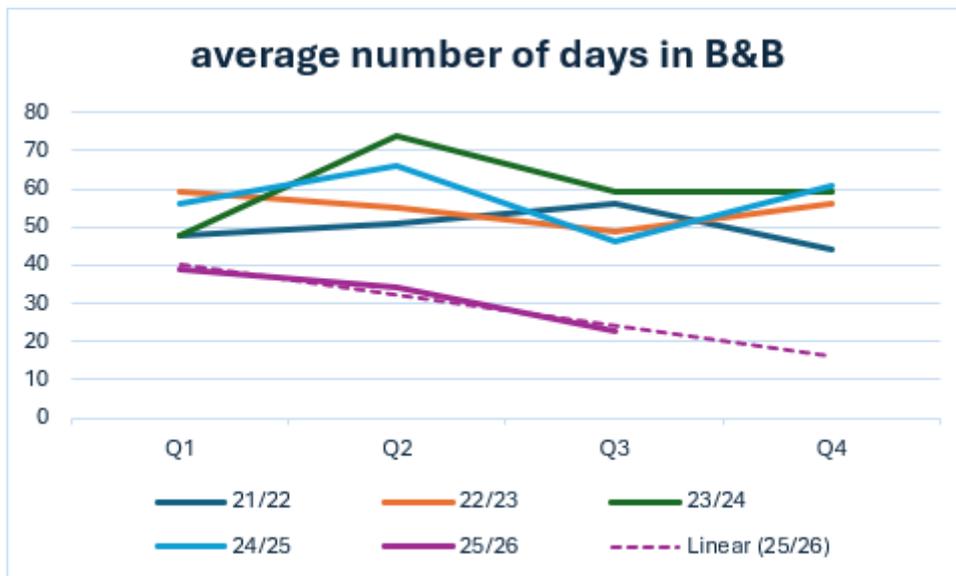
- Staffing underspends at Q3 of £11.4k are due to staff being appointed at lower scale points, generating savings against the budget.
- With regards to payment of bonds to assist with providing temporary accommodation, the estimated costs are expected to be £63.0k. This will give an estimated saving of £36.8k for the year, compared to the budget.

Temporary accommodation has reversed previous trends and as at Q3, is expected to be within budget at the end of the year. The Housing Options team has worked proactively to reduce the Council's spend on bed and breakfast accommodation. Through timely homelessness decisions, thorough needs assessments, effective support in temporary accommodation, and efficient use of the Council's own temporary accommodation stock, the average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation has decreased, resulting in a cost saving for the local authority. The following graph gives an indication of the reduction of B&B days for 2025/26, compared to previous years.

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- RBC are in receipt of additional Housing Benefit from DWP to cover the direct costs charged to the Housing Options Team for B&B charges from the hotels. This covers circa 1/7th of the costs incurred. The reduction of B&B days has also resulted in a reduction of Housing Benefits monies received which, in turn, has reduced the subsidy shortfall. Although the net effect will still be an overspend on the budget for the year, it is expected to reduce to an estimated overspend of £32.9k.
- Other budgeted costs at Q3 for resources on Homelessness are projected to overspend by an estimated £23.3k.

The situation will be closely monitored so decisions can be made whilst progressing through the remainder of the year.

Property Services and Facilities Management is currently projecting an adverse variance of £55.5k. This is broken down as detailed below: -

- Salary costs are showing a favourable variance of £2.0k. The vacant manager post has now been appointed to.
- Facilities running costs are showing an adverse variance of £56.9k.
- The estates income is showing an overall favourable variance of £87.7k. RBC received £75k on completion of an options agreement associated with planning.
- Valuation fees / professional fees are showing an overspend of £7.0k, predominately due to costs of eviction notices.
- The Business Centre room hire is projecting an underachievement of £20.1k. The Property team are looking to increase tenant occupancy which will seek to reduce this deficit. During this year, further units have successfully been leased.
- Tree Felling costs across unmaintained land are projected to spend £20.0k. These are all unbudgeted costs.

Future Issues

The council has entered into new utility contracts for the electricity and gas providing cheaper utility costs across the council sites.

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Corporate Services Directorate

Period 9 (Dec)

Corporate Management	2025/26 Orig Budget £000	Virements Budget £000	2025/26 App Budget £000	2025/26 Q3 Outturn £000	2025/26 Variance (Adv)/Fav £000	Variance last reported £000	Change in Qtr 3 (Adv)/Fav £000
Corporate Management							
Executive Office	399.4	-	399.4	406.2	(6.7)	(17.0)	10.3
Corporate Contingency	37.5	-	37.5	27.0	10.5	(5.0)	15.5
Corporate Subscriptions	55.0	-	55.0	67.0	(12.0)	(1.3)	(10.8)
Legal Services	202.2	-	202.2	189.5	12.6	16.0	(3.4)
Land Charges	20.5	-	20.5	(1.4)	21.9	21.7	0.2
Democratic Services							
Electoral Registration	96.7	-	96.7	85.8	10.9	6.5	4.4
Elections	89.8	-	89.8	88.3	1.5	1.5	-
Democratic Support	345.9	-	345.9	323.8	22.1	21.4	0.7
Mayoralty & Civic Events	76.4	-	76.4	60.6	15.8	19.9	(4.1)
Town Twinning	2.5	-	2.5	2.5	-	-	-
Financial Services							
Treasury Management	198.8	-	198.8	220.8	(22.0)	56.6	(78.6)
Insurance, Risk & Audit Fees	65.1	-	65.1	65.4	(0.3)	(0.4)	0.1
Financial Services	325.1	-	325.1	311.4	13.7	18.9	(5.2)
People & Policy							
Human Resources	597.9	-	597.9	549.5	48.4	55.0	(6.6)
Corporate Support	347.7	-	347.7	298.8	48.9	42.2	6.7
Publicity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leisure Services	(31.9)	-	(31.9)	9.3	(41.2)	(40.9)	(0.2)
Empty Homes Scheme	100.6	-	100.6	42.5	58.0	60.0	(2.0)
Total	2,929.1	-	2,929.1	2,746.9	182.2	255.1	(72.9)

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Key changes made during the period to the full year forecast	Variance Bfwd £000	Variance this Qtr £000	Full-Yr £000
Executive Office			
Salary variances	(2.9)	5.0	2.1
Conferences and Travel	(14.0)	5.8	(8.2)
Other minor variances	(0.1)	(0.5)	(0.6)
Corporate Contingency	(5.0)	15.5	10.5
Executive Office Servicing	(1.3)	(10.8)	(12.1)
Legal Services			
Salary variances	8.2	-	8.2
Professional fees	5.4	-	5.4
Legal Income	0.6	(3.3)	(2.8)
Other Legal Misc under/ over	1.8	(0.0)	1.8
Land Charges			
Salary variances	2.8	-	2.8
Search Income	(3.0)	0.2	(2.8)
HM Land Registry Grant Income	24.0	-	24.0
Other minor variances	(2.1)	-	(2.1)
Democratic Services			
Salary variances Elections	8.0	-	8.0
Other Election Misc under/ over	-	4.3	4.3
Salary variances Democratic Support	19.2	(1.2)	18.0
Members Costs	19.1	0.8	19.9
Office equipment	-	0.9	0.9
Other Dem Misc under /over	3.6	(4.0)	(0.4)
Town Twinning	(0.6)	-	(0.6)
Treasury Management			
External Audit (Including Audit Backstop Funding)	51.5	(62.2)	(10.7)
Bank Charges / Bank interest	5.0	(16.3)	(11.3)
Insurance, Risk & Audit Fees			
LCC Audit fees	-	-	-
Financial Services			
Salary variances - Accountants	24.0	(6.0)	18.0
Salary variances - Exchequer	2.5	-	2.5
Subscriptions	3.9	-	3.9
Computer System upgrade	(11.0)	-	(11.0)
Other misc under / (over) spends	(0.8)	0.9	0.2
Human Resources			
Salary variances	66.8	(0.2)	66.6
Authority wide Training	1.5	-	1.5
Annual Licences	(7.0)	-	(7.0)
Agency	-	(3.1)	(3.1)
Emergency Radio	-	(0.9)	(0.9)
Other minor variances	(1.9)	(2.3)	(4.2)
Corporate Support			
Salary variances	37.8	7.2	45.0
Other variances	-	(0.5)	(0.5)
Leisure	(1.6)	(0.2)	(1.8)
Leisure Review	(39.3)	-	(39.3)
Empty Homes	60.0	(2.0)	58.0
TOTAL	255.1	<b style="color: red;">(72.9)	182.2

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Corporate Management Highlight Report – Q3 (December 2025)

Historic Issues

- None.

Current Quarter Issues

The Corporate Management Directorate outturn is forecast to deliver a favourable variance of £182.2k, the main movements being: -

- Staffing cost variances at Q3 are projected to be £169.4k favourable to budget:
 - Land Charges is showing a favourable variance of £2.8k.
 - Democratic Services is showing a favourable variance of £18k due to reduced working hours.
 - Elections is showing a favourable variance of £8.0k.
 - Corporate Management is showing a favourable variance of £2.1k.
 - Financial Services is showing a favourable variance of £20.5k.
 - People & Policy is showing a favourable variance of £66.8k due there being a vacant post, reduced working hours and Communications being provided by an external agency.
 - Corporate Support is showing a favourable variance of £45.0k due to vacant posts.
 - Legal is showing a favourable variance of £8.2k.
- Members costs are forecasting an underspend of £19.9k due to the reduced number of councillors.
- An upgrade of the Council's payment software has incurred additional costs of £11.0k.
- Bank Charges are projecting an adverse variance of £11.3k.
- A Leisure Review for the authority has been commissioned and is expected to cost £39.3k.

Future Issues

- None.

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Corporate Services Directorate

Period 9 (Dec)

Non-Distributed Costs & Capital Financing	2025/26 Orig Budget £000	Virements Budget £000	2025/26 App Budget £000	2025/26 Q3 Outturn £000	2025/26 Variance (Adv)/Fav £000	Variance last reported £000	Change in Qtr 3 (Adv)/Fav £000
Non Distributed Costs							
Employee & Pension Costs	200.0	-	200.0	95.8	104.2	148.3	(44.1)
Other Non-distributed Costs	35.3	-	35.3	174.6	(139.3)	(69.1)	(70.2)
Capital Financing							
Minimum Revenue Provision	644.1	-	644.1	712.9	(68.8)	(68.8)	-
Interest (net)	174.6	-	174.6	(550.4)	725.0	375.0	350.0
Total	1,054.0	-	1,054.0	432.9	621.1	385.4	235.7

Key changes made during the period to the full year forecast	Variance Bfwd £000	Variance this Qtr £000	Full-Yr Forecast £000
Employee & Pension Costs			
Vacancy control and unpaid leave savings target - net	(100.0)	14.8	(85.2)
Employee contribution Additional leave	38.1	(38.1)	-
Superann additional years/Contribution to Pension deficit	210.2	(20.8)	189.4
Other Corporate	(69.1)	(70.2)	(139.3)
Capital Financing			
Interest Payable	200.0	50.0	250.0
Interest Receivable	175.0	300.0	475.0
MRP	(68.8)	-	(68.8)
TOTAL	385.4	235.7	621.1

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Non-Distributed Costs & Capital Financing Highlight Report – Q3 (December 2025)

Historic Issues

- Savings on pension costs relate to historical pension liabilities, and arise as former employees pass away.

Current Quarter Issues

- The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is £68.8k over budget, mainly due to delays in capital expenditure in previous years.
- The budgeted expenditure of £157.0k relating to the Council's contribution towards a potential pension scheme deficit is not expected to be required. This will result in additional savings of £157.0k.
- Non-distributed costs include a vacancy savings target of £100k and anticipated savings relating to unpaid leave of £25k:
 - Vacancy savings are included within the relevant department variances.
 - Employee contributions relating to the purchase of additional leave are included in non-distributed costs.
 - A more detailed analysis is included in the 'Staff Costs' element of the monitoring pack.
- Net interest for the year shows a favourable variance of £725k, as detailed below:
 - Income from longer-term, high-interest deposits maturing during the year is forecast to be £700k, resulting in a favourable variance of £475.0k.
 - Officers have been actively working to maximise interest receivable on the Council's cash balances.
 - Estimated cash borrowing is lower than originally budgeted, primarily due to the timing of capital projects within the Capital Programme, which are commencing or are being completed later than planned. As a result, this is expected to generate savings of £250.0k in borrowing interest costs.
 - Borrowing is expected to be required in future years once the agreed capital projects commence.

Future Issues

A significant reduction in interest rates would reduce the level of interest income received.

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Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked Reserves (cash-backed items only)	Local Business Rates Retention Reserve	Transitional Budgetary Support	Rawtenstall Bus Station Commuted sum	Directorate Reserves	MMI	General Reserves	Total Reserves
Balance at 01/04/2025	3,112.6	5,910.2	486.0	2,005.5	228.8	1,000.0	12,743.1
Funds Received 2025/26							
Transfer between Reserves		(44.0)					(44.0)
Revenue Support Grant		111.0					111.0
Collection Fund - S31 Grants (NNDR3)	2,436.0						2,436.0
Collection Fund - Renewable Energy (NNDR1/3)							-
Business Rates Pooling net gain							-
New Homes Bonus		141.0					141.0
Extended Producer Responsibilities		649.0					649.0
Recovery Grant		297.0					297.0
Employers NI Contribution Scheme		75.0		242.9			274.9
Total Funds Available	5,548.6	7,139.2	486.0	2,248.4	228.8	1,000.0	16,651.0
2025/26 Published Budget Utilisation							
Retained Business Rates							-
Revenue Support Grant		(111.0)					(111.0)
Collection Fund - S31 Grants (NNDR3)	(2,436.0)						(2,436.0)
Collection Fund - Renewable Energy (NNDR1/3)							-
Business Rates Pooling net gain							-
New Homes Bonus		(141.0)					(141.0)
Extended Producer Responsibilities		(649.0)					(649.0)
Recovery Grant		(297.0)					(297.0)
Employers NI Contribution Scheme		(75.0)					(75.0)
General budget support		37.7					37.7
2025/26 Other Utilisation Plans							
Transfers between Reserves							-
Other Utilisation from Directorates				(488.6)			(488.6)
Total Utilisation Commitment	(2,436.0)	(1,235.3)	-	(488.6)	-	-	(4,159.9)
Reserve Estimates 31/03/2026	3,112.6	5,903.9	486.0	1,759.8	228.8	1,000.0	12,491.0
Future Contributions/Utilisation Plans							
2026/27 Plans	114.0	(837.0)		(207.8)			(930.8)
2027/28 Plans		(917.0)		(117.7)			(1,034.7)
Potential Reserve Balances	3,226.6	4,149.9	486.0	1,434.3	228.8	1,000.0	10,525.5

Current Issues

The brought forward reserves balance was £12,743k as shown in the table above. Of this balance c. £1,759.8k is ring-fenced. As noted on page 2, the positive variance at Q3 of £575.6k will reduce the pressure for a significant contribution to be required from the Transitional Reserve as predicted in the 2025/26 MTFs.

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Grants Unapplied

Grants Unapplied (* denotes a capital grant)	Disabled Facilities Grants *	Capital Regeneration Programme (CRP) *	Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) *	DEFRA Waste Capital Fund *	Long Term Plans for Towns	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£'000	£'000	
Balance at 01/04/2025	2,083.0	3,069.0	493.0	528.0	170.0	6,343.0
New Funds Received 2025/26						
Grant due/received	1,439.0					1,439.0
Total Funds Available	3,522.0	3,069.0	493.0	528.0	170.0	7,782.0
Utilisation in 2025/26						
DFGs Outturn 2025/26	(2,600.0)					(2,600.0)
CRP Markets and Gyrotory		(3,069.0)				(3,069.0)
Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)			(493.0)			(493.0)
DEFRA Food Waste				(528.0)		(528.0)
Long Term Plans for Towns					(170.0)	(170.0)
Anticipated Balance 31/03/2026	922.0	-	-	-	-	922.0

In addition to the £2,083k of unspent DFG grant brought forward at 1st April 2025, the 2025/26 allocation of £1,439k has been confirmed, giving total DFG resources of £3,522k. The utilisation is based on the estimated capital spend for the year, which will be reviewed and updated throughout the remainder of the year.

All other grants, received in the previous year and in the current year, are expected to be used in 2025/26.

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Staff Costs, Including Agency

Net Employment Costs 2025/26 to 31/12/2025	YTD Budget £000	YTD Actual £000	YTD Variance (Adv)/Fav £000	Variance last Qtr (Adv)/Fav £000	Change this Qtr (Adv)/Fav £000	FTE Original Budget 2025/26	FTE Changes during 2025/26	Current Vacant Posts
Communities Directorate								
Customer Services	321	315	7	5	2	7.8	0.0	0
Operations Service	1,903	1,814	89	44	45	52.0	0.0	4
Parks & Cemeteries	658	675	(17)	(7)	(10)	22.0	0.0	1
Public Protection Unit	144	128	16	9	7	3.0	0.0	0
Environmental Health	165	128	38	31	7	4.0	1.0	3
Licensing & Enforcement	81	66	15	9	6	3.0	0.0	1
Communities Team	109	64	45	30	15	2.8	1.0	0
Economic Development Directorate								
Planning Services	463	455	7	6	2	11.6	0.2	0
Building Control Services	109	107	2	1	1	3.0	0.0	0
Regeneration	429	393	36	(3)	38	10.7	0.0	1
Property Services	121	114	8	8	(0)	4.0	0.0	0
Housing	312	304	8	13	(5)	8.5	0.0	0
Corporate Services								
Corporate Management	290	294	(3)	3	(6)	3.0	0.0	0
Legal Services	143	135	9	4	5	3.0	0.0	1
Local Land Charges	43	41	2	1	1	1.2	0.0	0
Democratic Services	220	206	14	10	4	6.5	0.0	0
Financial Services	388	357	31	31	(0)	10.0	1.0	0
People & Policy	680	566	114	86	28	19.2	0.0	4
Leisure Services	36	50	(13)	(8)	(5)	0.8	(0.8)	0
Total	6,616	6,210	406	273	134	177.1	1.4	15

Salary savings	406
Additional Leave	40
Total Staff Savings	446
Original Savings Target	125
Savings Target fav/(adv)	321

Net employee underspends at Q3 amount to £406k, in addition there are savings related to purchased additional leave of £40k, resulting in a total staff saving of £446k. The savings target for the year is £125k, therefore, resulting in an estimated favourable outturn variance of £321k. This is due to the agreed pay award of 3.2% being less than the budgeted estimate of 5% and a reduction in the pension payable.

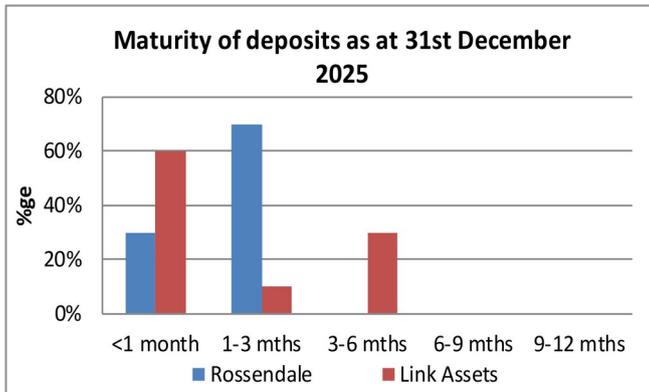
Whilst a saving against budget on salaries is beneficial from a financial perspective, there is a risk that this will have a negative impact on the workforce as workloads increase to cover the vacant posts.

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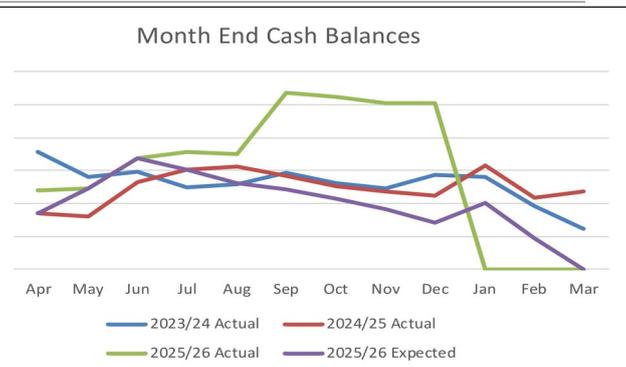
Treasury Management & Cash Flow Monitoring

At the end of December 2025, the bank balances were £25.2m. This is higher than in previous years due to funds being received in advance for capital schemes and Disabled Facilities Grants.

Although interest rates have recently fallen, the Bank Rate has remained high over the past two years. Because of this, and with temporary cash balances available for investment, the Council continues to take a more proactive approach to managing its cash in 2025/26. This aims to increase interest income beyond budget expectations and help offset rising costs caused by ongoing inflationary pressures.



Balances & Interest Rates at 31/12/2025	Current Balance £k	Avg Interest Rate %
NatWest SIBA	1,241	0.10
Lancashire CC Call	2,000	3.50
Handelsbanken instant	-	0.00
External Investments	20,000	3.70
Lloyds instant access	2,000	3.72
Lloyds 12mth Deposit	-	-
Total Bal & Avg interest	25,241	3.51



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The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) regularly review interest rates. The most recent movement was a reduction of 0.25% in December 2025. The current Bank of England interest rate is 3.75%.

The Council's strategy remains to retain a significant portion of its balances as liquid funds, to ensure it can respond promptly when required to meet its commitments as they fall due (revenue and capital expenditure).

Instant access arrangements typically return lower interest rates than fixed-term deposits. Despite the recent change in bank rate, officers are working to generate the highest level of interest income possible, whilst maintaining the ability to access funds when needed.

As per the commentary above, the Council continues to take a more proactive approach to fixed and longer-term investments for a smaller proportion of its surplus balances. In accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, these deposits will be placed with high quality Counterparties e.g. Central Government or other Local Authorities. The strategy is considered prudent in the context of CIPFA's Prudential Code which prioritises Security and Liquidity over Yield (SLY).

At 31st December 2025, the Council's portfolio mix consists of £1.2m in the Natwest current account, £2m in an LCC call account, £2m in a Lloyds deposit account and £20.0m on deposit with the Debt Management Office (DMO). The DMO is responsible for debt and cash management for the UK Government, lending to local authorities and managing certain public sector funds. RBC have deposits for varying periods up to 3 months with the DMO.

Interest Forecast	Budget 2025/26	Forecast 2025/26	Variance Fav/(Adv)	Change Fav/(Adv)
Revenue				
Interest payable (PWLB)	(100.0)	(100.0)	-	-
Other interest payable	(300.0)	(50.0)	250.0	250.0
Misc Interest income	-	-	-	-
Bank Interest income	225.0	700.0	475.0	475.0
Net Interest	(175.0)	550.0	725.0	725.0

The average effective interest rate at the end of Q3 was 3.51%.

Interest Paid / Received

The budget for interest in 2025/26 is a net cost of £175k. The outturn position is forecast to be net income of £550k. This is due to higher than anticipated available cash and slower than anticipated reductions in interest rates. This is combined with the reliance on internal borrowing, resulting in

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savings in interest paid on external borrowing.

Borrowing

The Council has an identified a 'prudential' borrowing need to finance its capital expenditure plans, in the sum of £6.2m, over the MTFS period from 2024/25 until 2026/27.

The decrease to Bank Rate during the last financial year has affected the borrowing rates on offer from PWLB.

The Council continues to assess its borrowing need on an ongoing basis, in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy.

Interest Rate Forward Predictions

The Council's treasury management advisors, MUGG (formerly Link), have reviewed their interest rate forecast for the next four years, as demonstrated in the table overleaf.

MUGG also provide their view of the 25 year borrowing rates from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). This forecast is based on a concessionary rate reduction to the standard rate for new loans, known as the 'Certainty Rate'. This discount is currently equal to a 20 basis point reduction to the standard rate. For clarity, the above table includes the Certainty Rate.

The Council completed the annual application for access to the Certainty rate to support its Capital borrowing plans on the most favourable terms available.

MUGG Corporate Markets Interest Rate View 22.12.25													
	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28	Dec-28	Mar-29
BANK RATE	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3 month ave earnings	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
6 month ave earnings	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40
12 month ave earnings	3.90	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.60	3.60	3.60
5 yr PWLB	4.60	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10
10 yr PWLB	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.70
25 yr PWLB	5.80	5.70	5.60	5.50	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.20
50 yr PWLB	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.00	5.10	5.00	5.00

Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) and Prudential Indicators

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26 and was approved by Council on 5th March 2025.

Prudential Indicators

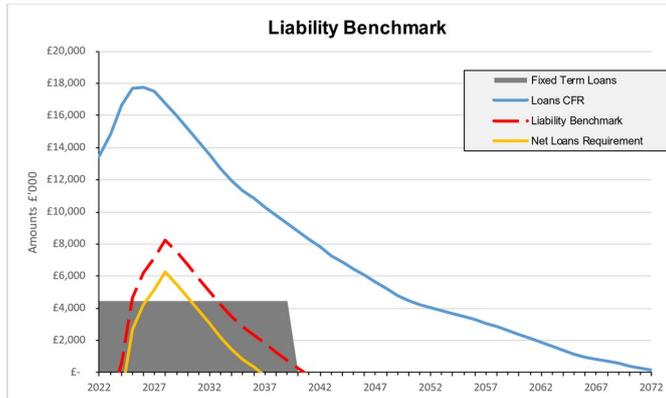
The updated Prudential Indicators – taking into account the Q3 Monitoring position are shown below.

Capital Expenditure	Original 2025/26 £'000	Q3 Revised £'000	Financing of Capital Expenditure	Original 2025/26 £'000	Q3 Revised £'000
Climate Change	527	767	Capital Receipts	1,600	640
Corp Services & Buildings	430	352	Capital Grants	17,228	11,332
Housing	1,000	3,449	S106	-	6
Ops & Coms	8,036	2,734	Capital Reserves	-	-
Regeneration	14,279	6,315	Earmarked Reserves	-	-
Total	24,272	13,618	Total in-year resources	18,828	11,978
			Net Financing need for year	5,444	1,639

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CFR	Original 2025/26 £'000	Actual 2025/26 £'000
Total CFR	23,448	18,561

Operational Boundary & Authorised Limit	Original 2025/26 £'000	Revised 2025/26 £'000
Operational Boundary	24,400	24,400
Authorised Limit	26,400	26,400

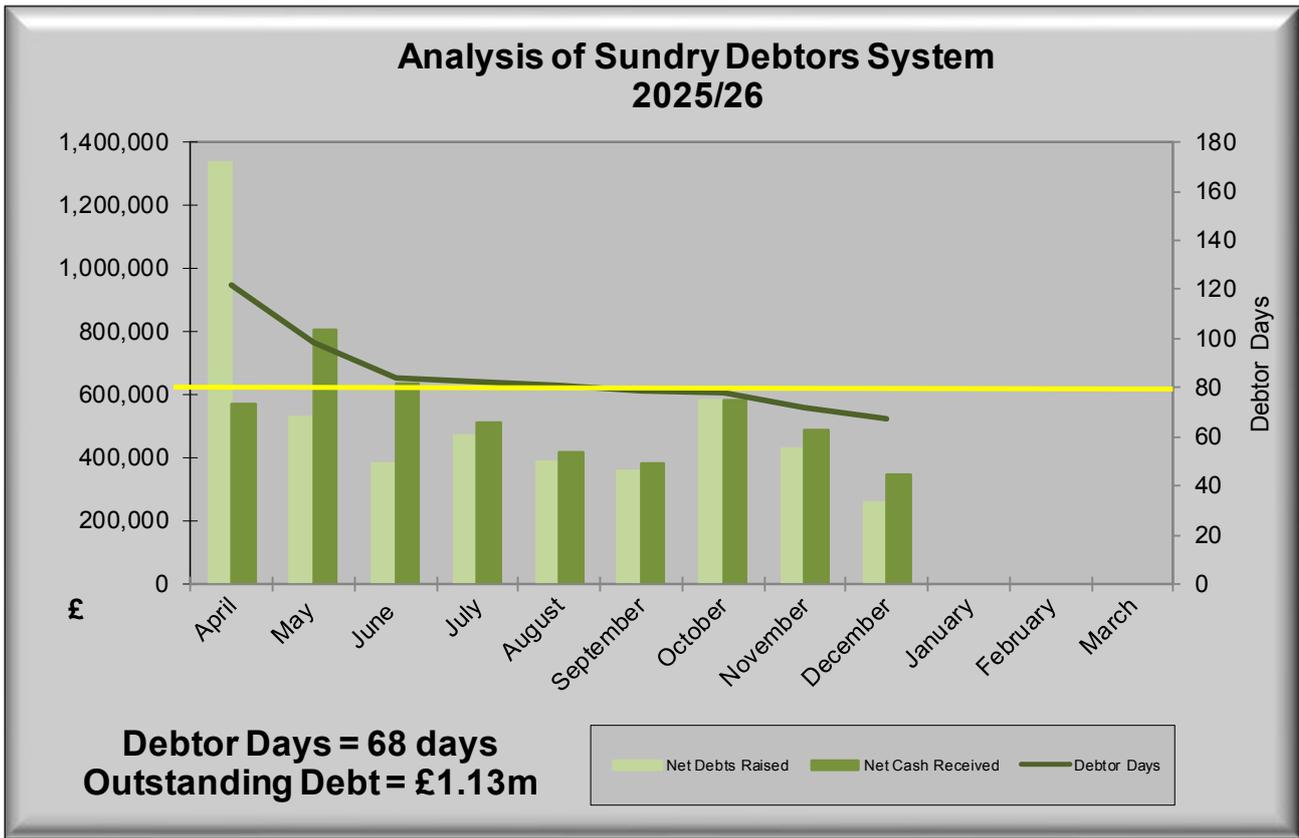


Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	Original 2025/26 £'000	Revised 2025/26 £'000
Interest Payable - Services	400	150
Interest Receivable	(225)	(700)
MRP	644	713
Net cost of capital	819	163
Net Revenue Stream	11,535	10,894
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	7.10%	1.50%

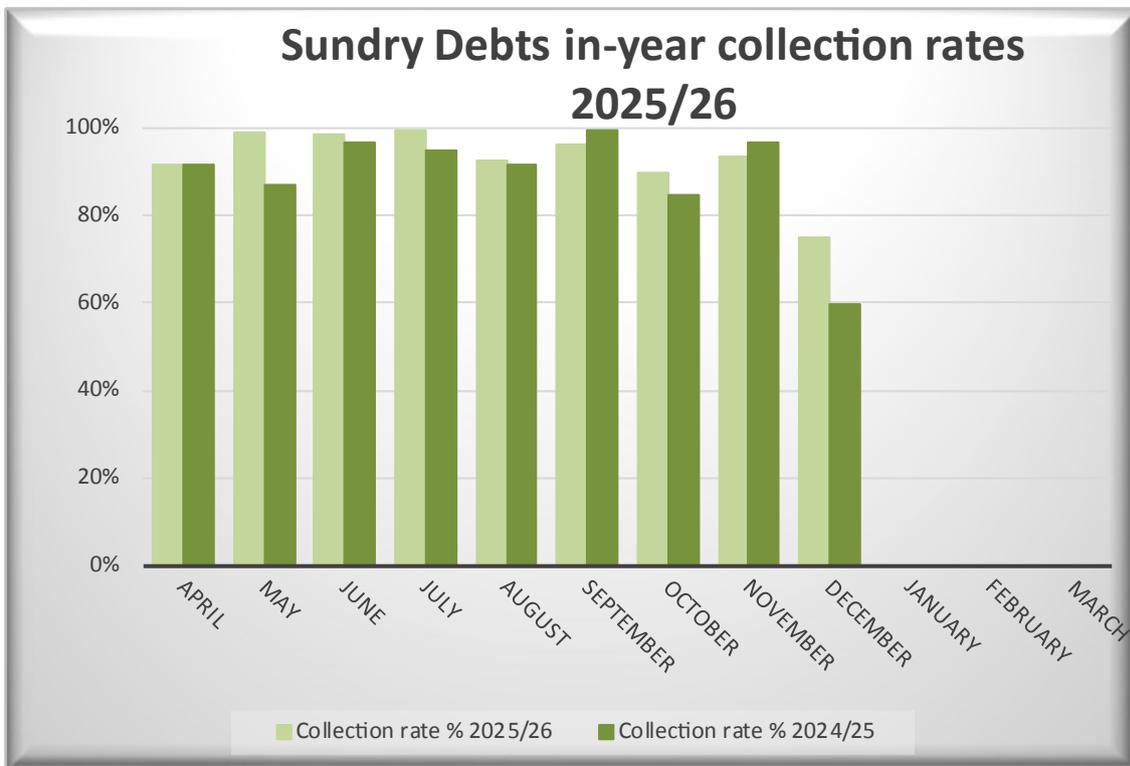
Sundry Debts Monitoring

Invoices raised in the year, to the end of Q3 totalled £4,738k. As at December 2025, £321k (7%) of new debts raised in the year were considered outstanding or overdue resulting in a collection rate of 93%.

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It should be noted that the high volume of net debts raised in April relates to the annual charges for trade waste and the annual rental of most industrial units.



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Doubtful Debts

The debtor days in Q3, based on a rolling 12 month average has reduced from 79 days to 68 days, for collection of sums due. The target average is 80 days.

The Council has set aside sufficient sums in the event of non-recovery of 'aged' debt. The Council will consider any decision to write-off sums in due course following an analysis of recovery attempts e.g. Debtor has 'gone away' or sums are considered uneconomical to pursue further. Any such decision will be reported to Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The Council has a provision of c. 83% for debts it considers to be at risk of remaining unpaid (impairment) and c. 50% for the total debt issued and considered overdue. The general impairment provision carried forward at 31st March 2025 is at £641.8k, plus a further £5.4k, which has been set aside for licensing debt.

Given the current collection performance at Q3, the current level of provision is considered adequate but will continue to be reviewed throughout the remainder of 2025/26.

The debts below exclude the Rossendale Leisure Trust Debt which stood at £1.365m as at 31st December 2025.

Debts Outstanding	Mar 2025	Jun 2025	Sept 2025	Dec 2025	Doubtful Debts at 31 Dec 2025	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	Rate	£000
Earlier Debt	46.2	46.1	46.1	45.8	100%	45.8
2017/18 Debt	63.3	63.2	63.1	63.1	100%	63.1
2018/19 Debt	38.7	39.2	39.2	39.2	100%	39.2
2019/20 Debt	16.8	16.9	15.8	12.7	100%	12.7
2020/21 Debt	109.2	107.8	107.8	107.6	100%	107.6
2021/22 Debt	38.4	38.2	38.3	38.3	100%	38.3
2022/23 Debt	91.0	83.0	82.1	80.5	100%	80.5
2023/24 Debt	192.6	165.7	161.6	158.2	75%	118.7
2024/25 Debt	437.4	228.1	173.8	148.2	50%	74.1
2025/26 Debt		447.9	402.9	167.6	15%	25.1
Q3 Oct				59.7	15%	9.0
Q3 Nov				28.7	15%	4.3
Q3 Dec				64.8	15%	9.7
Total Debt o/s	1,033.6	1,236.1	1,130.7	1,014.4		628.1

Capital

Capital Resources

Table 1 – 2025/26 Receipts

Major Receipts:	Original Budget £000	Year to Date £000	Variance Fav/(Adv) £000
Capital Receipts			
Land & Property Sales	1,600	50	(1,551)
Obsolete Vehicles and Kit	-	92	92
Net Receipts to Table 2	1,600	141	(1,459)

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Table 2 - Useable Capital Resources

Useable Capital Resources	£ 000
Balance at April 2025	2,141
Capital Grants in 2025/26	11,332
Capital Receipts used in 2025/26	640
	14,113
Revenue Contributions	
from Earmarked Reserves	-
from Revenue Operations	-
Total Capital Resources 2025/26	14,113
Capital Prog Funding Applied	(11,332)
Total Capital Resources March 2026	2,781
Capital Receipts Reserve (Whitworth)	38
Capital Receipts Reserve (Haslingden)	73
Capital Receipts Reserve (Unallocated)	2,670

Capital Programme

The Capital Programme for 2025/26 (approved in February 2025) was £24,272k, this includes:

- £14,078k for the Capital Regeneration Programme;
- £6,000k for the Operations Infrastructure;
- £1,200k for the 3G Football pitch upgrade;
- £666k for the vehicle replacement programme;
- £528k for projects included in the Carbon Reduction Fund (reduced to £503k due to additional costs incurred at the end of 2024/25); and
- A provisional estimate of £1,000k for DFGs.

A further £8,510k (amended from £8,485k) of slippage had been included at the start of the year, relating to projects which were ongoing at the end of 2024/25, with prior year allocations not yet spent. This includes £1,792k relating to DFGs. Items of estimated slippage and the associated funding arrangements are shown in the table below.

The following are capital projects that have been approved in the current year (2025/26), giving an additional total of £3,105k, this includes:

- £805k relating to the purchase of properties for supported housing with additional funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund;
- £600k relating to the extension of Haslingden cemetery;
- £533k funding from Innovate relating to the Net Zero Terraced Streets project;
- £510k relating to funding from UKSPF. This is to be used to support projects such as Waterfoot and Green Streets;
- £184k increase relating to the Whitaker Park improvements project, with additional funding from the Lancashire Environmental Fund and the FCC Communities Foundation;
- £34k relating to the Building Heat Decarbonisation plan, with funding from the Low Carbon Skills Fund;

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- The original 2025/26 estimate for DFG funding was £1,000k. An additional £439k has been added to the base programme, resulting in an actual grant received of £1,439k.

The revised Capital Programme, covering the full duration of the MTFs, will be updated to incorporate the timing variations outlined above, together with finalised slippage adjustments.

Financing the Capital Programme

The Useable Capital Receipts Reserve holds the balance of the funds generated from the sale of Council assets. The balance brought forward at 1st April 2025 is £2,141k. This represents the most effective method of financing the planned Capital spend in 2025/26.

The total grant income expected for the approved capital programme is £11,332k (including DFGs). Current funding for the slippage brought forward into the 2025/26 capital programme, and the additional projects in 2025/26, consists of a mixture of resources, namely grants, capital receipts and (internal) borrowing. The most effective method of funding the Council's capital programme will be determined at the end of the financial year.

Current Issues

- The costs associated with the maintenance and repair of Council buildings and specialised fleet vehicles continue to rise, putting increased pressure on the budget.
- The estimated completion time for the Capital Regeneration projects is expected to be March 2027, following a deadline extension.
- The work relating to the Operations Infrastructure will continue into 2026/27.

Capital Programme Spending

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Capital Programme 2025/26	Original Cap Prog	Revised Cap Prog	Spent (including Commitments)	Full-Year Forecast	Variance (Adv)/Fav	Estimated Slippage	Indicative Funding Arrangements			
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	Grants/Contrib'n	Capital Receipts	S106/Reserves/RCCO	RBC Int Borrow
IT Software & Equipment	-	-	22	22	(22)	-	-	-	-	22
Operations	716	761	774	675	86	86	-	500	-	175
Communities	1,240	2,048	119	242	1,806	1,806	55	-	6	182
Housing	1,000	4,080	2,214	3,449	631	631	3,449	-	-	-
Henrietta Street Depot Improvements	-	-	13	13	(13)	-	-	-	-	13
Futures Park	-	33	-	33	-	-	-	-	-	33
Property Repairs & Maint	400	450	171	270	180	180	-	-	-	270
Car Parks General 22-26 MTFS	30	40	-	40	-	-	-	-	-	40
Haslingden 2040 NLHF	-	1,472	1,820	1,820	(348)	-	1,680	140	-	-
Haslingden Market (UKSPF)	-	-	11	11	(11)	-	11	-	-	-
Waterfoot (UKSPF)	-	220	124	220	-	-	220	-	-	-
Green Streets (UKSPF)	-	150	-	150	-	-	150	-	-	-
Rawtenstall Market Electrical Works	101	101	-	-	101	101	-	-	-	-
Carbon Reduction Fund	527	237	134	134	103	103	35	-	-	99
Net Zero Terraced Streets	-	533	355	533	-	-	533	-	-	-
PSDS Marl Pits Decarbonisation	-	300	46	100	200	200	100	-	-	-
Whitaker Park	80	409	186	409	-	-	139	-	-	270
Trickett's Memorial Ground	-	-	5	5	(5)	-	-	-	-	5
Food Waste Collections	-	528	424	528	-	-	528	-	-	-
Waste Transfer Station	6,000	6,000	457	500	5,500	5,500	-	-	-	500
Leisure Various	-	186	-	-	186	186	-	-	-	-
Legacy Liabilities	100	359	-	30	329	329	-	-	-	30
Capital Regeneration Projects (LUF)	14,078	17,980	1,920	4,432	13,548	13,548	4,432	-	-	-
	24,272	35,887	8,796	13,618	22,269	22,669	11,332	640	6	1,640

Slippage items brought forward at the end of 2024/25	Costs £'000	Indicative Funding Arrangements			
		Grants/Contrib'n	Capital Receipts	RCCO (reserves or S106)	RBC Int Borrow
Communities Directorate					
Edgeside Park	55				55
Football Pitch Upgrade	163	163			
Subtotal Communities	218	163	-	-	55
Operations					
Vehicles / Equipment	39				39
Food Waste Collections	528				528
Subtotal Operations	567	-	-	-	567
Economic Development Directorate					
Leisure Facilities Upgrade	186				186
Haslingden 2040 NLHF	1,332	1,332			
Whitaker Park Parking (Includes Stubbylee Parking)	10				10
Whitaker Park	95				95
General Building Renovations & Maintenance	50				50
Futures Park Infrastructure	33				33
Stubbylee Park Drainage	40				40
Legacy Liabilities (Various Schemes)	241				241
Subtotal Economic Development	1,987	1,332	-	-	655
Housing					
DFGs - Mandatory Grants	1,792	1,792			
Supported Accommodation	44	44			
Subtotal Housing	1,836	1,836	-	-	-
Capital Regeneration Projects	3,902	3,902			
Total	8,510	7,233	-	-	1,277

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Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	MRP Budget 2025/26	Revised MRP Required 2025/26	(Additions) / Underspend 2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate	644	713	(69)
	644	713	(69)

MRP is the annual revenue repayment of internal funds used to support capital work.

Following a review of the capital programme, the MRP charge for 2025/26 was £69.0k higher than anticipated.

Section 106 Receipts Monitoring

The value of S106 agreements brought forward on the 1st April 2025 was £604.5k. To the end of December 2025, there have been two S106 deposits totalling £250. There have also been four contributions amounting to £20.7k applied to projects. This leaves £833.9k held on the balance sheet, yet to be allocated.

Section 106 Agreements 2025/26	Third Party Projects £'000	RBC Revenue Projects £'000	RBC Capital Projects £'000	Total Held £'000
Balance b fwd at 1st April 2025	251.1	64.9	288.5	604.5
Deposits received in 2025/26	17.7		232.4	250.1
Deposits applied in 2025/26	(4.1)	(10.0)	(6.6)	(20.7)
Current Balance	264.7	54.9	514.3	833.9

Section 106 Agreements in detail	Third Party Projects £'000	RBC Revenue Projects £'000	RBC Capital Projects £'000	Total Held £'000
Balance b fwd at 1st April 2025	251.1	64.9	288.5	604.5
LIDL, Rawtenstall			232.4	232.4
Douglas Rd		(10.0)		(10.0)
Scout Moor	(3.2)			(3.2)
Scout Moor	(0.9)			(0.9)
Scout Moor	17.7			17.7
Reedsholme Works			(6.6)	(6.6)

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Council Tax & NNDR Collection Rates

Cumulative Collection	Council Tax							Business Rates						
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
April	10.51	10.04	10.90	10.44	10.11	10.09	10.10	12.22	10.24	8.60	12.78	12.79	12.17	9.25
May	19.70	18.96	19.70	19.44	19.48	19.04	19.03	21.07	18.89	16.20	31.81	21.29	20.42	17.19
June	28.63	27.62	28.70	28.35	28.19	27.89	27.88	28.68	25.62	24.30	28.16	28.19	28	25.44
July	37.86	36.56	37.66	37.21	37.09	36.96	36.81	37.37	33.92	33.96	35.83	36.52	36.83	35.37
August	46.90	45.24	46.71	46.21	46.01	45.05	45.90	50.82	48.55	47.63	47.86	51.19	49.1	48.57
September	56.01	54.29	55.43	55.64	54.92	54.93	54.51	58.34	57.84	56.05	55.54	58.11	58.14	56.80
October	65.23	63.29	71.16	64.55	64.03	63.36	63.42	67.52	68.97	64.90	64.73	65.99	65.08	65.08
November	74.78	72.30	78.43	73.49	72.93	72.93	72.16	74.26	77.15	73.09	74.88	74.92	74.41	73.1
December	83.33	80.90	82.12	82.25	81.50	80.96	80.92	82.70	85.92	81.41	81.91	81.93	82.7	81.41
January	92.48	89.90	90.96	91.22	91.05	90.25	89.82	90.91	90.17	89.30	94.79	90.27	91.17	89.23
February	94.60	92.37	93.43	93.85	93.37	93.12		95.00	93.66	95.13	94.73	94.23	94.68	
March	96.32	95.72	95.59	95.95	95.75	95.31		97.78	94.19	98.15	98.85	98.60	98.56	

Collection rates for Council Tax are reducing, it is likely that this is the result of the continuing cost of living crisis. This remains an area of focus into 2025/26 given the potential impact on future collection. However, the rates of decline are low and collection rates remain at relatively high levels.

For Business Rates, the situation is harder to gauge as collection rates were distorted in 2022/23 by the Covid relief, which the Government distributed. 2023/24 was also distorted by the transitional reliefs given to businesses, due to the Business Rates revaluation, which were applied in April 2023. As at the end of 2024/25, the collection rates were in line with previous years which is positive, and as at Q3, the level remains relatively high and is only slightly below average.

Council Tax Collection Fund

At the time of this report, the estimated surplus on the Council Tax collection fund is forecast at £1,335k. This includes a £500k provision for doubtful debts. This year RBC's share of the Council Tax is 13.56%, equating to £175k of the forecast surplus.

Council Tax Forecast 2025/26	Q1 £'000	Q2 £'000	Q3 £'000
Council Tax Collectable (after Discounts & Exemptions)	53,288	53,168	53,116
less Doubtful Debt Provision	(500)	(500)	(500)
	52,788	52,668	52,616
less Precepts for 2023/24			
Lancashire County Council	(36,715)	(36,715)	(36,715)
Police	(5,868)	(5,868)	(5,868)
Fire	(1,898)	(1,898)	(1,898)
Rosendale Borough Council	(6,719)	(6,719)	(6,719)
Whitworth Town Council	(80)	(80)	(80)
	(51,280)	(51,280)	(51,280)
Surplus / (Deficit)	1,508	1,388	1,335
RBC Share = 13.56%	204	182	175

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Local Retention of Business Rates (NNDR)

Under the Business Rates scheme, variances from the original budgets fall into two categories – those arising from changes to the collection fund and those arising from grants and levies received or charged to the General Fund.

Business Rates Collection Fund 2025/26 (50% Pool)	NNDR1 £000	Q1 £000	Q2 £000	Q3 £000
Net Liability Due	15,241	14,890	15,164	15,004
Use of Appeals Provision	-	-	-	-
Less Cost of Collection Allowance	(97)	(97)	(97)	(97)
Less Doubtful Debt Provision	(300)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Less Appeals Provision	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
Less Renewables 100% to RBC	(291)	(291)	(291)	(291)
Net NNDR due	14,053	13,702	13,976	13,816
Transitional reliefs	248	248	248	248
Less Precepts	(14,301)	(14,301)	(14,301)	(14,301)
Cash Surplus/(Deficit)	-	(351)	(77)	(237)
RBC Share = C x 40%	-	(140)	(31)	(95)
Central Government share 50%		(176)	(39)	(118)
LCC and Fire share 10%		(35)	(8)	(24)

The Business Rates collection fund is predicting a deficit of £237k for 2025/26. The Council retains a share of any surplus or deficit arising at year-end, from activity on the fund, in the sum of 40%, thus the Council’s share of the deficit will be £95k.

Whilst there is an adequate appeals provision within the Collection fund to cover the cash refund due on any appeals, the rateable value reduction of any successful valuation appeals will adversely affect the Council’s in-year cashflow. This is because although the net liability due from the businesses has decreased, under existing legislation, the Council is required to make good its payments to major preceptors as originally assumed, despite a reduction in Collection Fund income. However, it should be noted that there are no outstanding appeals from the 2017 list.

RBC General Fund / Pooling Gains	NNDR1 £000	Q1 £000	Q2 £000	Q3 £000
Business Rates Income	14,301	13,950	14,224	14,064
RBC Share = 40%	5,720	5,580	5,690	5,626
less tariff paid to Lancashire Pool	(3,488)	(3,488)	(3,488)	(3,488)
add S31 Grants (for Levy calculation)	2,742	2,742	2,742	2,742
Subtotal	4,974	4,834	4,944	4,880
RBC Baseline Funding Level used in Budget	2,261	2,261	2,261	2,261
Surplus for Levy Calculations	2,713	2,573	2,683	2,619
Levy due for non Pool membership 50%	(1,357)	(1,286)	(1,341)	(1,309)
Levy payable as Pool member 10% of above	(136)	(129)	(134)	(131)
Retained Levy through Pool membership	1,221	1,158	1,207	1,178

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The Council is part of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool. Each year the Council is subject to a levy payment of 50% of calculated Business Rates growth, above its baseline funding level, as determined annually in the Local Government Finance Settlement. Membership of the Pool restricts this levy to 10% (of the 50% levy) and allows the Council to hold the balance as 'retained levy', thus reducing the total value of sums paid over to central Government, to apply locally. Therefore, in addition to the anticipated deficit the Council will generate as above, a pooling gain is estimated of £1,178k. The February 2025 MTFs included a contribution of an estimated pooling gain of £500k, the current forecast outturn position is a £678k surplus against that income budget.

Central government also gives authorities Section 31 grants to cover small business reliefs and other government-backed schemes. In the NNDR1 budget submission in January 2025 the estimate for those grants totalled £2,742k.

Business Rates Summary	NNDR1 £000	Q1 £000	Q2 £000	Q3 £000
Business Rates Surplus/(Deficit) 2024/25	2,713	2,573	2,683	2,619
less Lancashire Pooling Levy	(136)	(129)	(134)	(131)
Renewable Energy	291	291	291	228
Overall Gain/(loss)	2,869	2,735	2,839	2,716
Business Rates Retention Reserve Bfwd	1,028	1,028	1,028	1,028
Business Rates Cash Surplus/(Deficit) 2025/26	2,869	2,735	2,839	2,716
Less Budgeted Utilisation	-	-	-	-
Total Retained Business Rates Resources Cfwd	3,897	3,763	3,867	3,744

The table shows the potential impact on the Business Rates Retention Reserve. At the end of Q4 it is anticipated that RBC will transfer an additional £1,086k (40% of £2,716k) in overall NNDR gain. This is primarily due to government awards to cover inflationary pressures which had not been accounted for in the MTFs. This is net of the gain on net renewable energy, which RBC have previously taken to the Energy reserve and it is anticipated the same will happen in 2025/26.

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Glossary

Accrual

An adjustment at year-end to charge costs or income due in the old year, regardless of whether the cash has been paid or received. Accounts are prepared on an accruals basis in order to match the income for each financial year with the costs attributable to the same time period.

Capital expenditure

Spending on the acquisition or maintenance of assets either directly by the Council or indirectly in the form of grants to other persons or bodies. Expenditure that does not fall within the definition must be charged to a revenue account.

Capital Grants Received in Advance

Grants received in cash during the year, but not spent or committed, are held on the Balance Sheet in the Short-term Liabilities area as Capital Grants Received in Advance, acknowledging the potential requirement to pay these grants back should the related project not go ahead or underspend.

Capital Receipts

Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets, such as land or buildings, or the repayment of capital grants or advances. These funds form part of the Council's Useable Reserves, though they are ring-fenced for capital projects rather than revenue costs.

Cash & Cash Equivalents

Cash deposits are those which provide instant access to the funds without significant penalty or loss of interest. For the Council this is the balance on the NatWest accounts and two other instant access accounts with Lloyds and Handelsbanken. This is in comparison to short- and long-term *Investments* in which funds are untouchable during the life of the deposit.

Collection Fund

Rossendale Borough council collects funds on behalf of other precepting bodies, Lancashire County Council, Fire and Police as well as central government and Whitworth Town Council from domestic and commercial properties in the borough. These amounts are formally ring fenced in the Collection Fund and then distributed amongst the precepting bodies in line with their demands as set in the annual budget setting meeting. At the end of the year each precepting body has their share of the arrears, the doubtful debt provision or appeals provision and the accumulated surplus or deficit. Rossendale Borough Council accounts for its own share, but holds the other preceptors shares separately on an agency basis. Hence, within the Council Tax and Business Rates monitoring members will see the overall position and the RBC share clearly identified.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The consumer price index (CPI) is a measure estimating the average price of [consumer goods](#) and [services](#) purchased by households. It is a [price index](#) determined by measuring the price of a standard group of goods meant to represent the typical market basket of a typical urban consumer and how this changed in the previous 12 months.

Earmarked Reserves

Cash-backed funds identified to fund specific projects in the future.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Each full-time post within the Council works 37 hours per week. Part-time posts are expressed in relation to this, for example a post working 4 days a week would be 0.8FTE.

General Fund

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The main revenue fund of the Council.

Grants Unapplied

Unlike Capital Grants Received in Advance, there is no requirement to repayment of these grants. The unspent balance will be released into capital or revenue in the coming years as projects come online. These funds form part of the Council's Useable Reserves.

Investments

The Council invests surplus cash in short- and long-term deposits in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy and Practices revised in February each year. In this context short-term includes anything up to 365 days, and long-term is for more than one year. Funds deposited in such investments are not accessible until the end of the agreed terms.

MUFG Corporate Markets (formerly Link Asset Services)

Link Asset Services (formerly Capita & Sector) is the company which provides the Council with Treasury Management advice, including daily market reports and predictions, credit rating updates, interest rate forecasts and annual reviews of our strategy and practices ahead of the February reports to Full Council.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The Council's financial planning document for the foreseeable future.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

The minimum amount which must be charged to the Council's revenue account each year and set aside as provision for credit liabilities, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

The former Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has been redesignated as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, or MHCLG.

National non-domestic rates - now Business Rates (NNDR)

National non-domestic rates for commercial premises are set annually by the government and collected by all local authorities. The localisation of business rates in April 2013 meant that the National pool no longer exists, but the acronym NNDR is still widely used in local government circles.

Provision

Cash 'put aside' for expenditure on an intended project which has not commenced or is not complete at the year-end, but which has been contractually committed.

Provisional

Best forecast given current knowledge.

Public Works Loans Board (PWLB)

The PWLB is a central government statutory body which lends funds to local authorities with advantageous interest rates. Interest rates are published daily and local authorities provide the PWLB with annual estimates of cash requirements in return for certainty on the availability of funds and the interest rates being charged.

Reserve

Amounts included in one financial year's accounts to provide for payment for goods or services, whether revenue or capital, in a future financial year.

Revenue account

An account that records an authority's day-to-day expenditure and income on such items as salaries and wages and other running costs of services.

Section 106 Agreement

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Planning agreement whereby developers make a contribution towards specific projects linked to their development as a condition of planning application approval. Deposits may be for revenue or capital schemes, but application of the funds are dependent on firstly the developer, and then the Council, pursuing the projects specified within the agreement.

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